

## **INHOUD**

### **Suzuki Roshi Transcripts**

1962 (1)

- 1962 januari (1)
  - 1 - Religious Activity

1963 (7)

- 1963 januari (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #14, #15

- 1963 maart (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #19

- 1963 april (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #20

- 1963 juli (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #25

- 1963 september (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #30

- 1963 november (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #36

- 1963 december (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #40

1964 (8)

- 1964 februari (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #46

- 1964 maart (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #49

- 1964 april (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #52

- 1964 mei (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #53

- 1964 juni (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #51

- 1964 augustus (1)
  - 1 - The Traditional Way

- 1964 november (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #73

- 1964 december (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #75

1965 (7)

- 1965 februari (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #82

- 1965 april (1)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #84

- 1965 juli (4)
  - 1 - Blue Cliff Record #86
  - 2 - Sesshin Lecture
  - 3 - Sesshin Lecture
  - 4 - Sesshin Lecture

- 1965 augustus (1)
  - 1 - One-Day Sesshin Lecture

1966 (17)

- 1966 januari (1)
  - 1 - Shusogi: Sections 11-17

- 1966 februari (1)
  - 1 - KPFA Radio Interview

- 1966 maart (3)
  - 1 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-3
  - 2 - Shusogi, Section 1
  - 3 - The Way-Seeking Mind

- 1966 mei (2)
  - 1 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-2
  - 2 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 5-13

- 1966 juni (6)
  - 1 - Evening Lecture
  - 2 - Afternoon Lecture
  - 3 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 1-11
  - 4 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 7-9
  - 5 - Precepts
  - 6 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 11-13

- 1966 augustus (4)
  - 1 - Genjo Koan
  - 2 - (kort)
  - 3 - Intellectual Understanding
  - 4 - Sesshin Lecture

1967 (21)

- 1967 april (2)
  - 1 - Sesshin Lecture A
  - 2 - Sesshin Lecture B

- 1967 juni (2)
  - 1 - Sesshin Lecture: Three Treasures
  - 2 - Sunday Lecture

- 1967 augustus (5)
  - 1 - The mind itself is Buddha
  - 2 - Genjo Koan 15-18
  - 3 - Genjo Koan 6 and 9-11
  - 4 - Genjo Koan 12-14
  - 5 - Sesshin Lecture

- 1967 september (2)
  - 1 - The Threefold Body of Buddha
  - 2 - Things-As-It-Is

- 1967 december (10)
  - 1 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture
  - 2 - Evening Sesshin Lecture
  - 3 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture
  - 4 - Evening Sesshin Lecture
  - 5 - Sesshin Lecture No. 5
  - 6 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture
  - 7 - Evening Sesshin Lecture
  - 8 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture
  - 9 - Evening Sesshin Lecture
  - 10 - First Shosan Ceremony at Tassajara

1968 (25)

- 1968 januari (2)
  - 1 - Ten Buddhas
  - 2 - Samantabhadra

- 1968 april (2)
  - 1 - (sick)
  - 2 - (sick)

- 1968 juni (1)  
1 - (sound problem)
- 1968 juli (2)  
1 - Buddhist Schools  
2 - Non-Sectarianism
- 1968 augustus (1)  
1 - The Bodhisattva's Ten Powers
- 1968 oktober (14)  
1 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #8  
2 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #14  
3 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #7  
4 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #13  
5 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #15  
6 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #10  
7 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #3  
8 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #4  
9 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #5  
10 - Tenryu's One Finger  
11 - The True Dragon  
12 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1  
13 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1  
14 - Fourth Lecture of Training Session at Tassajara
- 1968 november (1)  
1 - Shosan Ceremony
- 1968 december (2)  
1 - True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End  
2 - The End of the Year
- 1969 (54)
- 1969 maart (5)  
1 - Blue Cliff Record #3  
2 - Nansen's "Everyday Mind Is Dao"  
3 - Find Out for Yourself  
4 - Selflessness  
5 - Ordinary and Holy
- 1969 april (4)  
1 - The Only Desire that is Complete is Buddha's Desire  
2 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture  
3 - Why We Practice  
4 - Bodhisattva's Vow
- 1969 mei (1)  
1 - Suzuki-Roshi's 65th Birthday
- 1969 juni (3)  
1 - Find Yourself Mentally and Physically  
2 - Everyday Zazen  
3 - Study with Mind and Body
- 1969 juli (10)  
1 - The Meaning of Practice  
2 - Rinzai and Soto  
3 - Emptiness is Form  
4 - Question and Answer Session  
5 - Form and Emptiness II  
6 - Eulogy for Trudy Dixon  
7 - Shikantaza  
8 - Trip to the Moon  
9 - Blue Cliff Record #43  
10 - Question and Answer
- 1969 augustus (8)  
1 - Truth and Liberation  
2 - Change and Suffering
- 3 - Selflessness  
4 - August Sesshin Lecture  
5 - August Sesshin Lecture  
6 - Question and Answer  
7 - Liberation  
8 - Question and Answer
- 1969 september (8)  
1 - Interviews with Peter Schneider  
2 - Summer Sesshin: First Night Lecture  
3 - Summer Sesshin: Second Night Lecture  
4 - Summer Sesshin: Third Night Lecture  
5 - Summer Sesshin: Sixth Night Lecture  
6 - Summer Sesshin: Shosan Ceremony  
7 - Sharp Iron, Pure Silk  
8 - Why I Became a Priest
- 1969 oktober (1)  
1 - Question and Answer
- 1969 november (8)  
1 - Interview with Peter Schneider  
2 - Question and Answer  
3 - Form is Emptiness, and Emptiness is Form  
4 - Not Priest, Not Lay  
5 - American Precepts  
6 - Evening Lecture  
7 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part I  
8 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part II
- 1969 december (6)  
1 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part III  
2 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #4  
3 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #5  
4 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #6  
5 - True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End  
6 - To Adjust Ourselves to Our Surroundings
- 1970 (65)
- 1970 januari (5)  
1 - What is Our Practice?  
2 - Ordination Ceremony: Bill Kwong and Silas Hoadley  
3 - Rules  
4 - Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism  
5 - Effort
- 1970 februari (7)  
1 - Morning Sesshin Lecture  
2 - Afternoon Sesshin Tea Lecture  
3 - Relationship  
4 - The Background of Shikantaza  
5 - Sesshin Lecture #1  
6 - Sesshin Lecture #3  
7 - Last Lecture of Sesshin
- 1970 maart (5)  
1 - Lecture to Professor Lewis R. Lancaster's Visiting Class  
2 - Letters from Emptiness  
3 - Our Everyday Life is Like a Movie  
4 - March Sesshin: Way-Seeking Mind  
5 - Zazen is Like Going to the Restroom
- 1970 april (3)  
1 - Buddha's Birthday Lecture  
2 - Officially Opening Beginner's Mind Temple  
3 - How to Have Sincere Practice

1970 mei (9)

- 1 - Sesshin Lecture #1: on breathing
- 2 - Sesshin Lecture #2: helping others
- 3 - Sesshin Lecture #3: sincere practice
- 4 - Negative View, Positive Practice
- 5 - Zen Center and City Practice
- 6 - How to Observe Precepts
- 7 - Money and Labor
- 8 - Sandokai Lecture #1
- 9 - Sandokai Lecture #2

1970 juni (10)

- 1 - Sandokai Lecture #3
- 2 - Sandokai Lecture #4
- 3 - Sandokai Lecture #5
- 4 - Sandokai Lecture #6
- 5 - Sandokai Lecture #7
- 6 - Sandokai Lecture #8
- 7 - Sandokai Lecture #9
- 8 - Sandokai Lecture #10
- 9 - Sandokai Lecture #11
- 10 - Whole-Body Zazen

1970 juli (12)

- 1 - Sandokai Lecture #12
- 2 - Sandokai Lecture #13
- 3 - Eko Lecture #1
- 4 - Eko Lecture #2
- 5 - Eko Lecture #3
- 6 - Eko Lecture #4
- 7 - Eko Lecture #5
- 8 - Eko Lecture #6
- 9 - Japanese Way, American Way, Buddhist Way
- 10 - Mudra Practice And How To Accept Instructions From Various Teachers
- 11 - How To Understand Rituals And Precepts
- 12 - Sesshin Meeting

1970 augustus (10)

- 1 - Sesshin Lecture #1
- 2 - Sesshin Lecture #2
- 3 - Right Teaching and Right Practice
- 4 - Sesshin Lecture #4
- 5 - Priest Ordination Ceremony: Paul Discoe And Reb Anderson
- 6 - Open Mind
- 7 - Push Yourself Into Some Very Strong Hard Rule
- 8 - Lay Ordination Ceremony
- 9 - Leaving for Japan
- 10 - Lay Ordination: White Bird In The Snow

1970 december (4)

- 1 - Lecture After Trip To Japan: Zazen As Our Foundation
- 2 - What Is Self? What Is Our Practice?
- 3 - Come Back to Emptiness
- 4 - Sickness and True Practice

1971 (49)

1971 januari (5)

- 1 - Universal Self, Individual Experience
- 2 - Right Concentration
- 3 - Lay Ordination Ceremony
- 4 - Gaining Idea
- 5 - Meeting Yourself

1971 februari (9)

- 1 - Sesshin Lecture #1
- 2 - Sesshin Lecture #3

3 - Sesshin Lecture #5

- 4 - Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Page Street Apples
- 5 - Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Closing Words
- 6 - Calmness of Mind
- 7 - Buddha's Practice
- 8 - Actual Feeling of True Practice
- 9 - Maps and Trips

1971 maart (3)

- 1 - The Idea of Self
- 2 - Admonishing Our Many Wishes
- 3 - Lecture at Reed College, Portland

1971 juni (8)

- 1 - Sesshin Lecture #1
- 2 - Okesa Ceremony
- 3 - Sesshin Lecture #2
- 4 - Sesshin Lecture, Day 5
- 5 - Zen Center Students
- 6 - Sewing and Wearing the Buddhist Robes
- 7 - Sesshin lecture: sewing sesshin
- 8 - Everyday Life

1971 juli (11)

- 1 - Real Precepts Are Beyond Words
- 2 - Precepts
- 3 - Precepts II
- 4 - Non-Mystical Understanding
- 5 - Question and Answer
- 6 - San-Pachi-Nenju
- 7 - Mountains and Rivers
- 8 - Self-Centered Practice
- 9 - Blue Cliff Record #61
- 10 - Ryaku Fusatsu Lecture
- 11 - Fusatsu

1971 augustus (12)

- 1 - Words and Zen Teaching
- 2 - Translation Of Unknown Text
- 3 - Freedom
- 4 - On Bodhidharma's Day
- 5 - Bodhidharma
- 6 - Communication
- 7 - Question and Answer
- 8 - Obon
- 9 - Special and Equal
- 10 - When wind stops, flowers fall
- 11 - Sun-Faced Buddha, Moon-Faced Buddha
- 12 - Stones

1971 oktober (1)

- 1 - Suzuki-Roshi Talking to His Disciples About His Illness

## Suzuki Roshi Transcripts

Source: <http://suzukiroshi.sfzc.org/archives/>

### 1962 (1)

#### 1 - Religious Activity

Saturday, December 01, 1962

Religious Activity

Published December 1962, Wind Bell #12

The more we attempt to manage religious activity, the more we lose our fundamental way. The more we study the teaching of Buddhism as if it were philosophy, the more we lose the original teaching.

The founder of Eihei-ji Monastery, Dogen-zenji, respected students who sincerely practiced zazen (cross-legged meditation) rather than intelligent or learned students. Dogen emphasized organizing everyday life as the practice of Zen. He felt that this was the proper activity for Buddhist. When he spoke of the basic teaching of Buddhism, the transiency of life, he stressed it as an actual fact and not as a teaching of the sutras.

Dogen Zenji lost his father when he was three and his mother when he was eight. His mother was a Fujiwara, the most eminent family of the time. She had full experience of the teaching of transiency, and she wanted Dogen to be a priest of great sincerity. He decided to follow her will. After his mother died and he sat by her cold body; he reached a profound understanding of impermanence, watching a few lines of incense smoke drift. Dogen said, "I can walk on the edge of a white blade. I can do without food and drink, but it is not possible for me to forget my mother's last words."

In Zuimonki it is stated that Dogen said, "In order to have a strong introgressive way-seeking mind, it is necessary to see the transiency of life. This actual fact of life is not something conceivable in our brain or something to be dwelled on as an object of meditation. It is an actual fact. You should not wait even for Buddha's teaching."

In Denki it is stated that Dogen said, "When we are not sincere enough to be Buddhists, there is a difference between the intelligent and the dull .... If you lose your human life (Buddhahood can only be attained, when you have human life) you cannot have your life again." This way is Buddha's true teaching. We should encourage ourselves with great holy desire and devote ourselves to Buddhism under the guidance of a true master."

And again in Zuimonki he says in regard to right activity, "Some people think building a temple or pagoda means that Buddhism is prospering.

This attitude is a great mistake. Even a building of gold and precious stone is not the prosperity of Buddhism. The only prosperity of Buddhism is the practice of Buddhism, without wasting a single moment."

## **1963 (7)**

### **1963 januari (1)**

#### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #14, #15**

Tuesday, January 01, 1963

Ummon Zenji and the Teaching Given by Shakyamuni (Blue Cliff Record #14, #15)

First Question:

A traveling monk asked Ummon-zenji: What is this first teaching? (the Teaching told by Buddha during Buddha's own lifetime).

Ummon replied: The teaching confronts each. (Model Subject No. 14)

Commentary:

The teaching given by Shakyamuni Buddha during his lifetime was accommodated to each disciple's particular temperament, and to each occasion's particular circumstances. For each case there should be a special remedy. According to the circumstances there should even be teaching other than the teachings which were told by Buddha. In the light of this, how is it possible to interpret and pass down an essential teaching which can be applied to every possible occasion and individual temperament?

Second Question:

The same monk asked Ummon a second question: What would Buddha have done if there had been no one to hear the teaching and no occasion on which to apply the teaching?

Ummon replied: Topsy-turvy idea. (Model Subject No. 15)

Background: the Founding of Sects

These questions and answers are quite interesting. This questioning monk had a preconceived idea of Zen Buddhism as an esoteric Dharma transmitted through the Zen Patriarchs which is different from the teachings of other schools of Buddhism based on supposedly "dead" scriptures. Ummon's answer points out the monk's misunderstanding of

the real nature of the sects of Buddhism. (Ummon's way of Zen was quite rough, but it was rough and strong enough to support Buddhism during the severe persecutions of his time).

During Ummon's time, so-called "Daruma Zen" (Bodhidharma's Zen) was becoming known as "Soshi Zen" (Patriarchal Zen): an esoteric school claiming special transmission outside the scriptures from Buddha to Mahakasyapa to Bodhidharma and the Zen Patriarchs. The school was popular in South China because of these claims of special transmission and because of the rough and whimsical methods of instruction used by the Zen Masters of the period. Eventually this school slighted scriptures and ignored precepts on the ground of Buddha's reported statement that "words are not the first principle."

All the Sects Are One:

The first principle of Buddhism is called by many names: buddha-nature; dharma-nature; reality; voidness; too; one phrase of the pre-voice; great light; universal-nature; Butathagata; Saddharma: wonderful law or truth as revealed in the Lotus Sutra (Tendai Sect); the one vehicle which contains final complete law (Kegon Sect); True Words (Shingon sect); Anuttarasmyaksambodhi (or Anubodhi): unexcelled, correct, complete, universal wisdom of Buddha (a term often used by Dogen).

However, according to the most authentic tradition, the first principle, Buddha's teaching (as attained by Buddhas) in its pure and formless form, is not expressible by word or idea. Hence, the contribution of each sect to Buddhism is to give system to the scriptures, to set up the true words of the Tathagata (Buddha's highest title) in a consistent way so that people may understand and follow Buddha's way of life. The fundamental philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism affirms the absolute character of all phenomena and the possibility for ordinary people to attain Buddhahood.

The leading two Mahayana schools, Tendai, Kegon, applied Zen practice (Shikan) in order to attain thorough and deep insight into the Dharma. For the Shingon sect, the pure and genuine teaching is in the Dainichi Sutra because it was supposedly told by Buddha in his samadhi to himself and not to an audience. The origin of this sutra is supposed to give it incontestable importance among all the sutras, and thus the Shingon sect used it to authorize their teaching.

For the teaching of the Shingon sect to be authorized should not mean that it is superior to other sects. The Zen practice of dharma Zen transmitted from Bodhidharma may be considered different from the Zen practice of the Tendai and Kegon schools, and the idea of the dharma-nature of samadhi may provide a turning point by which to differentiate the Zen school from other schools, but this does not mean that the Zen Sect or Soshi Zen is superior to other schools. Dharma-zen

emphasizes practice instead of teaching, that is all; but this emphasis does not mean to ignore the words of Buddha.

The Nature of the Teaching:

Whatever the teaching may be: the teaching confronts each. In accordance with the circumstances, the teaching has absolute value; and to accord with the circumstances the teaching should have an infinite number of forms.

Buddhism in its pure and formless form is given to us in samadhi or zazen when we are ready to accept Buddhism without expecting anything. Buddhism is not something you will find out when you try. When you are just ready to accept it, everything you see flashes forth the great light, everything you hear is the wondrous Pre-voice. That is why we sit.

Engo-zenji, in his introduction to Main Subject No. 15 mentions the "life-taking sword" in order to clarify Ummon-zenji's answer "topsy-turvy idea." "To kill" means not to expect anything, not to put any object in front of you, and to be one with what is given to you, as if you use your own hands. "To kill Buddha" means just to be ready to be Buddha. To be ready to accept everything as it comes to you, one thing after another, is Buddha's activity. In this way the gist of the teaching does not escape you.

If you have a preconceived idea of the first principle, that idea is topsy-turvy; and as long as you try to find out what is the first principle which can be applied to every occasion, you will have topsy-turvy ideas. Such ideas are not necessary, Buddha's great light shines forth from everything, each moment.

## **1963 maart (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #19**

Friday, March 01, 1963

Gutei's Lifting Up One Finger (Blue Cliff Record #19)

Gutei lived in a small hermitage to be free from the fierce persecution of the first part of the ninth century, A.D. in China.

One day a nun named Jissai came to visit him, entering with her hat on her head and her pilgrim staff in her hand. She looked around the seat where Gutei was sitting and said, "I will take off my pilgrimage hat, if you give me a satisfactory statement." When he could say nothing, she started to leave. He tried to stop her, because it was late and dark out. Then she said, "If you can offer one word good enough to stop me, I will

be happy to stay."

When he could not, he became quite ashamed of himself and decided to leave his hermitage on a pilgrimage in order to study Buddhism some more. That night he dreamed a Bodhisattva visited him and said that an incarnate Bodhisattva was coming to teach him.

The next day the famous Zen Master Tenryu came. Gutei told him Jissai's visit and about the dream. Tenryu, in answer, lifted up one finger. Gutei was enlightened at that moment, and he said, "I have acquired Tenryu's 'one finger zen' as an inexhaustible treasure for the rest of my life."

From that time on, he answered innumerable questions by lifting up one finger.

Later to his surprise, he found one of his disciples using the same gesture as an answer to questions. So Gutei asked him a question and when his disciple answered by lifting one finger, Gutei reached out and cut his finger off. As the poor man rushed away, Gutei called him back and held up one finger. The disciple was enlightened.

Commentary by Engo Zenji:

Introducing the subject, Engo Zenji said, "If one grain of dust is lifted up, the great universe is involved. If one blossom opens, the world vibrates."

Commentary by Master Suzuki:

One gains a good understanding by approaching this statement from a scientific viewpoint. Everything in the universe is closely related to every other things and to the whole, and the whole is involved in each separate part.

Yet Engo from another standpoint raises a new problem: What happens before the speck of dust is picked up, or before the flower opens?

Here he is talking about the necessity of practice, if one is to realize the oneness of the subjective and the objective. If one does not practice, he is driven by various impetuses to repeatedly wrong activity. Ignorance causes illusive ideas which encourage wrong intellectualization and discourage right observation. It is impossible to attain Reality without being One with the objective world. When perfect acceptance takes place, there is no subjective or objective world.

In the realm of Reality there is nothing that disturbs perfect acceptance: there are no illusive ideas (which are usually) mistaken for the true nature of things. We cut off the complications caused by self-centered desires in order to allow one's own "home treasure" (oneness) to reveal



itself.

Engo refers to an ancient saying: If one snips off one place, the whole reel of thread will be cut through.

Yet here is a great problem: We are always too much concerned with the superiority of enlightenment. This concern is caused by a kind of self-conceit. We should cut off the complications moment after moment, one after another, big or small-including such egotistical ideas.

Gutei's one finger always tells us when and where the thread of complications should be cut off.

Now the chance is right here-in this moment! There is no time for anyone to use his mouth or tongue. Tremendous numbers of blind tortoises in the dark sea are landing on Gutei's one small finger, one after another.[1] There is not time for anybody to lift up another finger.

[1] There was once a tortoise living in the deep sea. It had no eyes in its head, but only one in the middle of its belly underneath. So the poor creature could not look up to see and worship the sun, and it was greatly distressed. But one day, by great good luck, a single board with a hole in it came floating by. The tortoise managed with considerable difficulty to cling onto it from underneath in an upside-down position. Thus he was able to put his eye to the hole in the board and look upwards to see the light. (This old legend of the blind tortoise is found in the Parinirvana Sutra, the Aganas, and other scriptures.)

## **1963 april (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #20**

Monday, April 01, 1963

Blue Cliff Record #20

Zen may be said to be the practice of cultivating our mind to make it deep and open enough to accept the various seeds of ideas and thoughts as they are. When this kind of perfect acceptance takes place, everything will orient itself according to its own nature and the circumstances. We call this activity the Great Activity. Reality can be said to be the bed that is deep and soft enough to accept everything as it is.

When you accept everything, everything is beyond dimensions. The earth is not great nor a grain of sand small. In the realm of Great Activity picking up a grain of sand is the same as taking up the whole universe. To save one sentient being is to save all sentient beings. Your efforts of this moment to save one person is the same as the eternal

merit of Buddha.

For a person who wants to understand Buddhism logically, it may be difficult for him to understand why he should study over and over again stories such as are collected in the Hekiganroku (BlueCliff Records). Yet, when a student realizes how difficult it is to incorporate into his daily life what he learns in these stories, he will acknowledge the necessity of practicing zazen and reading. This practice and reading will in turn encourage him to read these stories over and over again. To do this over and over means perfect acceptance. Finding out the significance of everyday activity is the Great Activity.

Today's Problem:

In Japan we call this era civilized life the "instant age" because of the prevalent idea that quick solutions to problems are possible without difficulty. This idea takes many forms-instant coffee, instant Sukiyaki, operations for physical disease, pills for mental illness. In spite of all the benefits from our civilization, it is difficult for people to remain strong enough to be happy physically and mentally. Why? Perhaps because a most important point is missing.

Support from without is sometimes too strong, sometimes too weak, sometimes only partial, and sometimes harmful to other parts. The operation must be successful and in addition the patient must survive.

The important point is to arrange ourselves from inside. Orientation from our inmost nature is wanted. The problem is how to make use of our civilization and not be ruined by it. The solution to this problem is Zazen; by sitting we have to resume to our own nature and by Great Activity we should acquire absolute freedom.

Main Subject:

Attention! Ryuge asked Suibi, "What was Bodhidharma's intention in coming to China?"

Suibi said, "Pass me the meditation chin-rest." (When a Zen monk sleeps in zazen posture, he rests his head on a wooden board called a zenpan or chin-rest.)

Ryuge handed Suibi the chin-rest and then Suibi struck Ryuge with it. Ryuge said, "If you strike me, I will let you. But, after all, that was not the intention of the patriarch coming to China.

Ryuge later visited Rinzai. He asked Rinzai, "What was the intention of Bodhidharma in coming to China."

Rinzai said, "Pass me the meditation mat." No sooner had Rinzai received the mat than he struck Ryuge with it.

Ryuge said, "If you strike me, I will let you do so; but that is not the Patriarch's intention in coming to the west."

Interpretation of the Main Subject:

According to the Appreciatory Word of Setcho, the compiler of these stories, Ryuge was struck because he did not understand why Suibi wanted the chin-rest and Rinzai asked for the meditation mat. Their treatment of Ryuge was in the realm of Great Activity and helped Ryuge understand Bodhidharma's Zen. There are no regulations in the Great Activity. A chin-rest and a meditation mat can be used for scoldings slaps.

This power of Great Activity should be acquired by meditation (sitting quietly). There was no other intention in Bodhidharma, Suibi, and Rinzai; but he knew that these intentions had nothing to do with his own Great Activity. In other words, he was enlightened in Bodhidharma's Zen.

A long time after this event, Ryuge said in his answer to a monk, "I do recognize the Great Activities of those two Zen Masters, but that has nothing to do with Bodhidharma's Zen."

## **1963 juli (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #25**

Monday, July 01, 1963

Blue Cliff Record #25

Introductory word:

Engo introducing the subject said, "If a man comes to a standstill at some stage, feeling spiritual pride in his enlightenment; he will find himself in a sea of poison. If he finds his words unable to astonish men of lofty spirit, then what he says is quite pointless.

If one can discern the relative and the absolute in the spark of a flint stone, and can apply the positive and negative way in right order, then one is said to have acquired the stage that is as stable as fathomless cliffs.

Main Subject:

Attention! The hermit of Lotus Peak took up his staff and said to the crowds, "Look at my old staff, What was the intention of the Patriarchs of former days in using their staffs?"

Since the crowds had no answer, he himself answered, "They did not have to depend on their staffs."

Then asking them what the supreme goal was, he answered for them again, "Carrying my palm-staff on my shoulder, without any compassion, I immediately enter the thousand, ten thousand peaks of the mountains."

Appreciatory Words:

With dusty eyes and dirty ears this strange old hermit did not even want to stay at the top of a lofty peak. Where is he now; in a beautiful garden full of flowers? By a flowing stream?

If you wonder with twinkling eyes, he is already beyond your sight.

Notes:

It was not right for the ancients to be attached to their staffs (practice), or to be the top of a mountain (result of practice-enlightenment). For more than twenty years this hermit gave instruction about non-attachment with his staff.

For those who understand this secret, a life of non-attachment, it may be quite an interesting problem. Yet, for one who does not understand this way of life,; the question may be a difficult one. Even if a student has a good answer for it, the answer may be as difficult for him as gold dust in his eyes.

Therefore, one day, the hermit himself answered for his students, "Because they did not have to depend on their staffs."

In these circumstances, what is non-attachment?

Once upon a time celestial nymphs poured down many kinds of beautiful flowers on Bodhisattvas and other Buddhists who were listening to Yui-ma's lecture. The flowers which fell on the great Bodhisattvas fell from their robes. However, some of the flowers remained on the robes of the other disciples, no matter how hard they tried to remove them.

One of the heavenly beauties asked these disciples why they were annoyed with the kind of gift of flowers. Sharihotsu said to her that beautiful flowers should not be on the robes of disciples who live in simplicity. It is beautiful to put ordinary fragrant flowers on a Japanese Ukata, but it is not so good to have a pink flower on a priest's robe.

At this the heavenly maids became quite angry saying, "Whatever your liking may be, a flower is a flower and is beautiful. If the flower is good or bad, it is because of your discrimination and not because of the

flower."

This statement made all the disciples except the great Bodhisattvas feel very ashamed of their narrow view.

When one keeps his pure mind on some object or movement, leaving its true nature to the object itself, the oneness of subjective and objective occur. Here exists one sole independent activity. Flowers should be left to their own colors and their own graceful movement.

The hermit should use care for his staff; yet he should neither depend on it, nor ignore it. He should treat the staff the same way he treats his breath in zazen.

In our Zazen our mind must always be kept on our breathing: the breathing should not be too long, short, heavy, or light. It should be natural. We say our exhale does not come out of the world, and our inhale does not stay in our five skandhas.

This way, when we sit, we become one with one whole world. Here the great activity takes place: the absolute independence comes true. That is why the hermit said they didn't have to depend on their staffs.

Setcho says in his Appreciatory Word on this subject, "In the beautiful garden or by the flowing stream, the hermit does not stay. He is already beyond your sight." This is the way we Buddhist should be.

## **1963 september (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #30**

Sunday, September 01, 1963

Joshu's Large Radishes (Blue Cliff Record #30)

There is no Introductory Word to Model Subject No. 30 from the Blue Cliff Records, but I will apply the following statement from a Buddhist Guide for the Layman by Sita Paulickpulla Renfrew (publisher: Cambridge Buddhist Association, Cambridge, Mass.) as an introduction.

"According to Buddhist ethics, no person or authority can ever impose upon another any code of conduct lower in morality or humanity than the individual himself wishes. Neither can anyone make another act on a higher plane than the individual himself desires. Each individual can act only according to the level of his state of evolution, and he has to live by the consequences thereof."

Main Subject from the Blue Cliff Records:

Attention! A monk asked Joshu, "I hear by rumor that you were at one time closely associated with Nansen. Is that so, or not?" Joshu replied, "Chin-shu produces very large radishes."

Appreciatory Word by Setcho:

Chin-shu produces large radishes. Monks everywhere have taken this as a model for replies. It is obvious from ancient to modern times that one cannot ask a swan why it is white or a crow why it is black.

A rascal, a rascal! He has already twisted the monk's noses.

Notes by Master Suzuki:

A student who is familiar with his own true nature will become familiar with his teacher's true nature as well as the true nature of a radish-the true nature of all existence. It is true that there should be no problem merely because one thing happens to be big and another small, or one person the teacher and another the disciple, if their true nature is the same. But what will happen if a swan is black and a crow white? It is natural for a swan to be white and a crow to be black. This is Buddha Nature.

Do not say there is no need to practice Buddhism because we have Buddha Nature intrinsically. There is Buddha Nature (eventually there is happiness) only when a swan is white, a crow is black, a human being is a human being, and a Buddhist practices Buddha's way of life.

If a Buddhist does not behave like a Buddhist, one cannot say he is a Buddhist, or a Christian. Who is he? There is no composure. Eventually he will be unable to be aware of his true nature.

In Shobogenzo "Raihaitokuzi," Dogen-zenji says, when you meet with a right teacher, who teaches you highest wisdom, you must not consider his caste or race, nor attend to his favorable or unfavorable appearance, nor consider his shortcomings. You should be respectful of him only because of his true wisdom. You should not have a feeling of aversion, but serve him and bow to him truthfully.

If you practice Buddhism without hypocrisy but with truthfulness, this truthfulness penetrates into the innermost nature of all existence and will encourage man and nature; and the true nature of man and nature will encourage your sincere practice.

This sincerity accepts the level to which we have evolved, wakes up our slumbering moral faculties, and extends our true nature beyond the discrimination of good and bad, perfect and imperfect. You will always have a good reaction with continuous Zen practice.

## 1963 november (1)

### 1 - Blue Cliff Record #36

Friday, November 01, 1963

Cho-sha's "Strolling about Mountains and Waters" (Blue Cliff Record # 36)

Attention! One day Cho-sha went for a walk. When he returned to the gate, the gate-keeper asked, "Sir, where have you been walking?" Cho-sha said, "I have been strolling about in the hills." "Where did you go?" asked the gatekeeper. "I have walked through the scent of herbs and wandered by the falling flowers." said Cho-sha. The gatekeeper said, "Very much like a calm Spring feeling." Cho-sha said, "It transcends even the cold Autumn dew falling on the lotus stems."

Setcho, the compiler of the Blue Cliff Records, adds the comment, "I am grateful for Cho-sha's answer."

Commentary by Reverend Shunryu Suzuki, Master of Zen Center:

"Strolling about mountains and waters" means in Zen the stage where there are no Buddhas or Patriarchs to follow and no evil desires to stop. Not only climbing up a mountain or wandering about waters, but all activities of Cho-sha are free from rational prejudices and emotional restrictions. His mental activity is free from any trace of previous activity. His thinking is always clear without the shadows of good and evil desires.

It is important to have a good memory and to be able to go into every detail of activities so that effective decisions can be made. Yet one's mind cannot respond to the coming of new objects into the consciousness if it is full of the traces of former thinking. It is useless to remember everything. There is no point in remembering things just so we can cry, be jealous, or be proud. The mind should be spotless so that everything may be observed as it is. If the mind is free from the traces of past thinking and is always clear, without tainted ideas or desires, then mind will always be calm and natural like the flowers that come out in Springtime or the red leaves that turn in the Autumn. Your mind and your nature will have the same pace.

When you have reached this stage, your everyday life is called the life of yusan gansui-the life of wandering about mountains and waters. Cho-sha's answer, "I had walked through the scent of herbs and wandered about by falling flowers," refers to his well-trained everyday life which surpasses good and bad experiences and is always calm and clear.

The gatekeeper's reply that this is "very much like a calm Spring feeling" suggests Cho-sha is attached to the calm Spring feeling when his mind should always be like a mirror reflecting everything as it is,

transcending forms, colors, and feelings. So Cho-sha replied meaning that: the state of mind expressed in my statement that I have walked through the scent of herbs and wandered by the falling flowers transcends the warm Spring feeling and the cold Autumn feeling when icy dew is on withered leaves and stems of the lotus.

Engo's commentary says, "The first arrow is shallow, the second one is deep." Yet we must know the pain by the first arrow (statement). Because the gatekeeper did not appreciate fully Cho-sha's second statement, Setcho in his commentary says, "I am grateful for that answer."

Appreciatory Word by Setcho:

The Great land[1] transcends its small dusts.[2] What man's eyes are not open? Following the herbs and wandering around by falling flowers. [3] The enfeebled stork flutters around a cold withered tree. The mad monkey chatters on a balcony.[4] Oh! Cho-sha's impossible way of putting things into words.

TOTSU! [5]

[1] "Land" can mean a well-trained Zen mind.

[2] "Dusts" are evil desires, anger, ignorance, stagnation, agitation, doubt, remorse, etc.

[3] This remark of Cho-sha' means that his mind is always one with falling flowers and the scent of herbs (outward objects). There is no trace in his mind of former activity.

[4] This is Setcho's or Cho-sha's remark is better.

[5] TOTSU! is a kind of exclamatory word or scolding voice. Sometimes it is the same as KATSU! It is shouted in order to cut off entanglements completely. In this case, Setcho means infinity or endlessness.

## **1963 december (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #40**

Sunday, December 01, 1963

Rikko's "Heaven and Earth are the Same Essence" (Blue Cliff Record # 40)

Rikko is said to have lived from 764-834. He was a high official of the tang government in china. He was a disciple of Nansen Fugan. His writings and biography are in Koji-buntoruko. There were many famous



lay Zen Buddhists during the Tang Dynasty. The most famous of these lay Buddhists are:

Ho-Koji (Ho-un)--see Model Subject No. 42

Kak Rakten (Hak-Kyoi)--the most famous writer and poet of the Tang Dynasty.

Haikyū--Highest public official of the time. His teacher was Obaku (Huang Po).

Haykyū--Compiler of Obaku's Denshin Hoyo (a collection of sermons and dialogues).

Riko--a high official and the scholar author of Fukuseisho

Sai Gun--a high official and scholar

Chinso--see Model Subject No. 33

Sojō was one of the four most famous disciples of Kumarajīva, who came to China in 401 from Kucina, near Tibet. Kumarajīva and Genjyō were epoch-making translators of Buddhist scriptures. Kumarajīva translated many of the Vaipulya scriptures and sutras of the Prajñā Paramitā group. The Prajñā Paramitā Hidraya Sutra (Shingyō), which is said to have been translated seven times, was also translated by Kumarajīva, but his translation is said to be lost.

Nansen Fugan (748-834) was a disciple of Baso. See Model Subjects No. 28, 31, 40, 63, 64, 69.

Introductory Word:

Engho, introducing the subject, said: When complete liberation from the cord of desires takes place, and when there is a perfect cessation of effort motivated by wrong desires, then, even from an iron tree, blossoms might open out. Is it so? Is it so? Even a very artful or clever boy may make a mistake because of his cleverness. Even if one's skill is tactful enough for free activity in seven vertical and eight horizontal, one will still be led by the nose. Think where is the fault? Ponder the following:

Main Subject:

Attention! While conversing with Nansen, the official Rikko said, "Sojō said that heaven and earth and I are the same root--all things and I are of one substance. This is a wonderful statement."

Nansen called Rikko over to him, pointed to a flower in the front garden and said, "People of this time who see this flower are like men in a

dream."

#### Appreciatory Word:

Seeing, hearing, and knowing are not the same. Mountains and rivers do not see a mirror even though they are in a mirror. The frosty sky, the setting moon, and the middle of the night: with whom shall I share the coldness of the clear depths of the reflected shadows?

Commentary by Reverend Shunryu Suzuki, Master of Zen Center:

Sojo's famous statement in his last work that 'Heaven and earth and I are the same root.

All things and I are of one substance is wonderful, when it is not applied to Rikko's own attached view of the oneness of all things being in the realm of the explicable. As long as Rikko clings to the ideal of oneness, he is said to still be making an erroneous effort motivated by wrong desires or craving. This attachment will lead to disappointment, even though the idea of oneness is not wrong.

Rikko should try to know why he clung to a particular idea, and he should try to follow the way to attaining singlemindedness free from points of view. This effort is necessary if he is to have full appreciation of Reality. Because people and Rikko seek for temporal satisfactions from a worldly view-point, cling to their own stand-points, and do not follow the right way practicing zazen with perseverance, they cannot see things as they are. So Nansen pointed at a flower and said, "People of this time who see this flower are like men in their dreams."

Setcho, in his Appreciatory Word, brings each phenomenal existence into the realm of Reality and stresses the independent meaning of things. He said, "Seeing, hearing, (smelling, tasting, etc.), and knowing do not take place in the same realm. Mountains and rivers do not see (depend on) a mirror. (A mountain is a mountain, a river is a river, and a mirror is a mirror). Late at night when frost is everywhere, the moon is setting, everything is sleeping, with whom shall I share the severe coldness of the reflected shadows (each phenomenal existence) in the clear water (in the realm of Reality)?

## **1964 (8)**

### **1964 februari (1)**

#### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #46**

Saturday, February 01, 1964

Blue Cliff Record #46

Attention! Kyo-sei asked a monk, "What is the sound outside the door?" The monk said, "It is the sound of raindrops." Kyo-sei said, "All sentient beings are deluded by the idea of self and by the idea of the world as subjective or objective (as permanent).

Commentary:

Kyo-sei has seen through the monk, who thinks he is not caught by the "objective" sound of the raindrops, but he who actually is caught by the sound of raindrops in his subjective world.

The monk said, "How about yourself?" (In other words, "I have the raindrops in my clear mind. How about you?") Kyo-sei said, "People may say I am not deluded by myself or by the raindrops." (Original text says: "I am almost not deluded myself.")

Commentary:

Kyo-sei is just listening to the sound of raindrops. There is nothing but raindrops.

The monk said, "What do you mean by: you are regarded not to be deluded yourself?" The monk cannot understand why Kyo-sei doesn't say definitely that he is not deluded by himself and that he hears the raindrops clearly in his mind.

Kyo-sei said, "Even though it is not difficult to be free from the objective world (and to make a clear statement) it is difficult to express reality fully on each occasion.

GIVE THE MONK 30 BLOWS!

IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPRESS REALITY FULLY ON EACH OCCASION!!!!!!!

Commentary:

When my master and I were walking in the rain, he would say, "Do not walk so fast, the rain is everywhere."

Appreciatory Word:

When the voice of the raindrops covers the whole world, even an expert cannot give any answer (because he himself is also the raindrops).

Even though you say the voice of raindrops is nothing but your mind, that is not a perfect answer (of full understanding). Southern and Northern mountains, all over the world, are covered by the heavy rain.

## 1964 maart (1)

### 1 - Blue Cliff Record #49

Sunday, March 01, 1964

San-cho and "The Golden Scales" Escaping from the Net (Blue Cliff Record #49)

Introductory Word:

Engo introducing the subject said: Seven piercings and eight holes, snatching the drums and carrying off the banner (in war-time to pierce the enemy's lines in seven or eight places and to snatch the enemy's drums and banner is metaphorically compared to the great activity of San-cho in the main subject). A hundred ramparts and a thousand entrenchments, watching the front and guarding the rear (comparisons to Sep-po's way of attending to San-cho). Or sitting on the tiger's head and seizing its tail: such is not good enough to compare the great activity of skillful Zen Master (San-cho). Even though an ox-head disappears and a horse-head appears, this would not be miraculous enough (in comparison to the skill of Sep-po). So ponder what you will do, if you come across a man of such surpassingly great activity.

Main Subject:

Attention! San-cho asked Sep-po: "What (Why?) does a mysterious golden-scaled carp escaped from the fishing net cast? " Sep-po said, "I would like to wait for your coming out of the fishing net and then answer you." San-cho said, "You, who have fifteen hundred disciples do not understand what I say." Sep-po said: "this old monk is too busy in managing temple affairs to attend to you."

Appreciatory Word (by Set-cho with notes by Reverend Suzuki)

"Do not say that the golden carp which has jumped out of the fishing net is staying quietly in the water. (He is) loosening the heavens. moving the earth, shaking his fins, opening out its tail." (This refers to San-cho's statement: 'You who have 1500 disciples...etc') "Spouting water to a thousand feet, a great white whale will leap through the flood. After a great thunderstorm, a cool wind came." (This refers to Sep-po's statement: 'This old monk is too busy...etc.')

"Oh this wonderful pure clean wind, who knows the mystery of such tremendous cleansing power!"

Interpretation of Main Subject (A direct translation of Engo's remarks in the 'Hyo-sho', with some notes by Reverend Suzuki).

Sep-po and San-cho--with questions and answers, giving and taking, crossing words with one another--neither won nor lost. Just think what kind of wisdom they have. San-cho had received Rinzai's transmission

and had traveled many places. It is no wonder that he was treated as a high monk. Look at the following questions and answers made between Sep-po and him. Perhaps not many people can understand the deep meaning of this dialogue without being in the realm of radical Buddhism.

San-cho asked Sep-po: "What does the mysterious golden carp escaped from a fishing net cast?" Now ponder what he meant. What is the food for the golden-scaled fish? Sep-po, who was also a great master said to San-cho: "I would like to wait for your coming-out from the net and then answer you."

Fun-yo called the kind of question that San-cho asked, "a question presenting one's own understanding," (and in the Soto school they called this kind of question a "metaphorical question.") You may say that San-cho was a great golden-scaled carp escaped from the fishing net with a great incomparable wisdom and activity. However, Sep-po, a skillful master, did not give San-cho full play, saying: "I will wait for your coming out of the net." Look! Those two masters are standing at the top of the ten thousand feet cliff!

However, but for San-cho's next instantaneous statement, the question and answer would not make full sense. San-cho said to Sep-po: "Although you are a teacher of fifteen hundred students, you do not know how to question and answer." To this Sep-po said: "I may have been mistaken to listen to you, because I am very busy in managing temple work." Look! He became very droll!

In the manner of confrontation of the two great masters' skill, there are no restrictions: sometimes grasping, sometimes granting, to the strong with the weak, to the humble with the polite. According to the circumstances, they express themselves at their own will. If you try to understand this subject with the idea of winning or losing, you will never see San-cho, even in your dreams.

"Such is the two well-trained Zen masters' way," said Engo, "at first they are tough and later droll. Do you still ask which has won or lost? The way of confrontation between other Zen masters is not always like this."

In order to make clear what a good Zen master San-cho was, Engo then said: Once San-cho was a head monk of Rin-zai's monastery. When Rin-zai was about to pass away, he gave his students the last sermon and said: "After my Nirvana, you should not destroy the treasury of my right Dharma eye." San-cho came up to him and said: "How dare we destroy it?" Rin-zai said: "If someone asks you about my right dharma eye, what will you say?" San-cho gave a "Katsu!" (a loud shout). Rin-zai then said: "Who would expect that my right Dharma eye is going to vanish into that donkey's belly!" Hereby San-cho made obeisance to Rin-zai (to show his utmost respect to Rin-zai). San-cho was Rin-zai's true successor, and questions and answers between them were like this.

## FROM A LECTURE

[The following is the gift of Reverend Suzuki's response to a question from one of his students during the Wednesday evening Lecture, February 26. The question refers to the lines from Engo's appreciatory Word:

"After a great thunderstorm, a cool wind came,

Oh this wonderful pure clean wind,

who knows the mystery of such tremendous cleansing power!"]

QUESTION: Is it necessary to go through thunder and storm in order to attain the clear calm healing wind?

ANSWER: Not always. If there is no thunderstorm, you cannot undergo it! Once when I was travelling alone in Northern Japan, I met a man accompanied by a dog held by a great dog chain. The first thing he said to me (we were on a boat going to a small island) was "Be careful, the dog is very dangerous!" We became good friends. He told me that if it was my business to save all common people, then I should know what happened to them. I had to experience what they experienced. He, for instance had women and drank sake. I should practice the same in order to understand him.

If the occasion comes to drink, it may be all right. If you have to do something, if it is inevitable, then there is the possibility of real training. But if I drank sake in order to train myself, then I would not be doing it in the same way as he. It would not work, he agreed.

It is dangerous to undertake something on purpose in order to yourself. We monks go to Eihei-ji monastery for training but it is not always successful! If you go of your own will, often there is wrong motivation. You expect something when you have completed it; you expect to gain enlightenment or improve your character or something.

It is quite dangerous. You must be very careful on your motivation when you do something on purpose. If we have had wrong motivation, then when we come out of the monastery, we become arrogant or conceited. We have spiritual pride in what we have done. That is very dangerous.

There are many ways to train. The monastery is a good one. While you are there, you have to do many things. You know, if you walk through the fog, your garments will become wet, without any effort or being conscious of it, they quite naturally become wet.

That is why we begin training with the basic teaching of transiency: There is no self and all things are changing. If you really understand

these two points, and if you just remain faithful to the truth, you will be rid of useless ambitions and one day acquire good character.

Sometimes we want hard training. If you are in discomfort or pain then it might be quite difficult to accept the fact of no self. If your legs hurt you want you want to have the stick on your shoulders. It takes your mind off your legs; it is a very kind thing that stick. Thus, sometimes we want hard training; but if you have the right attitude in all you do, you will be successful in your training of yourself.

But I do not ignore the thunder or the rainstorm. It is quite interesting to walk in the storm and rain.

## **1964 april (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #52**

Wednesday, April 01, 1964

Joshu's "Donkeys Cross, Horses Cross" (Blue Cliff Record #52)

Jo-shu (Personal name: Sramanera) of this subject was a native of Northern China. When he was ordained (at quite a young age), he visited Nan-sen with his master. "Do you know the name of this monastery?" asked Nan-sen, who had been taking a nap in his room. The boy said, "Sacred Elephant Monastery." "Then did you see a sacred elephant?" asked Nan-sen. The boy replied, "I did not see any sacred elephants, but I saw a reclining bodhisattva." Nan-sen raised himself up and said, "Have you your own master now?" "yes, I have, said the boy. "Who is he?" asked Nan-sen. To this the boy Sramanera made a formal obeisance which should be given only to his own master, saying, "Spring cold is still here. Please take good care of yourself." Nan-sen called up Ino-osho (who took care of the monastery) and gave him a seat.

One day Nan-sen allowed Jo-shu to meet him in his room. Jo-shu asked Nan-sen, "What is the true Way?" "Ordinary mind is the true Way," said Nan-sen. "Is it something to be attained or not to be attained?" asked Jo-shu. "To try to attain it is to avert from it." said Nan-sen. "When you do not try to attain it, how do you know the true Way?" asked Jo-shu. To this question, Nan-sen's answer was very polite. "The true way is not a matter to be known or not to be known. To know is to have a limited idea of it, and not to know is just psychological unawareness. If you want to achieve the absolute, where there is no doubt, you should be clear enough and vast enough to be like empty space." Hereby Jo-shu acquired full understanding of the true way of Zen.

When Jo-shu was sixty-one years of age, he heard that his former master in his hometown was not well, and he went all the way back from South China to take care of him. His parents heard about his coming back from the South and wanted to have him home. But as soon

as Jo-shu learned of his parents' wishes, he left his old master before they came.

He used to say, "I must ask my way from a child of seven, if he is good enough. But I shall be a teacher of any old man of a hundred years." At the age of eighty he resided at Jo-shu (North China). He appreciated the bare life of ancient patriarchs and used only a broken-legged chair, repaired by a piece of firewood. Throughout the forty years during which he lived the simplest form of life in Jo-shu monastery, he never wrote a single page of a letter, begging for his support.

### Main Subject

A monk said to Jo-shu, "The famous stone bridge, I have just seen it; but it was nothing but a simple stepping-stone bridge," and requested his answer. Jo-shu said, "you did see a simple stepping-stone bridge, but did not see the actual bridge." The monk then asked, "What is the stone bridge you mean?" Jo-shu said, "It is that which donkeys cross and horses cross."

### Commentary by Reverend Suzuki

This monk came to Jo-shu ignoring the great master's prestige, and said "I did not see anything but a common stepping-stone bridge," and requested his answer. Jo-shu in return gave him an interesting gift problem, saying, "You did not see the real stone bridge, but only a stepping-stone bridge," Now the monk was caught in Jo-shu's gift-box of duality (intellectual problem: right or wrong, this or that, phenomena or noumena, interplay of the subjective and the objective) and asked, "What is the real stone bridge?" Now Jo-shu, wishing to free the monk from the idea of some special stone bridge, answered "Donkeys cross and horses cross."

This usual manner of instruction is not like Toku-san or Rin-zai, who answer by means of sticks or scolding voice, Jo-shu just answered with simple common words. This 'koan' looks quite common, but it does not allow you to become accustomed to it.

Once Jo-shu asked a head monk of the Zendo (Zen practice hall) who it was who had built the stone bridge. The head monk said "Riyo built it." Jo-shu asked again, "When he was building it, on what did he work? (i.e., did he work on subjective bridge or objective bridge or what?)" The head monk could not answer. Jo-shu said, "people talk about this stone bridge, but when asked this kind of simple question, they cannot answer."

One day when Jo-shu was cleaning the main hall a monk came and asked him, "Why is there dust in the hall to clean?" Jo-shu said, "because dust comes in from the outside." The monk said, "I cannot recognize pure clean hall to have dust in it." Jo-shu said, "I see one



more piece of dust here." Those were the old Zen master Jo-shu's way.

The Zen master is supposed to be tough enough to remain faithful to the way, but all the better to be not so tough and follow the way.

Appreciatory Word by Set Cho:

Without setting himself up as an isolated peak,

Old Jo-shu's Zen is insurmountably high.

Who knows he is catching giant turtles,

In the vast ocean of Buddhism?

That old scholar Kan-Kei may be compared to Jo-shu

Only to make us all laugh.

Suddenly breaking the arrows was quite futile.

NOTE:

Kan-Kei (895) was a disciple of Rin-zai, and contemporary with Jo-shu. He was asked a question similar to the one Jo-shu asked in the Main Subject. Kan-Kei's question and answer was as follows: A young monk: "I have just come from the famous Kan-Kei Valley, but I saw nothing but a small lake."

Kan-Kei: "But didn't you see the real Kan-Kei Valley?"

The young monk: "What is the Kan-Kei Valley you mean?"

Kan-Kei: "Breaking the arrow suddenly."

## **1964 mei (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #53**

Friday, May 01, 1964

Blue Cliff Record #53

Introductory Word by Engo

Introducing Engo said, "Obtaining the sole existing independent body, the total free activity takes place." (When you become one with an object, your activity is omnipresent, the activity of one existence.) "On each occasion, an enlightened mind is quite free from intercourse with the world." (This is called intuitive free activity.) "Only because he has

no idea of self are his words powerful enough to put an end to ordinary mind." (Baso's powerful way in this main-subject.) Think for a while. After all, from what place did the ancients get the ultimate restfulness. Ponder about the following subject.

### Main Subject

Attention! Once, when Baso was walking with his disciple Hyakujo, wild ducks were flying over them. Baso, the great teacher, said, "What are they?" Hyakujo said, "They are wild ducks." Baso said, "Where are they going?" Hyakujo said, "They are flying away."

Baso gave Hyakujo's nose a great tweak. Hyakujo cried out with pain. Baso said, "Did they indeed fly off?"

### Note by Reverend Suzuki

Baso Doitsu (709-788) was a man of mighty physique. It is said that his eyes were like a tiger's eyes, that he walked like a bull, and that his tongue reached to his nose when he talked. He was the chief disciple of Nan-gaku Ejo (?-755) and spiritual grandson of the Sixth Patriarch, Daikan Eno (638-713). During his life under the patronage of the Tang emperors, Buddhism in China was spreading rapidly.

His posthumous name was Daijaku Zenji. (Zenji means Zen Master). One hundred and thirty nine disciples attained enlightenment under him. Hyakujo Ekai was one of his five most outstanding disciples. (Banzan Hoshaku, Model No. 37; Mayoku Hotetsu, No. 31, Nansen Fugan, No. 28, 31, 40, 63, 64, 69; Taibai Hojo). It has been 1050 years since Hyakujo Ekai Zenji passed away. In Japan this year they held big memorial services for him in many Zen temples.

Hyakujo established for the first time monastic rules in a special monastery for Zen monks in a more suitable and advanced understanding of Vinaya. Before Hyakujo almost all Zen monks practiced zazen at temples of the Vinaya school.

Hyakujo's way of Buddhist life is not altogether the same as the Indian way of devotional life. In China, one of the most important practices for a Zen student was physical labor or to work on building a temple. This kind of work was thought to be wrong activity for monks in India. These Chinese monks must have appreciated a cup of tea after their hard work. It was from this practice and the certain deep way in which their appreciation was expressed that the tea ceremony developed.

Buddhism became more a part of practical life and was expressed as near-at-hand truth in such ways as "have a cup of tea" or "if I do not work one day, I do not eat one day."

Hyakujo had practiced Zen under Baso for 20 years. there is no break in

Zen practice. Who but alert Zen Masters, would know that by these wild ducks was meant Buddhatathata. Hyakujo was too truthful to his teacher's question to realize the secret point, and he said, "They are wild ducks." Baso was pleased with his disciple's usual innocent answer; but as an efficient teacher of a good student, he had to be a poison oak. So Baso said, "Where are they going?" This is a so-called old woman's kindness or to go into a donkey's belly. In the realm of Buddhatathata (reality), there is no where to come from for the ducks; but from the standpoint of the relative there are ducks flying away over their heads. For a good Zen Master like Hyakujo, his way should always be free, sometimes relative, sometimes absolute. But instead he always remained in the relative way of observance. Baso wanted him to get over the relative by himself. That is why Baso put to Hyakujo a strong relative question expecting a kind of strong absolute answer. But Hyakujo remained in his pure complete innocence and presented a relative answer, "They have flown away." So at last Baso gave Hyakujo's nose a sharp tweak with his big hand and Hyakujo cured out with pain.

Thereupon Baso said, "Have they indeed flown off?" and enlightened Hyakujo (who acquired the free activity of Baso--see Introductory Word).

Baso and Hyakujo, a teacher and a disciple, had practiced together for twenty years. It was sincere Hyakujo who fulfilled the absolute request of his teacher Baso. It was kind Baso who recognized his disciple's train of relative effort and helped to switch him over to the full awakening of relative and absolute. They are good example of the relationship between a teacher and a disciple.

When we come to a thorough understanding of the oneness of the relative and the absolute, we will realize that what Baso said was right because of Hyakujo's enlightenment. Or it may be said that the wild ducks did not fly away because Hyakujo's true practice. In short, Hyakujo completed this relative conversation provided by Baso. Here is the true sense of the oneness of practice and enlightenment.

Appreciatory Word by Setcho

Oh wild ducks! How many of you understand them? Baso saw them and started the conversation with Hyakujo. His great tongue covers the mountains' clouds and the moon above the vast ocean with a lofty sentiment. But Hyakujo remained unaware of his true nature and said the wild ducks were flying away. Indeed! Except for the tweak and the pain, their true nature would have flown off. What else would you say bit to cry out: Say! Say something!

**1964 juni (1)**

**1 - Blue Cliff Record #51**

Monday, June 01, 1964

Seppo's "What is it?" (Blue Cliff Record #51)

Seppo was a good example of a well-trained Zen Master. "Three times a visitor to Tosu and nine times an attendant to Tozai," became one of the catch-words of Zen practice signifying Seppo's hard discipline.

He was born in 822 and died in 908 near the end of the tang Dynasty. The Emperor was killed by Shuzenchu in 904. The next and last Emperor of the Tang Dynasty, supported by his traitor, lasted for only four years. A dark restless period followed the tang Dynasty. A severe persecution occurred when Seppo was twenty years old (845). Metalware throughout the land was turned into coin, including temple bells and images of Buddha, 4,600 temples were destroyed, 26,500 priests and nuns were cast out of the order along with 2,000 priests of other religions except Taoist.

The other principal character of this model subject, Ganto (828-887), was killed by a mob. He was a good friend of Seppo and they had both been born in the province of Fukien. Both went on long, hard pilgrimages from northeast to southeast China, visiting many famous masters. As stated, they are said to have visited Tosu Daido three times and Tozen Ryokai (Soto School) nine times. You may imagine how hard they practiced.

Later they were handed down Tokusan Senkan's transmission. When Seppo was 44 and Ganto 38, they left Tokusan and started pilgrimages again. At Gosanchin they were caught in a heavy snowstorm. Seppo was sitting all the while Ganto was sleeping. Ganto said to him, "This village is like a fortified town, why don't you sleep?" Seppo, rubbing his breast said, "I do not feel easy in my heart." Ganto answered, "Please tell me one by one what you have acquired."

Seppo told Ganto what he had experienced under Tozan and Tokusan, but Ganto did not agree and said, "the treasures that come from outside are not your family treasures." Seppo was enlightened by this statement. He was 44 years old.

The following year they left with Kinzan Bunsui, their best friend who had become Tozan's disciple, for further study at Rinzai's temple. On the way they heard that Rinzai had died. Ganto went on to Ryuzan near Lake Dotei, Kinzan went back to his temple, and Seppo returned to the south.

When Seppo was 47 he secluded himself at a stone cave which had been the first residence of his old master Reikun. When he was 54 he had his own temple beautifully built on the top of a mountain. At the age of 60 he had 1050 students, one of whom was Ummon, founder of the Ummon School. A purple robe was presented to him by Emperor

Kiso. His posthumous name is Shinkaku-daishi (Great Master Shinkaku).

### Introductory Word by Engo

Engo introducing the subject said, "If you are caught by the slightest idea of good and bad, your mind (true mind, essence of mind) will be lost in the realm of disorder. If you do not have an idea of the order of stages, there will be no purpose in your practice. Now which do you think is better, to pursue the relative way or to resume to the absolute?"

[Note: The relative form and color that you see now are the conditioned attributes of the unconditioned--constant--absolute. The absolute is the eternal unconditionally that gives rise to the conditioned, relative ways of practice. What you see now is the eternal unconditionality of the absolute and the momentous conditioned relative. Actually the positive or relative way is not different from the negative or absolute way. Even though you follow the order of the stages in your actual practice, if each relative stage, even the first stage, is brought out in full relief against the darkness of the absolute, and if there is no fumbling and groping in your practice under the right teacher, then your practice is already in the realm of Reality. Each relative stage bears the full meaning of the absolute and the absolute reveals its actual meaning in the relative practice. If you wish to understand this secret, you must study under the right teacher not only by words but also by actual conduct on each moment under particular circumstances.]

To continue with Engo's introduction, he said, "If you become attached to some particular way of expressing Zen, captivated by something told in words or verse, attached to some method of instruction (scolding voice, slapping face, seizing by the collar and casting off, drawing a circle, lifting up one finger, etc.) you are nothing better than the parasitic weeds wrapped around dead trees. Even if a man thinks that he is living in the land of Tathagata itself, when he is possessed by the idea of this land or that land, he is said to be watching the moon of his old home which is now ten thousand miles away. Well, have you understood what I am saying? If not, here is an actual koan for you to ponder."

### Main Subject

When Seppo was in his hermitage on Mount Seppo, two unnamed monks visited him and bowed to him (what is the bow). Seppo saw them coming, pushed open his gate, jumped out, and said, "What is it?" (An indicative question[1], a question and yet an answer, do you understand the real Seppo? Tell me what it is. "He is an iron flute with no holes," Engo said.) The two monks said, "What is it?" (The two monks did not fail to respond, but Engo says, "They are old sounding-boards covered by velvet." They were chalk and not cheese.) Seppo made a bow to them and went back to his room. Engo said, "This is not a dragon because it has no legs, but it is certainly not a snake because

it has no horns." I say, "What is it?"

The two monks later extended their travels to visit Ganto in Ganto Mountain. Ganto said, "Where did you come from?" (Ganto has already caught them). The monks said, "We are from Reinan." (Be quick and give him a right answer.) Ganto said, "Then you must have met Seppo, haven't you?" (It is very kind of him to wait for their right answer.) The monks said, "Yes we have." (He was not asking them yes or no, but whether they had understood the actual Seppo.) Ganto said, "What did he say?" They told him all about what had happened when they visited Seppo. Ganto said, "What did he say after all?" thus requesting their final answer. But they said, "He did not say anything." He bowed and went back to his room. Thereupon Ganto said, "Oh, what have I done? When I was at Tokusan with him, I should have let him know the verse of my dying bed. If only I had told him that, he would not have been thrown into such confusion." (Although Ganto mentioned Seppo's name, he actually meant to give the monks his own last word. Then, what is his last word?)

The two monks were allowed to spend the summer at Ganto's monastery. At the end of the session, the two monks asked Ganto's instruction about the meaning of Seppo's unusual behavior and what Ganto had meant by: How I wish I had told him my last word. Ganto said, "Why did you not ask me before?" They said, "Because we thought your last word too valuable to ask about." Thereupon Ganto said, "Seppo is a fellow countryman of mine. He and I always went on pilgrimages together, yet we will not die together. If you want to know my last word for Seppo and you, I will tell you what it was. It is nothing but: This is it."

Wherever Seppo and Ganto might be, however long they might live as the best friend of each other, what Seppo did is actual Seppo and what Ganto did is actual Ganto. "This is it" should always be the last word for oneself and for others.

Dogen-zenji said, "Breathing in or breathing out, after all, what is it?" No one can tell what it is.

Now, you may not be calm or patient enough to wait for the right answer, but let us ask ourselves if our activity is either subjective or objective. Let me point to this: What do we mean by "it"? Do you mean breathing itself or the idea of breathing. If you mean the idea of breathing it will be another matter. If you mean breathing itself each moment, you have solved the problem already when you breathe in and out on each moment in calmness with Big Mind. Now, you will understand that the right answer to "What is it" should always be "This is it."

Ganto was killed soon after leaving his last word to his friend Seppo.

This translation and commentary are my poor offering to these two great masters.

Appreciatory Words by Setcho

Referring to Ganto's last words to Seppo,

I will ask you, Enlightened Mind,

Is daytime different from nighttime or the same?

Even though they lived fully acquainted with each other

In complete companionship,

They were to die in different places. Yes.

They should die in different ways.

Buddha should have curled hair,

Bodhidharma should be blue-eyed.

From East, West, South, and North let us

Come back to our old home,

In a mid-night sky to see

A plain white

Mountain covered with snow.

[1] Indicative: (gram.) stating a thing as a fact, not as conception, wish, etc., of speaker; suggestive, giving indications. [Oxford English Dictionary.]

## **1964 augustus (1)**

### **1 - The Traditional Way**

Saturday, August 01, 1964

The Traditional Way

Summary of Reverend Suzuki's Sesshin Lectures by Nota bene.-Trudy Dixon

Zen Center's annual week Sesshin (concentrated period of meditation)

was held this year from August 10 through August 15th. During the Sesshin, the main theme of the daily lectures given by Master Suzuki was The Traditional Way of Buddhism transmitted from Buddha down through the Patriarchs to the present day. His opening talks concerned the sutras and rituals which are part of the daily zazen practice in the zendo of Soko-ji Temple. The following is a rough paraphrase of some of what Master Suzuki said.

To understand what the "Traditional Way" of Buddhism is and to actualize it in one's own life are the most important points in being a sincere Buddhist. The Traditional Way of Buddhism, although it is dependent upon no particular form for its expression, the sutras and rituals handed down to us from the Patriarchs are a great help to us. A part of the ritual which may be particularly difficult for Americans to understand and accept is the bowing. After zazen (sitting meditation) we bow to the floor nine times in front of Buddha's altar, each time touching the forehead to the floor three times and lifting the palms of the hands. (The story of the origin of his practice is that during Buddha's lifetime, there was a woman who wished to show her respect for Buddha, but who was so poor that she had no gift to give. So she knelt down and touching her forehead to the floor spread out her hair for him to pass over. The deep sincerity of the woman's devotion inspired the practice of bowing to this day). In our American culture there are no traditional forms through which we are accustomed to show respect towards a Buddha--a human being, who was not a god and who nevertheless attained perfection. Lacking such forms, there is a danger of neglecting or forgetting to respect Buddha, the Perfect One. This kind of respect is an essential part of the Traditional way. If we practice zazen just for the sake of our own self-improvement or to attain Enlightenment, our practice will be one-sided, and the true spirit of Buddhism will be lost. Because in America there is particular danger of this one-sidedness, we bow nine times to Buddha after each zazen practice, when in Japan it is customary to bow just three times.

Reverend Suzuki's own master, Ian Kishizawa, greatly stressed the importance of bowing in practice. (He himself developed a visible callus on his forehead from his practice of bowing!) Bowing to Buddha is actually to bow to oneself-to one's true nature. You, yourself, are Buddha. In a later lecture, Master Suzuki said that a common misunderstanding of the practice of bowing arises from our dualistic analyzing of the experience of bowing. We always think, "I bow to Buddha." But actually, when you bow, as Buddha himself did, there is no you and there is no Buddha; there is only the independent act of bowing which covers unlimited time and space.

But to say that you and Buddha are one can lead to another misunderstanding for someone who does not have the experience of zazen practice. It is true that you yourself are Buddha, and yet at the same time you are also Buddha's disciple. In the sutras, this is expressed by the words: "Not one; nor two." You and Buddha are one



and at the same time two. If your tendency in practice is to there is no good or bad, right or wrong, then the sutras say to you: "Not one?" (i.e., you are not just Buddha, but also Buddha's disciple; you are taking the lazy way out of practice and not trying hard enough; your understanding of Buddha nature and the deep truth of "no good, no bad" is very superficial). On the other hand, if you are unduly discouraged and self-critical, and dismiss your practice as not very good, then the sutras say to you: "Not two." (i.e., you and Buddha are one; on each moment of your practice, Buddha nature is there, whether you are aware of it or not. It is Buddha himself who is practicing zazen; how can you say that it is not good?) These two aspects of reality--the duality of oneness and the oneness of duality--are essential to a true understanding of our bow based on the experience of zazen.

After bowing, the Prajna Paramita Sutra is recited three times: once to Buddha and his first disciples (Arhat); once to the Patriarchs, and once to our ancestors. The Prajna Paramita Sutra is the teaching which Buddha, after his Enlightenment, gave to his disciple, Sariputra, saying: "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." One meaning of this sutra is that our ordinary perception and understanding of things is illusory. Usually we do not perceive things as they really are. We mistake for real and permanent what is actually constantly changing. This is true of human beings too when they are caught by the idea of self. This theory of the transiency of all things is one of the basic tenets of Buddhism, and an understanding of it is essential to follow the Traditional Way.

Before breakfast at the weekly Saturday morning meditation practice, and before each meal during sesshin, sutras and gathas are chanted. One of the most important phrases in these chants is: "May I, along with all sentient beings, achieve renunciation of the three attachments." "Renunciation" can also here be translated "emptiness" or "detachment." The three attachments refer to the three aspects of giving and receiving: the giver, the receiver, and the gift which is given. Giving should be a free act, unhindered by calculation of amount or reward. The receiver likewise should not be greedy; he should be grateful for what is given to him, but on the other hand he should not be overly humble. And we should not discriminate the gift itself. The attitude of renunciation or detachment consists in not evaluating the thing as good or bad. (Thus it is helpful in our practice to recite these words before each meal).

After going over the sutras and rituals, Master Suzuki devoted the remaining lectures to general discussions of the Traditional Way to help us understand how we can actualize it in our daily lives. The following is the gist of his talk on Wednesday evening of sesshin.

In the morning we say the Prajna Paramita Sutra the first time to Buddha and the Arhats (the first disciples). Part of the prayer that the priest or leader of zazen says at this time is that we may attain sah-myō roku-tsu. San-myō means the three powers of mind; roku-tsu means

the six powers of mind; the former contained in the latter. Power of mind means the power to fully understand sentient beings and our own human nature. The first power of mind is the capacity of sight and the second power is that of hearing. To understand someone we must first see with our own eyes and then hear what they say with our ears. The third power is the cognitive capacity to understand the words that we hear. The fourth power is to understand what is really meant by what was said. (Not just to understand the word, but to understand what the person means to say by them.) The fifth power is to comprehend the mind of the person speaking and to understand why he suffers. Finally, the sixth power is to perceive nature as it really is—as pure Buddha nature itself.

In order to obtain to the sixth power of mind, it is necessary to annihilate all evil desires and all thought of self. The way to its attainment is understood in different ways by the Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhists. For Hinayana Buddhists, the lower powers of mind are hindrances to the attainment of the sixth power of mind. But to the Mahayana Buddhist, when you see or hear or think, it may be done in the sixth way. For the Hinayana the lower faculties are obstacles and the seat of evil desires; they tend to take an annihilistic attitude with regard to them. The Mahayana attitude is more positive and not so strict in the physical sense. But with regard to the idea of self, Mahayana is more strict than Hinayana. The sixth power is emancipation from all ideas of self; to perceive in the sixth way is to see or hear or think, but not from an egoistic or self-centered point of view. To have any idea of self involved in your perception is to be prey to evil desires; what you then perceive is not reality and you can have no true understanding of human nature or sentient beings.

There is an old Chinese story which illustrates the power of mind or understanding when one is truly free from any idea of self. A famous old Zen master, Esan was taking a nap, his face to the wall. His disciple, seeing that he was asleep, passed by very quietly to avoid awakening him. But Esan turned over and soon awoke. His disciple said: "Oh, did I disturb you? Why not sleep some more." But Esan only answered: "I had a wonderful sleep and dream; do you know what it was?" His disciple at these words, left the room without replying and came back with a basin of fresh water and a towel. Esan washed his face saying: "That's wonderful!" The a second disciple came into the room. Esan asked him the same question: "I had a good sleep and a wonderful dream; can you tell me what my dream was?" The second disciple left the room and came back with a cup of fresh tea! Esan was delighted with his two disciples. He said: "Why, my two disciples are even better than Sariputra!" (Sariputra was one of Buddha's first disciples, a disciple of great Mahayana spirit, the one whom Buddha addresses the Prajna Paramita Sutra.)

This story has deep meaning. Most people want to help others and try very hard. But it may be quite difficult to know how to help people. In

order to help another it may be necessary truly to understand him. For this, the sixth power of mind, or absence of any idea of self is necessary. Our Traditional Way transmitted from the Patriarchs is the way of the sixth power of mind. When you are one with what you are doing, there is no idea of self. The transmitted way of practice is to become one with what you are doing, and to practice without cessation to express this oneness. To do something is to help others, and at the same time to help yourself. When you sleep you help yourself, and you help others too. When you take a cup of tea, you help others and you help yourself. Even if you sit alone in the zendo (meditation hall, you are helping others. And even if you do something quite different, you are sitting in the meditation hall. Practice is one. It is continuous and uninterrupted; there should be no discrimination of activities. Your attitude when helping yourself should be the same as when you help others. You are all quite sincere when you are helping yourselves; how about when you are helping others? We find it easy to want to help those we like.

So practice is not just to come to the zendo and sit in meditation posture; it is everything you do in your everyday life. It is, for example, to anticipate the wish of someone and bring a bowl of water, if such an activity be done with true zazen spirit (without thought of self). If your attitude is right, when you help another, you help yourself and vice versa. Sitting in zazen is the easiest, safest way to help yourself and others. It may be pretty hard to help others by kind words, by giving some good gift, or in some special way. Trying to help often creates more problems than it solves. But if you sit in zazen you will come to respect yourself and others will then respect you. Then you can help them quite freely and naturally, without imposing any burden or obligation or gratitude. (In Model Subject 39 of the Blue Cliff Records (Hekigan Roku), Ungan asked Dogo: "That great Bodhisattva of Mercy (i.e., Avalokishevara, Kwan Yin or Kwannon, often represented with one thousand arms and one thousand eyes, symbolizing the all pervading-mercy) how does he manage to use those many hands and eyes (in helping sentient beings)? Dogo said: "It is like when, in the dark night, we straighten out our pillow with our hand (though not being able to see with our eyes).

If you think zazen is some particular thing you are doing right here, you are quite mistaken. Practice is each moment every day all year long; over and over we repeat our activity. Our practice is like 10,000 miles of iron road. We run on iron tracks in a straight line, never stopping. The tracks are iron, not gold or silver. There is no special way for sages and another for fools; both are the same train. There is no special person for Buddhism, Buddhism is for everyone; there is no special activity of sitting for Buddhists--everything you do should be practice.

You remember the famous Zen master Joshu, the one who always sat in a broken chair. Once a young monk came to visit him, and Joshu asked: "Have you had breakfast?" Joshu was not talking about rice-gruel (but

rather enlightenment)! But this monk was very brave and confident, and he answered: "Yes, I have!" (i.e., I have attained enlightenment and know everything and am quite ready to converse with you on any subject!) Joshu replied: "Well then, wash your bowl!"

That is our way--step by step. After eating, wash your bowl. It is always the same on the same iron road. Sometimes you want to take an airplane, but that is not the right way! You should always stay on the train.

There is an old story about three animals crossing a river: a hare, a fox, and an elephant. The hare skipped across the surface (using stones?); the fox swam across, but the elephant walked slowly steadily across, touching bottom with each step. The Traditional Way of Buddhism is the last, and in our practice we should all be elephants.

## **1964 november (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #73**

Sunday, November 01, 1964

Baso's Four Propositions, One Hundred Negations (Blue Cliff Record # 73)

Enso's Introductory Word

Introducing, he said: The true preaching of Dharma goes beyond preaching or not preaching (true preaching is not preaching). True listening to Dharma is not only a matter of listening or not (true listening is no listening). If the true word is beyond perception (true preaching is no preaching), it may be better not to speak. If true listening is something other than listening or not (true listening is not listening), it may be better not to speak.

However, to speak of Dharma without saying anything about it, and to listen to it without ideas about it are perfect ways to transmit right Dharma. This no-preaching and no-listening is all that is needed.

Well, you are in my monastery and listening to my words. But how can you avoid the difficulties to have perfect understanding of right Dharma by words.?

If you have the wisdom to get through these difficulties, I will introduce you to an example to ponder.

Notes by Reverend Suzuki on the above translation.

1. I gave a free but faithful rendering of the original text according to the instruction of my Master , Kishizawa Ian-roshi.

Usually no is negative, but no at the same time is a stronger affirmative than yes. It means emancipation from yes and no. No word means right word under some circumstances, and at the same time, under other circumstances, it means that the connotation of the word should be denied. Saying no form, no color, should be understood in the same way.

2. Sentences in the parentheses are important parts which I translated literally.

3. At the same time, this no gives new life to dead Buddhist ivory-tower philosophy, and to rigid moral concepts and formal rituals. The constant practice of this no has been the history of Buddhism.

### Main Subject

Attention! A monk asked the great teacher Ba-so: "I am not asking you about the Four (negative) Propositions, and the One Hundred Negations (of Nagarjuna). But please point out the intention of Bodhidharma's coming to the West (China).

Ba-so said: Today I am very tired and I cannot explain it to you. Go get an answer from Chi-zo. The monk went to Chi-zo and asked him the same thing. Chi-zo said, "Why did you not ask the Great teacher?" The monk said, "I did, but he told me to come to you." Chi-zo said, "Today I have a headache and cannot explain the matter to you. Go ask E-kai (Hyaku-jo). So the monk asked E-kai who said, "I do not have anything to answer in this realm." The monk went back to Ba-so and told him the whole story. Ba-so said, "Chi-zo had a white head, and Hyaku-jo a black head."

Notes by Reverend Suzuki on the above.

The Four Propositions and One Hundred Negations of Nargajuna are as follows:

1. Everything that is, does not come out from itself. (singularity)
2. Everything that is, does not come from something else. (plurality)
3. Everything that is, does not result from adding one thing to another. (existence)
4. Everything that is, does not come out from nothing. (non-existence)

About these propositions, four types of statements can be made: affirmative, negative, affirmative and negative, and the negation of both affirmative and negative.

$(4 \times 4 = 16)$

About these sixteen, three kinds of statements can be made: past, present, future.  $(16 \times 3 = 48)$

And about these forty-eight, there can be two aspects: the actual (the real), and the potential (the ideal).  $(2 \times 48 = 96)$

Together with the original four propositions there are 100 negative propositions.

$(96 + 4 = 100)$

After all these efforts, still we cannot identify either ontological or phenomenal existence, and we cannot find any reason to be attached to some special metaphysical entity or to the phenomenal world.

However, in Note 1 of the Introductory Word, I have explained the true meaning of Buddhist negation. Negation after negation, we turn over and renew our perception and pre-conceived ideas: in other words, wiping out mirror-like mind in each moment, we can observe everything as it is.

Here everything as-it-is means everything means everything as-it-should-be, because everything as-it-is-in-the-usual-sense always should be negated, one thing after another-even though we are concentrated on one thing. The result of the practice of negating everything-as-it-is-in-the-usual-sense is what we mean by everything-as-it-is. The-way-everything-should-be should be accepted as the-way-everything-is. This acceptance should be the most important point in Nagarjuna's Middle Way.

When we practice zazen in the right way, this acceptance takes place. In the realm of Zen-mind, transmitted from Buddha to Buddha, from patriarch to patriarch, there is no noumena or phenomena, no subjectivity or objectivity, no object to be criticized or subject to be critical. Here we come to the true understanding of the so-called non-attachment or oneness-of-duality. In its true sense the Middle Way, which is beyond the Four Negative Propositions and One Hundred Negations, is not different from the transmitted way of zazen. This is the so-called 'Intention of Bodhidharma's coming to the West' or shobogenzonehanmyoshin.

But En-go presents us-his students-with a problem of whether this monk did understand the true meaning of the One Hundred Negations, when the monk asked his question. If he had had a true understanding of Nagarjuna's One Hundred Negations and had asked about our traditional way of practice., his questions should have been at the same time an answer to his own problem. So En-go says: If I had been the monk, I would have bowed three times, as soon as Ba-so said

something.

Taking up again the thread of the subject, the monk who thought he knew what the One Hundred Negations were, did not have a true understanding of them at all. And he asked, "What is Bodhidharma's zazen?" Ba-so who knew that this monk was not prepared to listen to the right Dharma, did not answer the question. He only said, "Today I am very tired so I cannot explain it to you. Go ask Chi-zo."

True expounding of Dharma is not done only by preaching. In everything we do at the monastery we should express the true Dharma. The true study of Buddhism is not studied by mouth and ears. To stay at a monastery without knowing one is always amidst the Dharma is quite useless. To seek for Dharma without knowing one is always exposed in the voiceless voice of Dharma was what the monk was doing. Ba-so and his two disciples Chi-zo and Hyaku-jo wanted him to stay out of this kind of delusive study of Zen. This why Ba-so said, "I don't feel well, go get an answer from Chi-zo."

When Chi-zo found the monk coming from Ba-so, in spite of Ba-so's kind instruction, he must have felt helpless and said: "Today I have a headache and cannot explain it to you. Go ask Hyaku-jo."

So the monk went back to Hyaku-jo who, not liking to expose the true way in useless discussion, said, "No understanding is my understanding in the realm of reality."

The monk then went back to Ba-so, the Great Teacher, and told him the whole story. Ba-so said: Chi-zo the white-headed, and Hyaku-jo the black-headed.

I visited the Cambridge Buddhist Association. In Cambridge there is a Cambridge Buddhist Association; in San Francisco there is Zen Center. There is one and yet two, two and yet one, as they should be, as everything is under some particular situation.

Bodhidharma's intention in coming to the West cannot be understood by people who seek Buddhism without knowing Buddhism is everywhere. Salt is white chemical, nearly the same as sugar in appearance. If we do not know which is which, we try a little on some food. We do not take the salt alone, but always with food, as something other than a white chemical, as, maybe, the most important seasoning in our actual life. It is in oceans, rivers, plants, trees, in everything. It is in every food we take. Without salt nothing exists. We say a pickle is salty and that cake is sweet, but in cake there is salt, it makes the cake more sweet.

This is why Ba-so said, "Chi-zo the white head-gear, and Hyaku-jo the black head-gear."

Without the spirit transmitted from Bodhidharma, there is no black-

hatted Chi-zo or white-hatted Hyaku-jo. Chi-zo should be Chi-zo and Hyaku-jo should be Hyaku-jo.

Our traditional way of understanding is not different from being concentrated on the actual fact which we face on each moment.

## **1964 december (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #75**

Tuesday, December 01, 1964

Blue Cliff Record #75

Introductory Word:

The treasure sword always is present (beyond oneness and duality). It is a life-taking sword and yet a life-giving sword. Sometimes it is here (in the teacher's hand) and sometimes there (in the student's hand); but this make no difference. gaining or losing it and its positive and negative use are at each other's disposal. Just consider! How do you make good use of the Treasure Sword without attaching to the idea of host and guest, or integration and disintegration?

Note by Reverend Suzuki:

In the last Wind Bell, in the discussion of Model Subject No. 73, I explained the Middle Way or negative aspect of life, which provides us with the full meaning of life in various circumstances. In this Introductory Word, En-go presents the same aspect under the name of Treasure Sword.

These subjects are koans to which Zen students devote themselves with great effort. It is important to confront yourself with the experiences of the old Zen students by reading these stories over and over again. I shall be very glad if you will give my writing your critical attention.

Main Subject:

Attention! A monk from Jo-shu's temple came to U-kyu's place. U-kyu asked him: "Is there any difference between my way of Zen and that of Jo-shu?" The monk said: "No difference." U-kyu said: "If there is no difference, why don't you go back to Jo-shu?" and then he gave this monk a good slap. The monk said: "If you staff had an eye to see, you could not have delivered such a wanton blow." U-kyu said: "Today I have given a wonderful slap," and he gave the monk three more whacks. The monk went away.

The story to this point is perfect, but it continued in this way: As the monk was leaving, U-kyu said: "Originally a blind staff was something



with which to slap someone." The monk turned back and said: "A man with a dipper is handling the situation." (This means U-kyu has taken some leadership in the situation). U-kyu said: "If you want the staff, this jungle monk will let you have it." The monk came up to U-kyu, seized the staff and gave him three blows. U-kyu said: "Oh the blind staff! The blind staff! The monk said: "Here is someone who has been hit." U-kyu said: "This monk was hit without reason." The monk immediately made obeisance to him. U-kyu said: "Well, well! Is this all?" The monk went out with a roar of laughter. U-kyu concluded, saying: "So it is! So it is!"

Note by Reverend Suzuki:

As you know, after an unknown southerner came to the north and received the transmission from the Fifth Chinese Patriarch, Zen divided into two schools: the Southern School and the Northern school. The U-kyu of this subject was a southerner and a disciple of the fifth Patriarch. The difference between the Northern and Southern Schools was as great as that between a dragon and a serpent. The Northern School was called the Gradual School while the Southern School was called the Sudden School.

A monk came to U-kyu's place from Jo-shu's temple hoping to study a different way of Zen. U-kyu gave the monk an unexpected question. He asked if there was any difference between his own way of Zen and the way of Jo-shu. But the monk's answer, that there is no difference, is not at all a common answer, when there is indeed a great difference. This monk might have been an extraordinary one. Only a tactful master like U-kyu, would have been able to manage him. Thus U-kyu acknowledge the strength of the monk and gave him the meaningful slaps. The monk appreciated the meaning of the tactful U-kyu. There is not the slightest gap between these two masters' activities.

However, in the realm of the ultimate integration of the powers of teacher and student, one goes with the other. (Refer to Chan and Zen Teaching, Second Series, p.127, and to my interpretation of Model Subject No. 73 in the last Wind Bell). In this realm, nothing takes its own form. The absolute negative aspect is the opposite of the first part of this subject where a good teacher gave a good slap to a good monk; and in the second part, an aged U-kyu was slapped by a bad student with a blind staff. But nothing is wrong with these tactful masters. Sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes in order and sometimes reversed, their great activity has no special regulation. When such activity of two masters ceases to be curios, you will get the gist of our traditional way. All the mysterious powers and faculties depend upon this secret.

The blind staff in this Model Subject means right Dharma--which can be likened to an invisible wedge for the dualistic world: a wedge which gives rise to good and bad, love and hatred, favorable and adverse: the dualistic conflict of the amicable worldly affairs; and yet which keeps

the strict unity of our existence.

In the second part of this subject, the situation between the master and the monk changed under the blind staff. The monk seized the staff and struck U-kyu who had offered his own staff to him. Here U-kyu said: "Oh, the blind staff! the blind staff! the monk said: "Here is someone who was hit by it." U-kyu said: "This fellow (U-kyu) was hit without reason." Here we see the blind staff playing the leading part of the role. U-kyu was at one with this monk, and the monk was at one with the blind staff, the symbol of the traditional way. In En-go's Introductory Word, by the 'Treasure Sword' he meant this blind staff. [See Introductory Word to this subject.]

The monk immediately made obeisance to U-kyu. U-kyu said: Well, well! Is that all?" The monk went out with roaring laughter. U-kyu concluded the subject saying: "So it is! So it is!" This 'So it is' is not simple. Let us see Set-cho's appreciatory word.

Appreciatory Word:

It is easy to attract (a serpent by calling with a flute). It is difficult to turn loose. Look carefully at the well-integrated power (of the two). Even though the kalpa-stone is hard, it may be worn away. Even though the ocean is deep it may be dried up. But U-kyu's way will never cease. Oh aged U-kyu! Aged U-kyu! One after another, how many variations have you in your way; if only you had not given that dipper to the monk. (Set-cho is creating a problem for us students.)

## **1965 (7)**

### **1965 februari (1)**

#### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #82**

Monday, February 01, 1965

Dai-Ryu's Immutable Law-Body (Blue Cliff Record #82)

Introductory Word:

Introducing En-go said; Only a man with open eyes knows the catgut line of the fishing rod. Only an advanced mind catches the true idea of the extraordinary procedure. What is the catgut line of the fishing rod and the extraordinary procedure?

Main Subject:

Attention! A monk asked Dai-ryu, "The physical body is disintegrating, but what about the immutable spiritual body?"

Note:

As you may see, this monk is apparently asking a question based on a dualistic idea: an immutable spiritual body and as a disintegrating physical body. However, not speaking of Zen experience or pure Enlightenment, according to the Buddhist philosophical canon: every existence has the same essential nature which is spiritual and physical, permanent and impermanent.

The constituents of every existence are supposed to be the five aggregates (skandas): matter (rupa), feeling (vedana), ideas (sanja), volition and other faculties (samskara), and pure sensation and consciousness (vijñana). Each existence is spiritual as well as material because these constituent elements are sense data itself or the so-called five doors. These elements are not substantial or idealistic, but are pure momentary flashes (of appearance) in the phenomenal world.

Space and time are the same as each existence, and existence can be viewed in two ways: One is as an endlessly changing continuity (in this sense nothing really exists); and the other view is that the world is an eternal moment: each existence manifested in each moment and manifested again in each successive moment. These two views are two sides of one coin, but for this Model Subject let us concentrate on the second view. From this view each momentary existence seems to be independent and disconnected from existence in successive moments. In each moment each existence is perfect and immutable. Although this is true, each existence arises moment after moment contiguous to the existence which came before it and to the one which will come after it and also concurrent with all existences in each moment. Between each successive manifestation of existence there is no connection and yet there is a connection which is in a realm beyond our intelligibility.

This is an intellectual interpretation of the non-duality of duality. Our intellectual desire for the non-duality of duality is really at the same time an absolute desire for attaining the oneness of duality in the pure experience of Zen practice, and our intellectual desire gives rise to right effort (to improve our true Zen life).

However, when the monk asked Daio-ryu, "The physical body is disintegrating, how about the Immutable spiritual body?" his intellect was content with an external observation of the world. His practice was probably aimed at the attainment of some psychological state, and was probably not based on the inmost claim of the essential nature of all existence (as we have discussed it).

There is a saying that if you want a true answer and true meaning, don't ask a question which is based on a dualism (some aspect of a dualistic

conception of the world). You cannot understand the meaning of our existence with dualistic ideas. But when you are through with dualistic conceptions and have attained the non-duality of duality, then you will understand the true meaning of the phenomenal world as well as the immutable Law-Body (Dharma-kaya Buddha).

Dai-ryu knew that if he answered the monk's question in a dualistic form, the monk would not be able to get free dualistic ideas, and so Dai-ryu turned to an immediate fact of phenomenal beauty.

It might have been a chilly Spring morning when some early bird was singing, that Dai-ryu gave the monk his beautiful answer, that on the hillside the wildflowers open up like a piece of brocade and down in the ravine the limpid stream never ceases being violet-blue.

Appreciatory Word of Setcho:

Innocent question of an ignorant monk. An accurate answer is given to the point. The moon is cold and the wind is high. Of the cold cypress trees on the sheer frost-bound cliff. isn't it wonderful not to say anything even though you happen to meet an enlightened master! Dai-ryu held the white jewelled whip in his hand and broke the pure black horse pearl. If he had not broken the pearl, it would have caused as many crimes as there are sentences in the three thousand clauses of the law of the country.

Note:

The monk's mistake was that he didn't know how to raise his question about the true way. He was asking a question only with his intellect. Dai-ryu's answer was so precisely to the point that there would have been no time for even an alert fellow to make a retort. His answer is said to be like moonlight which passes through pure water to the bottom without disturbance.

Do not say I practice zazen for a certain time, in a certain place and posture. If you have no time to spare for Zen practice, if you have no zendo, or if you lose your legs, what will you do? Zen is the practice of all existence with everything else, stars, moon, sun, mountains, rivers, animate and inanimate beings. Sometimes the pain in our legs practices zazen. Sometimes our sleepy mind practices zazen on a black cushion, on a chair, or even in bed.

Zen practice for the purpose of obtaining a sort of psychological tranquility or joy or power is called Shu-zen, and is not our true Zen practice.

Each one of us is an independent existence and yet at the same time not separated from other existences. If you find someone suffering, you will naturally be involved in the suffering. When all sentient beings are

in the midst of suffering, how is it possible for you to be free from suffering. However, if only you practice zazen when you are suffering, the suffering mind will practice Zen instead of you. In other words, the suffering you have, will drive and help you to attain the singularity of your mind.

On the other hand, if you practice zazen to overcome your suffering, or to keep suffering away from your self, then suffering or the fear of suffering will prevent you from attaining the singularity of mind. We must know that all the difficulties we have are incitements to right zazen, and not obstacles. Even though you can attain the oneness of your mind, this state of mind may be some special psychological tranquility or joy to which will be attached. Set-cho says such a state of mind is a pure black horse pearl which should be broken by Dai-ryu's white jewelled whip.

Once you attain singularity of Mind, then oneness of mind and body, oneness of the subjective and the objective world, and the oneness of duality is also attained. You accept everything as it is. Everything that exists is your own.

Should you expect some outside help? Should you expect to attain something especially valuable only for you, knowing that it will create anxiety about losing it?

This is why Dai-ryu said, "On the hill mountain flowers are coming out. Down in the ravine indigo pure water is flowing."

In his Appreciatory Word about Dai-ryu's answer, Set-cho quotes Kyo-gen (famous for attaining Enlightenment hearing a stone hit bamboo), "Wonderful not to say anything to an Enlightened master whom you may happen to me!"

## **1965 april (1)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #84**

Thursday, April 01, 1965

Yu-Ma's "The Doctrine of Attaining Non-Duality" (Blue Cliff Record #84)

This Model Subject is about the Yui-ma-kyo (the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra). This sutra is as famous as the Sho-man-gyo (the Srimala-simhanada Sutra). Both sutras relate stories reputed to have taken place during the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, and both have great Mahayanistic spirit. The hero of the Yui-ma-kyo, Yui-ma, was a "ko-ji" (a householder or lay Buddhist), while the heroine of the Sho-man-gyo was a daughter of King Ha-shi-noku (prasenajit) and empress of a king in a neighboring country. She became an adherent of Buddhism and received "juki" (recognition as one who will achieve Buddhahood), and

gave her people a sermon about Mahayana Buddhism in the presence of Buddha.

When Yui-ma was ill, Buddha told his disciples and Bodhisattvas to visit him in his sickbed, but no one could accept the order because they had had a bitter experience with the lay Buddhist before. And his illness was a very unusual one: he was suffering the suffering of all sentient beings.

Mon-ju bosatsu (Manjusri), the Bodhisattva of the Zendo (Zen practice hall), at last came to visit him accompanied by thirty-one fellow Bodhisattvas. Mon-ju bosatsu found Yui-ma in a large vacant room. When he asked what Yui-ma's illness was, Yui-ma said that he was suffering from the same illness of all sentient beings and because sentient beings suffer he suffers. He said that he wanted to provide a perfect remedy for all who suffer from ignorance and passion. After asking questions and giving answers to each other, they revealed how to attain a true understanding of the non-duality of phenomena.

To these two typical Mahayana sutras and to Myo-ho-rence-kyo (the Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra), the famous Japanese prince Sho-toku (574-622) who built Ho-ryu-ji, (the oldest wooden temple in the world), wrote a commentary and delivered lectures to the Empress Sui-ko. This is regarded as one of the three best commentaries in India, China, and Japan. The prince set up the constitution of old Japan based for the first time on the spirit of those sutras.

The ninth section of Yui-ma-kyo is entitled "Doctrine of entering into non-duality", and this is also the title of our Model Subject No. 84.

Introductory Words:

Introducing Engo says: There is nothing to be decided upon as right (unattachment) or wrong (non-discrimination). If we get away from right or wrong and forget all about attaining or losing, we will become utterly naked and independent. Now what is in front of us and what is behind us? Some monk may come out say: In front of us there are the Worship Hall and the Temple Gate, and behind us there are the Sleeping Room and Sitting Room of the Head Monk (Ho-jyo). Can you tell me that this monk has open eyes or not? If you can, I will allow you to see men of old (Yui-ma and Mon-ju).

Note:

"Ho-jyo": Literally "ho-jyo" means a ten-foot square room in Chinese or Japanese. It now means the sitting room of the resident monk or priest. Sometimes we address the resident monk or priest himself as "Ho-jyo." The source of this Zen Buddhist custom originated in a very dramatic story about Yui-ma of this subject, a story which likewise can be found in the Vimalakirti Sutra. Yui-ma is said to have been living in a ten-foot square hut in Vaisali and at one time would have accepted 32,000

guests in it! (32,000 means innumerable or all sentient beings; in his room Yui-ma suffered their suffering).

"Oneness of duality": This doctrine is the essential teaching of Buddhism. Oneness and duality are two sides of one reality. Reality has two inseparable sides like a paper-slide picture. Both the reading side for a teacher and the watching side for children are needed. If one side is set apart from the other, it is no longer a paper-slide picture. One side of Reality is diversity, and the other side of it is universality. When universality reveals itself in the diversity phenomena, then we have universal validity which at the same time has the deepest personal meaning. Universal truth is perceived as unique and personal to yourself alone. Enlightenment is the acceptance of all teachings as if they were only for you yourself. From this acceptance springs a great gratitude to all the Buddhas.

Above the earth there is sky, below the sky there is earth. In the light there is darkness, in darkness light. The sun shines on the moon, and the moon reflects the sunshine. The good exists because of the bad; the bad exists because of the good. There is nothing good or bad by itself. If you have understood what is good, you have understood what is bad. The good is something you want to do, and the bad is something you do not want to do. Once having decided to do or not to do something, it is what you actually do that counts. Within this comprehensive understanding of reality, everything that exists will in its true sense be the aim of your activity and will encourage your practice.

Main Subject:

Attention! Yui-ma-kitsu (Vimalakirti) asked Manjusri: "What is Bodhisattva's doctrine of attaining non-duality?"

Manjusri said: "In my comprehension, on each doctrine there should not be any word, any verses, any interpretations or any understandings. This is the true entrance to the doctrine of non-duality, and all discussion about it makes no sense. This is the doctrine of attaining non-duality."

Then Mon-ju asked Yui-ma-kitsu: "Each one of us already has finished giving our interpretations; what is your explanation of this doctrine of the oneness of duality?"

Here Set-cho said: "What did you Yui-ma say? Did you understand?" (Set-cho was the compiler of the Blue Cliff Records).

Each one of the Bodhisattvas had tried their interpretations on the supreme doctrine of non-duality. When Yui-ma was asked to give some interpretation to the doctrine, he did not say anything about it. None of the other interpretations were better than the silence of Yui-ma.

If you understand this Model Subject in this way only it may not be perfect, because Yui-ma's silence was not just to keep his mouth still. Set-cho was very kind to us just to leave this point to our own effort, so that we would not be caught by Yui-ma's powerful silence. Yui-ma's way, including his silence, is a good example of the Bodhisattva's way" to help others before helping himself, through suffering the same suffering with others, in accordance with the circumstances and the temperament of the people.

Appreciatory Word:

Totsu! Foolish aged Yui-ma![1] Grieving for the people who suffer in vain,[2] he helplessly laid himself in the sickbed at Vaisali. His whole body was withered and exhausted. When the teachers of the seven Buddhas came, he tidied[3] up his room thoroughly. earnestly he asked them about the doctrine of obtaining non-duality, but when he was asked back about it, he seems to have collapsed.[4] However, he was not broken down.[5] Even the Golden-Maned Lion (Bodhisattva Mon-ju) could not follow in Yui-ma's track.

[1] An ironical eulogy by Set-cho of Yui-ma, who is a good example of the Bodhisattva.

[2] See the quotation from Dogen's Shobogenzo, below:

After all, Yui-ma's silence and his illness should be understood not just as the "finger to point at the moon," but also as the actual practice of the ultimate teaching of Buddha. This is the Bodhisattva's way which is neither for yourself nor for others, but for Buddhism. Dogen-Zen master says: "When you practice right practice, your inner treasure house will open by

itself and the treasures will offer themselves for your free use (Oneness of duality)."

"By the Awakening of the Wisdom-Heart is meant the earnest desire to save all beings, even before we ourselves (laymen and priests) have attained Enlightenment. Anyone who cherishes this desire is the great teacher of all living beings. Even a little girl seven years old may be the teacher of four classes of men. This spirituality has nothing to do with sexes or age in the law of the supreme teaching of Buddha (Duality of oneness)."

"The Buddha Sakyamuni is to be found in one's own mind. Find out what this one mind is, and by so doing you will show your gratitude to the Buddha." (Dogen).

[3] He cleared up his mind of discriminating ideas, of gaining or losing,



good or bad, and waited for Buddha's disciples' visit.

[4] When Mon-ju was asked about the doctrine of obtaining non-duality, he said: "No words, no verses, no interpretations." But Yui-ma did not say anything when he was asked back about it, just as if he had collapsed. But his "no answer" in this case was the best relish ever given by any disciple of Buddha to the eternal teaching of non-duality.

[5] However, later, even Zen students became attached to his silence without knowing that we should realize the same truth even in the prattle of an old man. Set-cho is said to be very kind in that he did not say anything about Yui-ma's silence so that his students would not be attached to the practice of silence alone. When Mon-ju was talking about the ultimate teaching, the whole world was nothing but Mon-ju's and there was no Yui-ma; and when Mon-ju and the other disciples of Buddha were listening to Yui-ma, the whole universe was Yui-ma and there were no disciples of Buddha. For this reason, you should say that before Mon-ju disappears Yui-ma appears expressing one whole universe in different connotations. This is called the oneness of the duality or the doctrine of non-duality. The Bodhisattva's way of life is supported by this truth.

## **1965 juli (4)**

### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #86**

Thursday, July 01, 1965

Blue Cliff Record #86

Unmon Bunen (?-949) was a disciple of Seppo and founder of the Unmon School, one of five schools of Chinese Zen Buddhism (Rinzai, Igyo, Unmon, Hogen, and Soto).

During the political confusion at the end of the Tang Dynasty all the major schools of Chinese Buddhism (Tendai, Hosso, Ritsu, and Shingon) were in decline, except Zen, which was strengthened by the persecutions and the difficulty in traveling to escape persecution and to visit and to visit various Zen Masters. The hard practice of Sep-po and Un-mon during that time has been and still is a good example for all Zen students.

Introductory Word:

Introducing, Engo said: To control the world without omitting a single feather, to stop all the streams of passion without losing a single drop, this is the great teacher's activity. If you open your mouth (in a dualistic sense) in his presence, you will fall in error. Hesitate and you will be lost. Who has eyes to penetrate barriers of this kind? Ponder the

following.

Commentary by Master Suzuki:

"Control" needs some explanation. The man who has realized the wisdom and virtue of the single-Buddha-mind in which every existence is one, does not think, speak, or act in a dualistic way because his view of things, including himself, is based on the inmost request (the activity of buddha-nature, or the experience of buddha-nature as the inmost request) of the self-sufficient mind.

Things are usually viewed as either positive or negative, material or spiritual, objective or subjective. The positive materialistic way of life may be more common and naive than the so-called negative spiritual way of life, and may involve us in innocent but terrible competition. Eventually this competition requires from itself a restrictive power. At least a person in a summer resort cannot be regarded in the same light as a deer in the mountains. In the negative way of life there may be a resistance to materialistic power or an indefinite feeling of helplessness in the face of materialistic power.

Although amicable and sweet, the more primitive materialistic man is doomed to feel criticized by himself and by others (from inside and outside his heart). Although pure and immaculate, the spiritual man will be condemned completely by material power insensitive to any spiritual subtlety; or he will become lost in a sort of materialistic merry-go-round.

Accommodation of these two opposite aspects will not satisfy our inmost desire. When such accommodation is successful it will result in depravity. When the accommodation is unsuccessful, the friction of the opposites will kindle a formidable destructive fire. It is impossible to ignore these contradictory aspects of our visible world, because they are based on our inmost request for life.

A deeper understanding transcending successful or unsuccessful accommodation of these aspects is needed. Even though everything is observed through sense organs in a necessarily dualistic way, it is possible to not be limited by the duality of the sense world. It may come through hard practice, but the ordinary observation of our world with our sense organs is at the same time holy.

In the realm of real experience beyond intellectual formulation there is no material or spiritual view. The free activity of the mind and the pursuit of material power is our inmost request. The idea of matter and spirit are intellectual formulations which are seen to be non-existent when we resume to the genuine empirical world in which there is no subjective mind or objective material. What really exists is our inmost request-always in incessant activity. In the realm of thinking this inmost request takes the form of mind and its objects. In true living or

experience, which is Zen, the activity of thinking and the everyday empirical world is one there, before reflective thinking takes place. The inmost request plus nothing is our true existence. There is nothing to control or nothing to lose.

Main Subject:

Attention! Un-mon introducing the subject said, "Although everyone has the 'Light' within himself, it cannot be seen in one's 'UTTER DARKNESS'. Now what do you think I mean by the 'Light' of everyone. As no one could answer he said, "A temple store house or a gate." Then after a while he said, "It would be better not to say anything, even if it is a good remark."

Note:

By "light" Un-mon meant essential mind or Buddha-mind. Zen Master Dogen said, "Buddha light does not mean blue, yellow, red, or white light. It means the great original light in which plants, trees, and land are perpetually shining. This essential mind cannot be recognized by our five senses or mental faculties. However, all our thoughts and sensations are based on this original vitality. It is because of this vital request (before any empirical thinking) that our mental and physical faculties serve their purpose just as birds know when and where to fly. Because of this innermost request we know what is good and what is bad as a fish knows where to lay its tremendous eggs without knowing why. We want to know when this cosmic world started; but even if we knew the answer to this mystery, we do not know in the same way the answer to why we want to know.

The mystery of why we pursue truth in the spiritual world, or physical pleasure in the material world, should be understood as the vital request of our true nature. Our spiritual and physical pursuit of life is always carried on in the realm of duality and this is the ultimate cause of our suffering in this world (four noble truths). This cause of suffering appears to be dualistic only in the empirical world. But in reality-in Zen practice-beyond intellectual formulation, there is no duality. This freedom does not come from outside nor is it the result of practice. In fact practice is meaningful and joyous because of this freedom. Practice vitalized by our inmost request is self-joyous practice. This practice covers everyday dualistic life. Duality should be realized as oneness, and oneness should be manifested as duality. The joyous continuous effort to realize the oneness of duality is the way to obtain vital religious freedom. Only when we find ourselves actualizing this freedom by practice do we find the incessant shedding forth of Buddha light in our life.

The light should not be sought in the visible objective world in a dualistic way. It is necessary to actualize this light in your everyday life by your perpetual effort.

This Un-mon said, "Temple storehouse and temple gate. But in order to prevent all the disciples, the idle seekers, from being attracted by tentative answers and then forgetting themselves in dualistic thinking, he added, "Even an excellent word is not better than saying nothing.

Appreciatory Word of Setcho:

Each one has his own light. But I have toiled to make myself clear to all of you about the ABSOLUTE DARKNESS where there are neither flowers nor the shadows of trees.

However, when anyone wants to see; who will not see? Only when one does not see, does one see.

Note by Master Suzuki:

Before I add my note, you have understood all about it.

## **2 - Sesshin Lecture**

Monday, July 26, 1965

Sesshin Lecture  
San Francisco

My talk is always-at the conclusion of my talk is always why we should practice zazen. Now this is not-my talk is not just cordial talk and, basically, my talk is based on Shobogenzo. Fortunately we have a system of-we have complete system-how to understand true religion. The true religion cannot be understood by philosophical way or scientific way. The only way to understand or to realize our true nature is just true practice. Without true practice it is impossible to realize our true nature. Of course, what we do, whether we are aware of it or not, what we do in our everyday life is based on true-our true nature. True nature drive us to do something but if you do not understand, or if you do not realize your true-what is true nature, and if you have no system to know the actual meaning of your true nature, you will get into confusion.

There are many and many scientists who become interested in religion, it is true. Some of them perhaps interested in true religion, but some of them will not have the true understanding of religion. As long as there are just-their understanding is just limited in scientific reality, it is impossible to know what is true religion because religion should be understood by religious way. Religion shou- [partial word]-is not understood by philosophy or science.

And some philosophers, of course, may interested in true religion, but it is impossible for philosophers-it is impossible to reach the complete understanding of religion through philosophical study because in philosophical study the conclusion of philosophy will be different. The

authority of Greek philosophy is still powerful in this age. So it is very difficult to understand-to reach the true understanding of religion which everyone will agree with it.

So-but Soto school has pretty deep philosophy, but as I said last night, the Shobogenzo or the philosophy of Zen is just a lid, just a cover of a pan because people may be interested in Zen, but it may be rather difficult for them to know what is true Zen. Without some intellectual understanding, it is difficult to figure out what is Zen. So that is why we have philosophy of Zen. But [laughs] by philosophy you cannot have true understanding of Zen. Zen should be understood by Zen, by practice of Zen, not by philosophy, even by Shobogenzo, even reading-even by reading Shobogenzo, you cannot [laughs] understand what-you cannot realize what it-actually realize what is Zen. So only way is just practice Zen which-right understanding-if you do not have right understanding, the-your practice will be mixed up with some other practice. And that is why, I think, in America there are so many misunderstanding of Zen.

So, by Shobogenzo, we have to polish our practice and we have to keep various misunderstanding-keeps our practice Zen from various misunderstanding. That is why we have Shobogenzo. That is why in sesshin I should talk. This kind of talk is not, you know-the purpose of my talk is not to give you some knowledge, but to-by my talk I want you to-I want to encourage your practice without being interested in philosophical bits of our system. In this point if you make misunderstanding, the result will be pretty serious.

And fortunately, our system of encouraging people is the same-is the same as other schools-philosophy of other schools. So if you understand Shobogenzo, you will understand some other schools, and why there are so many schools in Buddhism. If we do not have this system of various schools in Buddhism is quite different from other schools, and there will not be any connection with each other. With this system, we will-each schools-we will find out the meaning of existence-why Soto Zen like this, why Rinzai Zen like this, why [1 word unclear] school exist, why Tendai school exist, why all those schools are important. Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to translate Shobogenzo in English, but we are making effort to do it. And many scholars had given some interpretation, some modern, some up-to-date interpretation to it. So if we only have time, it is not impossible to give you complete system of our understanding of Buddhism.

We say we have two kinds of knowledge: intuitive knowledge and-and thinking, discriminating knowledge. The scientific knowledge and the philosophical knowledge is the dualistic thinking knowledge. As long as we use word and we think by words, it is impossible to reach the absolute conclusion. When we just resume to our own nature, which is universal to everyone, we can achieve-we can realize our true nature, which is universal to human being and even for animals and plants and

everything-existence. And that is why in Zen practice we stop our mind. We do not put any consideration to our sensitive [partial word]-sensitivity or thinking. Whatever image come, you just accept it and let them go out. [Laughs.] And whatever sound you hear, you let them come in and let them go out. When you do not pay any attention to outward objects, you will find out your true nature.

This true nature, when you are healthy and practice zazen in this way, it-it is just calm and some inexplicable thing itself. But when you have some actual problem-when you have pain on your legs, you will have direct experience of [laughs] your true nature. But, you know, don't mistake: that is true nature. That is true nature plus something-plus your painful legs. Something is added on true nature, and true nature takes the form of pain. This relationship is very important and if you understand this relationship-your true nature and your pain-there's a key to solve all the problem of life. Through problem we will realize our nature, true nature. When we-when I am hungry, what I feel is what you will feel when you are hungry [laughs]. There might be some difference, but not much difference. And how you feel when you sit is how everyone feels when you sit. Strictly speaking, that is enough, even though you do not attain enlightenment [laughs]; if everyone sit and find out how you feel when you sit, that's good enough. We will-in this point-we will reach some agreement. But if you are caught by some fancy idea of religion-there may be various religion-and you don't know what religion is yours [laughs]-Buddhism, Christianity or Indian religion or some folk, native religion-you don't know what to choose. Sometimes everyone-every religion looks like same. Sometimes it doesn't look like same. But when religion is studied the most simplest way, the most universal way, [2-3 words unclear] want of sleep or hunger or pain or-we will reach the universal religion-universal religion even to animals. Here we have common playground. Everyone will play in this common playground.

So you shouldn't have-according to Buddha or our patriarchs or founder of various religion-you should not have too fancy idea of religion. Religion should be understood the most foolish [laughs] man, not [one word unclear] wise man. Wise man's religion is compli- [partial word]-very complicated and very fancy. If his [1-2 words unclear] too great, you will-you will be attached to his religion. That is good. If you really want to do it, that's good [laughs]. Just because of the name or, you know, some gaining idea. We should not attach to some particular religion. That is why we say don't study religion with gaining idea-gaining idea. Gaining idea is not-gaining idea is not based on your true nature. That is very superficial desire-not so deep as your hunger. When we give up the various gaining idea, we will find out our true nature. And this true nature is very primitive, of course. And at the same time it could be very, very refined and deep, lofty idea-desire. And this primitive, fundamental desire [two words unclear] true [one word unclear] and various possibility. But if you start from fancy idea of religion, you will be con [partial word]-more confused. So to realize why

we study-why we study religion is to find out the meaning of our fundamental desire-how important it is, and how miraculous it is. And how much prosperity it has.

Now when we-all of us is concentrated on this point, there will not be any religious sectarianism. Because we start from some particular philosophy of religion, we have various sectarianism. When we have just one lid, just one cover, which covers various pan and bowls [laughs], there will be no problem. Our cover, our philosophy, is not the same philosophy as usual philosophers will provide for us.

Today, I just gave you some general-general of-idea of our system. But this point-we sh- [partial word]-other sort of student-this point should not be neglected. We should be-when we study Buddhism intellectually, we should be concentrated on this point. And as well as your practice. Just practice is not so good because you may practice zazen for sake of something. You will abuse your Zen practice until you mix pure practice with various country or wrong practice.

In short, Soto way is to use everything in right purpose and to put everything, its own-its own place. What should be put on high place should be put on high place, and what should be put of-on the floor should be on floor. In America, you know, you put scriptures [laughs] on the floor where you walk. We don't, you know. But I don't know how to do it, how to treat those scriptures in your way of life. So until I find out [laughs] some way, I don't say, "Don't put scriptures on the floor." But this is not supposed to be put on-supposed to be treated as-as rubbish, you know-as rubbish. This is not rubbish. Scripture should be put on table or altar or in your hand. Those small things is very important.

And this idea-with this idea, we study science: What is science? What is religion? What is Buddhism? There is the way to study philosophy; there is particular way to study science. There is particular way to study religion. Religion should be studied by religious way, not by science. Scientists cannot criticize [laughs] what religion unless he become religious. But-and religious-religion gives-or give way science and philosophy. Define-to find the meaning of science is religion. To find the meaning of philosophy is religion. But science or philosophy-in science or in philosophy, there is no religion. This relation [partial word]-this relationship is very important. Dogen-zenji says, "Our ordinary way-although you know our ordinary way-in our ordinal [ordinary] life there is no Buddha's way. People understand that. Or-I don't know [laughs]-may not understand it, but he says. They may understand there is no ho- [partial word]-it is impossible to realize-to know what is religion in ordinal [ordinary] way. But from viewpoint of religion, there is no ordinary [?] life. Everything-what we do is religion.

This kind of system is very important for us. I shall be very glad if you find out why this kind of understanding is so necessary for us. It is very important because it is the only way to find out the harmony in various

religion we have. When various religious people understand this [one word unclear], this system, then religion will be one. Not Buddhism, not Christianity, not one school of Christianity or Buddhism. The one whole big family of religious people will be established. There is this possibility in his [Dogen's] understanding.

-----

Slight additions made by Bill 1/3/01.

Transcribed by Judith Randall at City Center 12/2000 - 1/2001.

### **3 - Sesshin Lecture**

Tuesday, July 27, 1965

#### Sesshin Lecture

For a long time after Renaissance, you have forgotten the value of religion. You try to exchange religion for, you know, science and philosophy. You-you are Christian [laughs], but actually what you have been doing is to replace [laughs] science to religion-to exchange science. And you wanted to establish, you know, human culture, which is quite free from [laughs] authority of religion. You have quite good reason [laughs] in your effort to try to exchange or try to reform your culture before it is too dark [laughs]. Now it is too bright [laughs]. You went to the-too extreme, I think [laughs].

But recently, even though you have excellent-very advanced culture, but there is something-there is something which you don't know what to do-or that is your mind [laughs]. You don't know what to do with this mind. You have various tools, but you have no mind to use it [laughs]. That is your problem, I think. And we, you know, we Japanese people studied what is our mind [laughs], but we have enough tools [laughs], so we become attached to your civilization too much and almost forgetting what we have studied [laughing]. That is our problem just now. So combination of the two will create something wonderful, I think.

If I say, "Treat everything in right way," it looks-it will-it looks like very rigid and formal, but it is not so. This secret of Dogen-zenji will work. Someone said Western people failed in creating their culture by ignoring true-ignoring religion. And Oriental people made a great mistake in abusing religion. The Buddhism is-was too handy, so they-we abused religion too much. So now we don't know what is true religion. Oriental religion is mixed up [laughs], you know. In-in India, in China, or in Korea, even in Japan, Buddhism is so handy that they use religion instead of medicine. They use religion instead of education, science, and every-our culture is based on Buddhism. That is too much for us [laughs]. And you abused [laughs] Buddhism-Oriental people abused Buddhism too much. When you abuse something, you know, the true original advantage will be lost. If you cut paper by razor, razor will-will



be blunt? What do you say?

Student: Dull.

Dull-will not be sharp enough. So you should not use razor when you cut paper. That is why Dogen-zenji emphasized the purity of the Buddhism-the religion. Religion should be pure and sharp always so that it can serve its original purpose, its own purpose. Leave every-activity for some other people. We religious people should devote ourselves to the pure genuine religion. And we should keep religion always sharp enough to cut various entanglement completely.

This is why Dogen worked so hard. And this is why I came here and why you are studying Buddhism in San Francisco, I think.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Judith Randall. Checked against tape by Bill Redican (1/18/01).

#### **4 - Sesshin Lecture**

Friday, July 30, 1965

Sesshin Lecture

San Francisco

Tape Operator: This is the beginning of the 1 pm lecture, Friday.

Suzuki-roshi: If you have a question, please give me. I want to answer about what I told you during sesshin.

Student A: Sensei? I'd like to refer to a question someone else asked a couple of mornings ago, about helping other people. At that time you said that unless a person were enlightened, it wouldn't do much good to help other people. It seems to me that that would mean that probably most people in this room should not do anything for anyone else. I doubt we're all enlightened in this room, and since I have been thinking of [it], I wonder if you could expand on this idea?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. "Enlightened" means, maybe, many things. And in the word "enlightenment" is very wide. So "enlightenment" does not mean to attain perfection, you know. Bodhisattva-for bodhisattva-bodhisattva's way is to help others, even before he save himself. That is bodhisattva's way. So the point is how to help others, you know. Enlightenment-enlightenment, or bodhisattva's mind-I have to go back to my talk about bodhisattva or bodhisattva-mind.

Bodhisattva-mind is, in your philosophy, it is "normative

consciousness,"[1] you know. To-to-to do something, to seek for-pursue for good or pursue for truth or pursue for beauty. Those are "bodhisattva's mind" in narrow sense. And-but that was not satisfactory conclusion for the-your philosophers. So at last they-they refer to religion. Of course, here they mean mostly Christian type of religion.

And they refer to holiness. The holiness is when three kinds of pursue-good and truth and good and beauty-get together and work for one thing, that is holy function of our mind. Still they insist [it is] their mind, not [laughs] God-God's mind. But whatever they say, the actual meaning is the same. The word is different. They call it "human holy function" [laughs], but that is actually holy function of God. But they call it "God's function."

So here, even so, it is just entrance of the idea of Eastern-Eastern idea of religious life. In East, it was maybe about two thousand years ago, they-they have same-exactly the same philosophy. And oneness of the three functions is the-they acknowledge those three function. If those three function work together, that is buddha-buddha's mind. But that was two-about two thousand years ago. And after that [laughs], in East and West, many progress was made.

And in Zen, at least, "to help others" means, you know, we do not take it in dualistic sense. "To help others" means to-to think [of] others as a part of you. Not "others"-not-"you, yourself." You think to help others is to help someone-some imperfect person helps people. But when we say, "to help others" in our sense, it means to consider people a part of you or a part-it is like your hands or your body.

So in this sense we help others, you know. Not to help someone else-when you think-understand "to help others" in that way, there is big misunderstanding. And there will be big confusion between worldly activity of helping others-social work-and religious help.

There is some-there is clear distinction between social work and religious work. Do you understand? The social work is based on science and sociology. And sociology is good, you know. Of course it is good. And it-there should be-we should have sociology. And we have full understanding of sociology. But to help others in religious sense is quite different from social work.

So what I mean is, if you want to help others, you know, you may-to work at hospital is, you know, to help others. If he is religious person, to work at hospital is our practice, without changing anything. For us, sociology is-those who understand religious way-for those who understand religious way, there is no sociology. Sociology [laughs] is itself, you know-without changing anything, that is religious activity for a man who knows how to help others. But [for] those who do not understand religious life, sociology [is] just sociology. And he will ignore religious life. So it will not work properly. Some confusion will be

created. So that is why we-all of us should believe in-or all of us should have religious life.

But to seek for-but we have various science. We have-we should have science.

Student A: But then for a religious person there's really no such thing as help. Simply any religious person acts in each situation, reacts with each person in a way that's appropriate to that situation. There's no idea of "I am helping you." But it's simply, "This is what is to do now."

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student A: And so there's no-no idea of "I am helping another person."

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: Then you just do the right thing at the right time.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah. [Laughs.] That is so. And, you know, he-now, you know in Western philosophy, they-they had to-normative consciousness, you know, in realm of ethics they had. Ethics is normative science. And religion is, you know, nearly-in Western philosophy it is nearly the same, you know. It is based on normative consciousness. And consciousness, you know-later when impressionism become popular, especially-consciousness itself comes from our experience [laughing]. Then there is no place for God, you know. Even the voice of conscience is result of our everyday experience, and then there is no seat for God.

So in this way, more and more, our life become far away from religion. Actually, you believe in Christianity. Many people believe in Christianity. But actually they are far from religion.

Student B: What is there about Buddhism which we don't know but which is always there?

Suzuki-roshi: Why we say "don't know"- "don't know" means [laughs] "beyond science or philosophy." Philosophy is science, but-beyond science. Science is study of act- [partial word]-shadow of actual life [laughs]-study of dead corpse of human being [laughs, laughter]. So we say "beyond." But it is evident-what do you call it in English?-"ultimate truth"- "ultimate," not "truth," but "ultimate," you know, something-some-something which does not want any explanation [laughs]. Right there. That you suffer is, you know-no one can doubt that you have suffering now. As long as there is suffering, "you" is here.

Student B: What is Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Buddha?

Student B: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Buddha-"buddha" has many meanings, you know. Historical Buddha is-Buddha who attained enlightenment is Buddha. But in this case, to attain enlightenment-it does not mean who has-he did not[2] have buddha-nature before he attained enlightenment. He found out what he had. That is enlightenment. And he-this kind of person is enlightened person.

So-and when we do not-when we are confined in scientific world, we have no chance to find out the actual reality. So they are not buddha because they don't know it [laughs]. But when he is-he become aware of true reality beyond science-more actual reality than science, or the man who found out science will not-do not satisfy him, he is buddha. That is enough, you know.

So-so in East-West that was called "normative consciousness." But if you say "normative consciousness," it-it-nearly-it is nearly the same as ethics. So maybe for Christianity [laughs] there is no difference between religion and ethics. I don't know. I must [laughs] say I don't know. But it looks like maybe so, you know. As long as they have absolute dogma, you know, that is: "You should not do so. If you do so, you will be," you know, "punished." This is nearly the same as ethics. As long as when you want to study, you know, you cannot go further. But Buddhism allow to discuss further more. You can criticize more. There is no barrier.

So that is why people are interested in Buddhism, because we have no, you know, borderline for religion.

Student C: Is it ever permissible to help others by killing?

Suzuki-roshi: By killing?

Student C: I mean, would it be possible for a bodhisattva to be a soldier?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I don't think so. Because human life is absolute-has absolute value.

Here there is contradiction between science and bodhisattva-mind. But here you have to deny the-the idea of utility or science. This is very subtle and very interesting. You know, someone asked me-it was last-was it last night?-if you-our law should punish people-a man who-who committed suicide [laughs, laughter]-along with a man [?] who killed-who killed someone else? That is true, you know. To-it is same-crime is the same as, and more serious to kill a person-to kill he himself than to kill some other person. He should protect his [laughs] buddha-nature. To protect his own buddha-nature is to protect others' buddha-nature,

because others are a part of you.

So forgetting all about protecting himself [laughs], to protect others means just, you know, just dead rules. Just rules, you know. It means nothing for you-to you. When you want to help others or protect others, you can help others. There is no reason why you protect others. It is same thing to help yourself, you know-to, you know, to protect yourself from danger. That is pure bodhisattva's way.

So forgetting all about [laughs] helping himself, to try to help others is just moral rule-dead rules. And you are bound by the rules because everyone say so because you will be punished by it. So you do it. That's all. You-so you don't kill others. So that is the-and if you kill others you are not human being any more [laughs]. That's the limit.

Student C: What is that person which is not a human being?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: What is that person which is not a human being?

Suzuki-roshi: You lose the meaning of "human being."

Student C: [Question mostly obscured by traffic noise.] But you would not live [3-4 words] what is it that changed? I mean, he doesn't physically go though being changed. But if I were to take out a revolver and put a bullet in your head, for example, would that make-it would make me less of a human being?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You are animal.

Student C: An animal.

Suzuki-roshi: An animal [laughing].

Student C: Ah.

Suzuki-roshi: It is true. But you cannot be an animal [laughs]. But if you can [shoot me?], you are an-you are animal. There is no bottom in heaven and hell. Maybe if we do not-if we cannot be a human being, we may be the worst animal [laughs]. Cats and dogs much better than human animal. There is no bottom. The being having four-working with two legs, using two hands, and thinking something-"good and bad, half and half" [laughs]-if that will protect you as a human-you will be protected as a human being, that is big, big mistake. That is abuse of human body-human being. He abuse human being. He treat human being as a lowest enemy or creature. That's awful.

Student D: Was there enlightenment before the original-I mean, the historical Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, according to Buddha, there were-there were [laughs, laughter]. He was the seventh patriarch or buddha. Before he himself there were six buddhas.

Student D: How about before the first? Was there enlightenment before him?

Suzuki-roshi: Before him? I-I-I don't know. [Laughs, laughter.] He counts many and many millions of years, but it means he is not only the [not the only] person who will attain enlightenment. Everyone-this is everyone's consciousness. So he-he is not only buddha. There are many-

Student D: So "the first" does not have the numerical meaning of being first? Is it just sort of all-pervading? "The first" or "the sixth" doesn't have much meaning?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. First and sixth-it is rather, you know-it-it-he-it was-this kind of story was told by Buddha so that people may not make any mistake about-about him. You know, if he said, "I am the first one," people [laughs] will make big mistake [laughs, laughter]. So he said, "I am not the first one." But at the same time, he said, "This is not the first time for me to attained enlightenment. I attained enlightenment many and many times." It means, you know, his enlightenment is for everyone. Everyone has his enlightenment.

Student E: Why is fair to say [2-3 words] us to be enlightenment? Why-why are so few people enlightened?

Suzuki-roshi: It m- [partial word]-why so few people?

Student E: Or are there lots of people? I mean, it's just-I didn't realize that there were a lot of people who were enlightened. Maybe there are.

Suzuki-roshi: But that is want of right understanding of enlightenment. If you understand enlightenment is something which is difficult to attain, that is wrong understanding. [Laughs.] Did you understand what I said now? In-during sesshin?

Student E: In what?

Suzuki-roshi: No? Did you-did you understand what I said, and do you agree with what I say-what I am saying? Then you are enlightened [laughs, laughter]. I think you are still, you know, thinking [laughs, laughter] or wondering-

Student E: I-I don't think I do understand. I mean, I'm trying to understand.

Suzuki-roshi: You don't understand me [laughs]. Yeah, maybe so.

Student F: In this-in this way of helping each other [4-6 words] with words, and trying to convey meaning is very difficult. And it seems to me the-to be very important to-to be able to communicate with another person. And I'd like to know-I say to myself, "What is preventing the lack of understanding when the words are being correctly used?" What is preventing, what is not listening, or what is the disturbance? What is preventing the penetration of this meaning?

Suzuki-roshi: You yourself prevent it [laughs].

Student F: Obviously, but what can be done to help-how do you get through if there's no understanding-say, right now?

Suzuki-roshi: If you-if you are confronting the problem you have, you will understand it.

Student F: But for the other person, how will he understand [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student F: How will the other person understand?

Suzuki-roshi: Other person doesn't matter [laughs]. You. [Laughter.]

Student G: But when it does matter-when you have to [1 word]-

Suzuki-roshi: No, no.

Student G: -or feel his innermost need [2-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: It doesn't matter.

Student G: Does it matter when you want to communicate, when you want to try to help the other person who is obviously [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: It is-it-most important thing is to understand you yourself is most important thing.

Student F: Fine. And after that?

Suzuki-roshi: After that? After that I don't know! [Laughs, laughter.] You know after that-you will know after that.

Student G: Your answer to that is still confusion in other people, and it is the reason why-

Suzuki-roshi: You are still, you know, thinking. And you are not serious

enough.

Student G: Now?

Suzuki-roshi: You are not serious enough.

Student G: Now?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: Maybe not, but [?]-

Suzuki-roshi: That is-that is, you know, trouble. No other [?] trouble [laughs].

Student G: I wonder if my question is understood.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: Huh?

Suzuki-roshi: I understand.

Student G: Ah.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe [laughs, laughter] I understand your question more than you [laughter].

Student G: Obviously.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] Suffer a little bit more. Then you will understand.

Student H: Can you explain the connection between death or fear of death and zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Yeah. That's very good question. Fear of death, you know, fear of death is in religious-for religious mind there is no fear of death. The fear of death exist in realm of thinking or emotional realm. When you, you know, attach to something, for an instance, you will have-that is the beginning of the fear of death. When you attach to your body, that is fear of death. And when you don't know what you will become of-what will become of you, you will, you know, become very uneasy. That is fear of death.

But for a man who has-who become aware of his inmost request or his inmost nature or his absolute nature, that is more important thing than your physical body. It is so. When you are not serious enough, you know, you-you have fear of death. But when you become very serious about you yourself, you will, you know, you will not afraid of-you will not



be afraid of to lose your body. That is what I am [laughs] telling him, you know.

Student I: What relationship does anyone who has studied Buddhism have to organizations that work against killing such as peace organizations or civil rights organizations?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Peace organization or-

Student I: Civil rights-civil rights organizations.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: Should one who is studying Buddhism have a relation to the world?

Suzuki-roshi: I think Buddhist should have deep concern about those movement. Buddhist should concern if it is, you know, right. But we should not be mixed up, you know, just-organization itself and our true desire to help others. And the best way may be to allow true spirit of a peace movement for people is the best way, I think-

Student I: How do you-

Suzuki-roshi: -in its true sense. So the most important things is to spread Buddhism-to make them known what is Buddhism is the best way. We cannot do it by number. We cannot use everyone's right-we cannot abuse everyone's right by number.[3] This is very delicate question, I think.

But the most important thing is to realize the oneness of the human being. This problem should not be cut off from other problem. Sometime, you know, people do two opposite things. Some- [partial word]-in one hand [laughing], they work for civil rights, and on the other hand, they are doing something opposite. This kind of mistake is pretty common. So even something good should not be cut off from our life as a whole.

Even enlightenment should not be cut off from "me," you know. "Ten years ago I attained enlightenment. [Laughing, laughter.] But it doesn't work today." It is enlightenment ten years ago. It is impossible to cut off the enlightenment from my life and present the enlightenment to someone else. "This is my enlightenment." This is impossible. Enlightenment should be here, you know, now, in this moment.

So even though some movement is good [laughs], it shouldn't-should not be cut off from our everyday life. As a part of everyday life, we should participate [in] the movement. Then movement will be successful. Only Sunday or [laughing] Saturday to join the movement-to make procession-that's not so good way, I think.

Student J: I'm very curious, Sensei-I mean, the purpose of these questions and the result of these concepts [?], and not that would appear to [4-5 words]. What does it mean to be serious? I mean, not- not just about something, but just to be serious? Is it something that- that we can say that we're familiar with? Or is it something that-

Suzuki-roshi: When you are compelled to do something, that is serious.

Student J: Again, please?

Suzuki-roshi: When you are compelled to do something, so that you will become very serious.

Student K: How could we understand our own discipline? That is, how can we-what attitude can we take towards discipline ourselves?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's very good question. And it is difficult to know by yourself, actually. So that is why it is better to practice with people. If there is some, you know, some set-up rules or, you know, explanation, it may be easier. But unfortunately, we are not same, you know. So the practice is for you, and you are practicing. So strictly speaking, there is no set-up hope [?] of practice. And there is no rule, strictly speaking, or no standard to say this is good or bad, or right or wrong. That is why we emphasize the buddha-nature. Unless-if you do not have the idea of buddha-nature or inmost request, you have to be concerned [with] some visible rules, and you have to be attached to something. And that will not work so good, you know. So the best thing is to confront with your problem. That is the best way. And to suffer and to struggle [laughs] is the best way. Then you will have more and more-your-you will have deeper and deeper religious experience.

Student L: Was there some distinction between having an idea of buddha-nature, or the word buddha-nature is [?]-and buddha-nature?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Bud- [partial word]-idea of buddha-nature. There is no idea of buddha-nature, you know.

Student L: Well, I seem to [2-3 words]. Until you have an idea of what buddha-nature is-

Suzuki-roshi: There is no idea of buddha-nature or for buddha-nature. But there is many idea of many things. Se we count, or we qualify various idea one by one. Then you will-something which is left [laughs] is idea of buddha-nature.

Student L: Yeah, well, when-when-when you have systematically [3-5 words] and gotten closer to the-you've eliminated all the wrong answers and the wrong ideas-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: -and are left with-with few possibilities and can-and narrowed the buddha-nature down to-to a smaller area, well then where do you go from there to buddha-nature? I mean-

Suzuki-roshi: So already-concept-in your concept, you know, you will-your concept will be limit- [partial word]-of buddha-nature will be-will become smaller and smaller and smaller, you know. Not smaller, but like this [probably gestures] rather than like this.

Student L: Then it disappears?

Suzuki-roshi: No. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student L: I mean [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: If it disappear, it's wonderful [laughs, laughter]. You know, there-you [the West?] tried for a long, long time to [laughs] take off the idea of holiness, you know, and establish human authority in intellectual realm. And they thought it will disappear [laughs], but fortunately or unfortunately it didn't [laughs]. So the idea of holiness itself still in-not question, but they found out it is impossible to, you know, to give some interpretation to it. It is like this so no way to catch it. If it is on the-some surface, it is easy-may be easy to pick up. But it is like this [probably gestures], so bottomless. And it is too deep to reach. But still we know [laughs, laughter]. We should acknowledge it, but it is impossible to take it up.

In-in that center we exist, you know. So if you try to understand you yourself, there is no way to reach you yourself. Even though you suffer and struggle for-if-even though you spent whole life to reach to yourself, it is impossible. It-so I think someone who attain perfect enlightenment-someone who say-who thinks he attained perfect enlightenment may be crazy [laughs]. The enlightenment is not such a psychological state of mind. Because of his poor understanding of our true nature, he can make such a hasty statement.

Student M: Isn't it true, Sensei, that any idea of the thought of enlightenment is an obstacle? You said about thinking [6-8 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: If there is some obstacle, it may be easy to take it away, but [laughs] actually there is no obstacle. The o- [partial word]-the only obstacle which exist is the obstacle which do not exist.

Student M: All right. Fine. But still, but isn't it so that this-that this concern about the self-about enlightenment-whatever that is-and all that other stuff-isn't it-isn't that an obstacle?

Suzuki-roshi: No, no. It does not-you cannot compare with the

enlightenment with some other stuff.

Student M: Well, [1-2 words] it is true, I just object that-that-I meant to say that I think that quite possibly the idea of preconception is a hindrance or is an obstacle to [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Obstacle-by "obstacle" I don't mean a pre- [partial word]-just preconception, or idea, or, you know-I mean the way-wrong way to try to reach it. The way is not right.

Student M: This is an obstacle, no?

Suzuki-roshi: The-not-not obstacle, but way to reach is not right way. You are finding, you know, a fish on the tree [laughs]. That is obstacle.

Student N: Why-why do we keep dreaming-the dream of the self-why-of the small self? Why do we cling to it and not see it, or why else there would be [1-2 words] selfishness? Why does it seem so important that we can't see past it?

Suzuki-roshi: Dream. I am sorry-I-I have very little knowledge about psychology.

Student N: No, no, but you used the word "dream" yesterday, I think, for the "dream of the small self." It-it's just a dream.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. "Dream" is the dream of small self, you know. But big self is-will admit the dreams comes out, you know. Then-so if you have-if you realize the big self-the dream will not bother you. The-you will welcome dreams. "Oh! That's very interesting!" [Laughs.] But if you, you know, if you have just-if you have no capacity or no-no container to-to accept the dream, you will suffer, that's all. Of course, it will have some meaning. But that is habitual-your habits, you know. It is like drinking or smoking or, you know, telling words-some good and bad habits [laughs]. Good and bad habits. Bad habits [laughs] will makes you dream, you know. The habits, I mean-in-in wide sense, if you-because you are too much to-attached to visible world, you still have vision in your dream. But our visible world is not visible-is not-it-it is important, but-

Becau- [partial word]-when we have, you know-we live in big invisible-invisible world. Visible world is not so big-big enough to be bothered by it. So, you know, to sit is to live in invisible big world. So sooner or later we may die, and we go to the same place when you sit. That is the place where you will go [laughs]. But for someone just to sit in dark room where there is no sound ...

[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... fear maybe. That is death. So for people who came out from zazen,

there is no fear. For the people who is going to the, you know, zazen state, there is fear of zazen because they don't know exactly what it is.

So if you compare zazen experience and your everyday experience, which is important-which is-you cannot compare, you know, which is big or which is great. There is no parallel [?] even [laughs]. Maybe like this [laughs, probably gestures].

When this world is not yours, it is just a daydream, you know, to talk about math or, you know, cosmic existence, or [laughs] everything which exist. This is big, big statement. You may say, "He is crazy" [laughs], but when it is yours, you know, then no wonder to talk about it. The point is if you had your own mind, you will have your body, and you will have everything else. And wherever you go, that is your home.

But when you have-when you do not have your own mind, and your mind is some subject to study, or subject of psychological study, then you have no "you." You haven't your mind. You haven't your body. You have no home. And you have nowhere to live. That is why you suffer. Still you-you act, you exist. This part of [?] is very, very serious.

So just to have your own mind is the point. Then you will have everything. Then you can help others. Whatever you do, it's all right.

So the point is how do you-how you have your own mind is the purpose of zazen.

If you want to accept your mind, you have to accept everything with your mind [laughs]. It is impossible to accept just your mind [laughs]. Your mind always operates with something else [laughs]. It is impossible to accept just the essence of mind. You translate the jisho, or, in Chinese [English?], "essence of mind." But even though it is called "essence of mind," essence of mind cannot be deprived of. It wants always medium. So you have to accept the medium or mean[s]-mean[s] of practice. That is zazen [laughs].

We have to catch a fish with [1 word] [slaps hands together; laughs]-with a net. Without net you cannot catch fish. Our archbishop[4] always talk about salt. Salt-salt itself is bitter [laughs]. No one likes salt. But if you take it with food, it is delicious [laughs]. If you take it with vegetables, it is delicious. That is how we, you know, appreciate salt and how we appreciate buddha-nature with something.

So if you are not alert enough, you have to suffer [laughs]. Then you will know what is buddha-nature. We are usually very dull and dumb. So we want a lot of suffering, maybe.

We are not like historical Buddha. For him it was not so difficult, even though he was in his court with delicious food and beautiful palace, and many servants, and many waitress. Still he was, you know, sensitive

enough to realize the true nature of himself. But for us it is not so easy [laughs].

So I think for-for you American people, it is-it may be pretty difficult to understand-to catch the fish. But if you catch it, it will be a big, big fish [laughs, loud laughter]. By long time you will-long time difficulty, you will catch whale. We shall be very glad if you even catch [?] the tail of the fish or some-what do you call it [laughs]? We don't want the meat-the tiny-what do you call it-scale?-scale of the fish is enough.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: Transcribed verbatim from original tape by Bill Redican (11/9/00).

[1] Possibly: consciousness as "ordinary awareness" (per philosopher Lyle).

[2] Double negative: "It does not mean he did not have buddha-nature ...."

[3] By force of numbers?

[4] Togen Sumi, who came from Los Angeles for part of the sesshin: Wind Bell, 1965, IV (4), p. 1.

## **1965 augustus (1)**

### **1 - One-Day Sesshin Lecture**

Saturday, August 28, 1965

One-Day Sesshin Lecture  
San Francisco

Tape operator: This is the beginning of the-it will be that we missed this morning's lecture at 9, which was a good one, and this lecture is at-will be at one o'clock, and it's the-this is a one-day sesshin, August 28.

Suzuki-roshi: Confucius said the most visible is the something invisible. There are many proverb-Oriental proverb the same kind in Japanese: "A firefly, without voice, burns its body with enthusiasm, rather than cicada, which is noisy." [1] This is the same-same meaning. Firefly burns itself by its enthusiasm, rather than noisy cicada [laughs]. Do you know insect cicada?

This kind of idea is very Oriental. You say Japanese culture-shibui.

Shibui means "not conspicuous," just common, and not colorful. And it express deep taste. I think those idea is originated our practice. Any tradi- [partial word]-if you want to keep the tradition or culture or heritage, this point is very important. We say this kind of effort is to accumulate unknown virtue or unknown merit: to do something where nobody notice it; to do something fundamental; to devote ourselves mostly [to] the fundamental work.

To set up the foundation is the most valuable work, and if you want to devote yourself, choose some fundamental work rather than visible conspicuous work. We-we have to work with far-reaching plan or far-reaching eyes. The far-reaching eyes, we say kenshiki. This is very important word in Japanese. Kenshiki. Kenshiki is to have far-reaching idea, not temporal work.

Even though we compete [complete?] our merit in realm of visible world, your work will be neglected before you die even. So we have to work for our descendant-for future generation. And we must be proud of doing something which people usually do not realize its value. When you work-devote yourself in this kind of work, you have eternal life. But if you are occupied by near-sighted idea, you will lose your value, and you will not find out the composure of yourself.

In Japan, many and many religious heroes devoted themselves [to] this kind of work. So they were confined-they confined-confound themselves in limited work. We say-do you know Japanese barrel-barrel?-or, you know, in which we keep-a container for shoyu sauce, you know, made of wood [laughs] with bamboo ring tied up-wood-piece of-it is made of piece of woods. My-my pronunciation is not good. What is-"barrel"?

Students: "Barrel."

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Students: "Barrel."

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] That is very difficult to say for me. Anyway, the piece of wood does not, you know, work as a container without bamboo circle or bamboo ring [hoop]. If-if we have ring, you know, on our head, we can work. But if we have no ring on our head for ourselves, we will lose the meaning of existence. If you are very clever and capable, you can do anything you like, and people will ask you many things. But [laughs] if you do various things-if you try to accomplish many things, you will not accomplish nothing [laughs]. You will be just a tool of people. If-in that way, if you can really help-if you can help others completely, it may be all right. But if you want to help others in its true sense, it is better to devote yourself for some limited thing.

If you help them when you [they] asked, they will feel very helpful [helped] at that moment-at that time. This kind of help is rather

superficial help and casual, you know, help. If you want to help people, you have to devote yourself for some particular thing, and you have to help others with full confidence in your work. Then you can help people spiritually and physically.

But if you try to help superficially, that help is-will sometime or most of time spoil people without [laughs] helping them. But you will spoil them-just spoil them. And mutual help of this kind is-will result [in] depravity.

And so it is the same thing with religion, even though you compare various religion and you take good points of-points from various religion. But if you seek for too much honey from various flower, which is not necessary for you, you will be spoiled by honey. A little bit honey is enough for us. There is no need to be greedy. If it is true, a little bit [of] truth-a faint idea of truth is enough. And you should complete-devote yourself to the truth you have-you-you saw, completely. Then you will find out the true meaning of the truth. It is not matter of which is good or bad. It is matter of whether you devote yourself to the truth completely or not.

This kind of idea is very special to Japanese culture or Oriental culture. In Lotus Sutra, Buddha said to light up-or to lit up one-just one corner--one corner, not the whole-all the world. Just to lit up-to make it clear just where you are. Ichigu wo terasu.[2] Ichigu is "one corner." Terasu is "to lit up" or "to shine" one corner. This is very valuable point-important point in our practice.

It does not mean to be, you know, to be negative, or to be narrow-minded, or to be sectarian. It is a way it should be. And everything exist in that way. Bamboo cannot be a pine tree at the same time [laughs]. Bamboo is always bamboo, so bamboo is valuable. Bamboo and-mixture [laughs] of bamboo and pine tree [will not] serve-serve for anything, because bamboo is straight, [and] pine tree is crooked. So bamboo is valuable, and pine tree is valuable.

So there is no need for us to be famous or to be useful. First of all, we should be-each one should be he himself. Then we will find our world very convenient. If we try to be the most famous, and most useful, and most powerful, everyone will lose the true meaning of our existence. So we say, "When you become yourself, Zen become Zen." When you become you [laughs]-when bamboo is bamboo, that is Zen. When a tree is a tree, that is Zen. If so, we have to realize our inmost nature as a being, or inmost request of ourselves. Inmost request works for every existence in the same way, but as each existence [is] different from the other existence, even though the inmost request is the univer- [partial word]-is universal, the way of expression should be different.

The other day, we Soto followers completed a big building[3] at Soji-ji Temple for the memory of the Fifth Patriarch from-in Japan. Dogen is



the First Patriarch, and fifth one-fourth one we call-is Keizan-zenji.[4] And the fifth one is Gasan-zenji.[5] Gasan-zenji had many good disciples. Sometime we count twenty-five. Sometime we count ten. Anyway, he has many-he had many disciples.

When Keizan-zenji saw the Fourth Patriarch-Gasan-zenji-the Fifth Patriarch saw the Fourth Patriarch-Gasan-zenji-Gasan-zenji-although Gasan-zenji was very good, but Keizan-zenji did not allow his transmission. But-and he gave him some question: "Have you seen the double moon?" Double moon.

He couldn't [laughs]-he couldn't understand what did he meant. And he studied and studied and studied for many years-many and many years. And he could [not] understand what did his master meant by "double moon." Although our inmost request or nature is the same, our way of expression should be different-it should be double. It is, you know-my-when I devote myself to my inmost request, you will understand how I-how hard I make my effort to express it. Here we have mutual understanding, but the way you express and I express is not the same. Because it is not the same and it cannot be the same, we can respect each other's effort, and at the same time we can feel-we can tell-we can realize how difficult it is. That is mutual understanding. Here we have double moon, not single, not the same moon. You may say the moon we see here in America [and] the moon they will see at-in Japan may be the same-is the same, but it is not the same. It is double [laughs]. Oh, I don't know how much-how many moons we will see, but the feeling of the seeing-observing the moon is the same. Even though sometime when we see the moon, we will see with tear. Sometime we will see the moon with joy. But the moon is the same. Here we see the double moon. It should be double, but the moon is the same.

So as long as you are caught by the single moon which is always same to everybody, we cannot see the true moon. You are seeing the painted moon which is always [laughs] same. There is no meaning to it.

We say, "a white bird-bird-a white bird-a white bird in the snow-in the snow-in snow." [6] You cannot see the white bird in snow, but still bird exist. When we devote ourselves in true practice, our practice is not visible. But this invisible effort-accumulation of those invisible effort will build up your character, and you will obtain the power to be a master of the surrounding. As long as you are chasing after just visible thing, you will never understand the meaning of our life. This is how we devote ourselves to our way. [Break in tape of unknown duration.]

Student A: I still do not have the general idea. I can see that if we look at the moon, projecting our own emotion, we won't see the moon. On the other hand, we must be one with the moon and must be fair to it in a special way so that it has particular meaning to us, and we experience the moon ourselves. Could you clarify?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I understand your point, you know. To see-if you want to see double moon-the, you know, the power or-of-excu- [partial word]-let me put in this way. When you-unless you have eyes to see the double moon, you cannot see it. As long as you observe the moon [as] just an object-an object of your eyes, you cannot see it. If you want to see the double moon, you must have-you must build up your character and you must have the power to observe the double moon. In other word, you ha- [partial word]-through your practice obtaining your power to observe it, you can see the double moon. As long as you just seek for-just figure out what is double moon-is this moon is-is this moon-is this way of observing moon is right or wrong in this [?]? You cannot see it. When you are quite sure, you know, in observing the moon, you can see the double moon. Even though you say, "That is just [single] moon, not double moon," I may say, "For you it may be the single moon [laughs], but for me it is double," I may say. If someone say, "It is double," I may say, "No, it is single." [Laughs, laughter.]

It doesn't matter to me whether it is double or single, because I am quite sure about my eyes. So when it is-when you are quite sure with yourself, or when you own your eyes as a sense organ-as your sense organ, you can see the double moon. But when-as long as you are enslaved by your eyes, you are-you cannot trust your eyes [laughs]. So if someone says that is a double or single [laughs], you will, you know, wonder. You cannot trust your eyes. Do you understand?

This kind of strength can be attai- [partial word]-acquired by your own effort, not other's effort. Even though I explain it one thousand time, it will not help you unless you yourself make your effort to-to be sure about yourself. Before you believe in yourself you cannot, you know, see the double moon. Actually double or single doesn't matter [laughs]. That is double moon.

So as long as you are proud of your practice-to be proud of your practice is-you are still relying on something, someone. Because you rely on others-rely on the reputation, you [are] proud of [laughs] yourself. If you are quite independent, you know, you are not proud of anything of yourself. So the Fifth Patriarch in Japan [was] rather proud of his deep understanding of Buddhism. So Keizan-zenji said-did not accept him, you know [laughs]. Naturally [?] you have-you are-you cannot see the double moon. When you forget yourself, you have full strength. [Laughs.] Do you understand? You understand this psychology.

But it does not mean to be lazy or to become wood or stone. That is zazen-Zen. You are alive, and your mind is not working. But you are fully-you are in full activity but your activity is not rely on anything too. That is, you know, zazen. Okay? [Laughs.] Did you understand?

Student B: I-I am curious to know-

Suzuki-roshi: Don't say "curious to know." [Laughing.]

Student B: -whether or not you are [6-8 words]. How did the Fifth Patriarch become the patriarch if he cannot see the moon [?]. I think the Christian mystic formative [?] thought, which was similar to Robert Warren-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -that some disciples and patriarchs and masters have to be certified for their vision.

Suzuki-roshi: Certified?

Student B: Certified-

Suzuki-roshi: By?

Student B: -verified by a higher authority before impersonating [representing?] the temple.

Suzuki-roshi: Before you-you have full, you know, confidence in yourself, you will not be certified by anyone. Even though someone say you are good, it doesn't mean anything. So your confidence is first. So there is no other way to be confidential [confident] in yourself. We are not talking about something very difficult. If we are quite sincere with ourself and- -selves, and if we are conscientious-not conscientious, but if we are aware of our idle practice and ashamed of it, that's the way. Even though we are not perfect, if we are aware of our imperfection, that is good, very good. That is very good.

And after trying to polish ourselves until we think it is-we are allowed-we will be allowed by our patriarchs, by Buddha, and by our teacher, then you are pretty good-not perfect, but pretty good.

Student C: Sensei, what does sashu [sic] mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: What is sashu? The sign says, "Walk in sashu."

Suzuki-roshi: Sesshin?

Student C: Sha-sha-

Suzuki-roshi: Shashu.

Student C: Shashu.

Suzuki-roshi: This is shashu [probably gestures].

Student C: Is this also a symbol of the cosmic world [1-2 words]?[7]

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I don't know. I am sorry [laughs, laughter].

Student C: Well, [4-8 words]. And he said it was like the cosmic world, and I was wondering its history [1-2 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know. Actu- [partial word]-really, I don't know. [Laughs, laughter.] I get accustomed to this way, you know, pretty early in my age. So I didn't think what it was [laughs]. I will-I will find out by dictionary, but there is usually-there is many interpretation to it [laughing]. We may forget.

Student D: Reverend Suzuki, I've noticed that you have it kind of like this, instead of-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. That's-if I do it like this, it's not good [laughter]. Should be like that.

Student D: I've noticed it's harder to do it like that. I've been trying to do it that way.

Suzuki-roshi: But it should be like this. This is no good. Maybe when I am talking, my fingers may be like this. This is not good. Should be like this.

Student D: Are your forearms on your legs this way?

Suzuki-roshi: Bishop Yamada told us to do like this, but for someone this is better. But for someone [others], I think this is better-not to rest your hands on your side.

Student E: Reverend Suzuki? In the Lankavatara-sutra they described a buddha as one who controls his outflows. Would you say a few words about that? Or they also used the phrase "non-leakage," which was hard to get [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Non-? Non-what?

Student E: Non-leakage, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Leaky?

Student E: When a bottle leaks, you know, it comes out the cracks- overflows. Would that contribute to the-to the [1 word] around the head-the ring around the barrel that you were talking about?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] I don't know. That is quite Japanese expression: tangawa honryu.[8] Maybe so. We have many ways of-

expression for "one truth." I couldn't understand actually what you said just know. What did you mean? One?

Student E: Well, when I am doing zazen, it seems as though sometimes I have this experience of-of immed- [partial word]-of my-of a non-outflowing, you know, that I'm-it's all staying right within me-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Oh, "outflowing." I see.

Student E: Yeah. Instead of, you know-when you see-when I see-I feel like I'm looking outward, and I feel-oh, like-so when I'm doing zazen, though, that will drop back inside.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: And I thought perhaps this is what they meant by "non-outflowing": being able to control the-the outflow of your energy or-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. "Outflow." It is-that is opposite, you know, to our way. Outflow. Comes out-your energy from your-whatever it is, body or mind. You should be one thought [?] or existence when you sit. There is no outside or no inside when you sit. Can you-do you accept this expression?

Student E: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: So outflowing or-it is not even to see inward. It is just to sit. No inside or no outside. Just one existence.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (1/17/01). An edited version of most of this lecture was printed in Wind Bell, September 1965, IV (No. 6), pp. 3-5.

[1] The Wind Bell version reads "The silent firefly, unlike the noisy cicada, glows with light" [1965, IV (6), p. 3].

[2] See also SR-69-12-01.

[3] The original transcript and Wind Bell version added "Taisodo," which should have read "Daisodo" ("Great Monks' Hall"). It is the largest building at Soji-ji.

[4] Keizan Jokin (1268-1325).

[5] Gasan Joseki (1276-1325).

[6] Possibly a reference to Dogen-zenji's poem Raihai ("Worship"): "A white heron hiding itself in the snowy field, where even the winter grass cannot be seen." (Steven Heine, *The Zen Poetry of Dogen*, 1997, p. 117.)

[7] The student appears to shift from discussing the mudra of the hands during shashu to the cosmic mudra (the position of the hands during zazen).

[8] Phonetic only. Suzuki-roshi did not understand the question, so the translation may not correspond to the question (e.g., it may be a translation of "one truth").

## **1966 (17)**

### **1966 januari (1)**

#### **1 - Shusogi: Sections 11-17**

Friday, January 21, 1966

Sesshin Lecture: Shusogi: Sections 11-17  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Tape operator: Sesshin lecture in January 20th-21st, I think, one o'clock.

Suzuki-roshi: The next chapter[1] which we will learn is about precepts. And this is pretty difficult one, so before we study how to recite it, and I want to explain it beforehand.

The precept observation is very important for Zen practice. If we eat too much, we cannot sit. If we do not have enough sleep, we cannot sit. So your-physically and mentally, you have to adjust your life so that you can sit. This is very important point. Zen or Buddhism is actually the way of life, and way of life is the precepts. [Possible gap in recording.] To live is how to observe precepts. It is not some rules of 16 or 250 or 500. There must be innumerable number of precepts. And-so it is necessary for us to have full understanding of precepts and to make effort to observe precepts. So whenever a great Zen master or religious hero appears, precepts observation is emphasized by him. Or before someone appears-some great teacher appears, precepts observation always have been emphasized by many precedent masters. Before Dogen, there were several famous masters who emphasized precepts.

[Section 11] Next we should deeply respect the three treasures: the Buddha, the teaching, and the Buddhist community. In fair way or adversity, they deserve our respect.

Excuse me, maybe they have to put in this way:

We should yearn to respect them and make offering to them in fair way or adversity.

This is literal translation. But here it says: [2]

They deserve our respect and offering no matter where we wander from life to life.

This is more maybe advanced, maybe-not literal but it takes-this express the meaning what he meant.

We should yearn to respect them and make offering to them in fair way or adversity. It was respect for Buddha-for the Buddha, the teaching, and the Buddhist community that was truly transmitted from India to China by the Buddhas and patriarchs.

Buddha and sangha-the Buddha and the sangha, and then Buddhist community is also precepts observation, you know. Those are how we practice Buddhism. So how we practice Buddhism is to keep our precepts. It is-precepts is not just prohibitory precepts. We have three refuges, and three corrective precepts, and ten prohibitory precepts. This is three of the sixteen of Soto precepts or [1 word] precepts.

The three treasures is-has-should be-will be understood in three ways: the manifested three treasures, the supreme one [?], his dharma, and his sangha. This is manifested treasures-manifested three treasures. And maintaining three treasures-Buddha's images, sutras, and precept-priests. Those are meant-those are called "maintaining three treasures." And one body, three treasures. Essentially Buddha. No body of Buddha. The harmonious body of Buddha. This is more philosophical understanding of three treasures.

Anyway, we have to take refuges in three treasures as long as we are Buddhist. And-and then it says:

[Section 12] If the unfortunate and virtueless cannot even hear to [of] the Three Treasures, how can they make refuge in them? Do not take refuge in the spirits of the mountains or the ghosts of the dead, and worship not at heretical shrines. Such refuge-seeking lead us away from salvation. Let us instead quickly take refuge in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Buddhist community, seeking three-seeking there not only release from pain but complete enlightenment.

When we take-when we observe our precepts, may I ask you with what mind [laughs] do you observe precepts? This kind of, you know, story is everywhere in Zen koan. "With what mind do you [laughs] observe those precepts?" This is a kind of tricky [laughs] question. With what

mind? If you say, "With this mind-with this kind of mind I-we observe precepts," then it means your mind is separated from the observation of the precepts. Precepts is there, and you are here-your mind is here. That is dualistic understanding. It is same thing when we-will happen if you practice zazen with your mind. Same misunderstanding will happen to you.

Zen practice is a practice which happens within your mind [laughs]- within your big mind. Precepts observation is the-how our life goes in its true sense. That is precepts observation. Precepts-your life goes in that way automatically. That is precepts observation. So if you think the precepts is some particular rules which was set by Buddha, that is wrong understanding. Precepts is the way of life recorded by tape recorder [laughs, laughter] or printed by film [laughs]. That is precepts, you know. If you take a record someone-someone's speech, it will say something, you know, moment after moment. That is precepts.

So if you say, "Printed," you know, "[film] negative is precepts," that is wrong understanding. "Recorded voice is precepts." That is wrong understanding. What I am saying, what I am doing, whatever it is [laughs], that is precepts. So as a Buddhist, it is quite natural for them to observe-to respect Buddha or take refuge in Buddha and dharma and his sangha. In this way, precepts should be observed. In other word, it is sincere effort to-effort to make your life meaningful. This is precepts observation in its true sense.

Do not take refuge in the spirits of mountains or ghosts of the dead, and worship not the heretical shrines.

Because heretical understanding-according to heretical understanding, we take refuge in something, you know, which is different from your-yourself. That is heretical understanding. That is not our understanding. According to our understanding, everything is within our mind. Our mind include everything, and in our mind many things will take place. So when we do not lose this mind, whatever happen to us, that is precept observation. When we are caught by dualistic or something objective existence or idea-objective existence and worship them, that is heretical understanding. So the spirit of the mountain or ghost of the dead and to worship heretical shrines is not our way of observing precepts.

Such refuge-seeking lead us away from salvation. Let us instead quickly take refuge in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Buddhist community, seeking there not only release from pain but complete enlightenment-to complete enlightenment.

When we have enlightenment, many things happen within enlightenment, within big mind. In this case, we call it-we call our activity "precepts observation."

[Section 13] To take refuge in the Three Treasures, we must come with



pure heart or faith. To take refuge in the Three Treasure, we must come with pure faith. No matter when-or whether at the time of the Buddha's appearance in the world or after his disappearance-we repeat with clasped hands and bow head-bowed head: "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the teaching. I take refuge in the Buddhist community." I take refuge in the Buddha because he is our great teacher. I take refuge in the teaching because of its curative effect. I take refuge in the Buddhist community because here we find wisdom and warmth-warmth-warmth. To become followers of Buddhism, we must uphold the Three Treasures. We must lay his foundation before receiving the moral precepts.

We-before we-before the observation of moral precepts, we have take-we have to take three refuges. And this is those observation of taking refuge in the Buddha, and the teaching-and his teaching, and his community is included in the sixteen precepts.

[Section 14] The merit of Triple Refuge will always ripen when responsible [responsive] communion take place between the trainee and the Buddha. Those who experience this communion-whether deva, dwellers in hell, and animals-or animals-will take this refuge. The embodied merit increase-increases through the various stage of existence and ultimately leads to the highest right enlightenment. Buddha himself confirmed the merit of the Triple Treasures as supremely valuable and inconceivably profound-profound. All living beings should therefore take this refuge.

[Section 15] The next we should accept the three collective pure precepts-that embracing good behavior, and embracing good deeds, and that embracing all being and salvation-saving them. We should then accept the ten grave prohibitions:

Do not kill.

Do not steal.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not lie.

Do not sell liquors.

Do not bring up the faults of others.

Do not boast and blame others.

Do not withhold material and spiritual possession.

Do not become angry.

Do not debase-debase the Triple Treasures.

Those are ten prohibitory precepts. "Do not kill."

It is not-those rules is not manmade-is not supposed to be manmade precepts like social rules, or custom, or rules of some special countries. It is something more than that. It is not manmade one, but based on the truth-a universal truth of universe. If so, it does just mean not to kill. Strictly speaking, we cannot kill anything [laughs]. You think you can do it, but it is impossible. When we realize this, we will not kill anything. We will not try to kill anything because it is impossible. This is one way of observation-observing the precepts "Do not kill." So "Do not kill" is not just matter of-matter of forcing something to others or-or empower a person to do something, or formality observation. It is not-it is something more than that. If you realize this fact, that you cannot kill anything, then you will be free from dualistic activity of killing or not killing.

So "Do not kill" means ex- [partial word]-to extend our life activity or our life. "Do not kill" means [refers to?] sometime lazy attitude, you know, lazy way of life. If you-when you are lazy, or when you are not sincere enough in your practice you are killing [laughs] Buddha. Buddha will not manifest itself. You are keeping Buddha within yourself without doing anything [laughs]. That is actually to kill Buddha or to kill something. "Not to kill" means to do something with sincerity. That is fundamental way of observing precepts. So precepts observation is to do something with your utmost effort. That is how you observe those ten prohibitory precepts.

So negative precepts and positive precepts observation is not different. This is the most important precept.

"Do not steal." When you find out you cannot kill anything, how is it possible to steal something from others? When you have everything, there is no need to steal something from others. When you have no idea of others, when you understand your life [is?] something which is happened-which happens is in your mind, it is not possible to steal anything. That is actually a practice of zazen. When you practice zazen, you practice zazen with big mind-the mind which is not matter of big or small [laughs] [and] with your true mind. That is our practice of zazen. So the practice of zazen is not different from-to-from observation of the precepts.

"Do no steal. Do not commit adultery." You will not attach to what will be within your, you know, capacity. When you think-when you have some object of adultery, you think you can-you will become-you commit adultery. But when-when you do it as if you-as if you-as if your eyes breaks [laughs], that is not adultery. This-there is no need to be caught by some unchaste act.

"Do not lie." You cannot tell lie, you know. Whatever you do, it express your true nature. So you cannot tell lie.

"Do not sell liquors," or, you may say, "drugs." "Liquor" means something, you know, some intoxicating medicine or intoxicating teaching. Those are liquors. Even the Buddha's teaching-even Buddha's teaching, if you sell it [laughs], that is liquor. If you are caught by it, that is liquor. So not only wine or drugs, but also you should not sell anything [laughs]. Do you understand? You should not sell. It should be your life in its true sense. This is very important precepts for us, and subtle understanding is necessary.

We call-Japanese people call sake-do you know sake? Japanese wine made from rice. We make Japanese wine from rice. That is-another name for sake is "best medicine of all the medicine" [laughs]. If you do not intoxicated by it-if you take not-if you do not take too much, that is the medicine of all [laughs]. But when you are intoxicated, that is sake which you should not take or sell.

We say "sell." This is very subtle. "Don't take" is not, you know, adequate enough. "Don't sell" mean-when you yourself [are] intoxicated by something, you know, by-by some gaining idea to make profit from it, or-or you are-when you are caught by something, you will try to sell it to others. "Buddhism is so wonderful teaching! [Laughs.] Why don't you join us?" At that time you are already somehow intoxicated by it. So "don't sell" is very subtle expression. But it means also "do not take it."

But even though-you can take it if you do not [get] caught by it. You can do it. But precepts observation-why we emphasize precepts observation is it will protect yourself from bad habits. Precepts will protect yourself, as our human nature is-has some weak points-so many weak points we have. So it is necessary for Buddha to protect us from evil habits by setting up some rules for us.

But if we are alert enough, we should-wise enough, we should take care of ourselves with alert-with alertness. Not to fell into the pitfall of human nature. We have many danger in our life, and sometime we know it and sometimes we do not know it. So it is necessary for us to have some rules to protect ourselves. And actually, precepts observation is difficult way, but actually it is easy way, you know. Not-difficult way is to-to be-to behave like Buddhist without precept, without any rules. This is very difficult. But if we have some precepts, it is easy for us to observe our way. How do you think [laughs]? Do you think this is just, you know, some-some good explanation of precepts? It is not so.

When I was young, I wanted to remain celibacy. You know, I wanted to-I didn't want to get married, because I know myself so much, I know-I knew what will happen to me if I get married. So I thought I'm not so, you know, good. I know pretty well. So I thought it may be easier to remain alone-to be a Buddhist. This is easy way. But some people may

think to get married, to remain Buddhist, may be easier because his life will help him [laughs]. So it may be easier. Yes, in some way it is easier, but it makes-makes us-makes him more difficult-more difficult to be a good priest.

So precepts observation is very-we should be very-we should be very grateful to the precepts. It is mercy of the Buddha. If you think the precepts will be a bandage for your life, or precept is the rules of your life, that is big misunderstanding. It means your effort is not-you are not sincere enough. You don't know yourself, and you do not make your effort enough to be a Buddhist. When you become Buddhist, you will find the true meaning of those precepts.

And so, the Buddhism is not some knowledge or some philosophy-something to talk about. Buddhism is for yourself. And to study Buddhism is to help you yourself in its true sense. So all the teaching is just within yourselves, not without. The spirit that started Buddhism is the spirit to solve everything as your own problem. That is how to study Buddhism, as Dogen-zenji says: "To study Buddhism is to study yourself." It-from beginning to end, it is study of our life. No one help you. If you expect someone's help, it means you have-you lost your step, and you lost your true mind.

[Section 15, cont.] The Buddha have received and kept the Triple Refuge, the three collective pure precepts, and the ten grave prohibitions. [Repeats.] The Buddha have received-the Buddhas-excuse me-the Buddhas has-have received and kept the Triple Refuge, and the three collective pure precepts, and then the ten grave prohibitions.

To transmit Buddhism is-to receive transmission means to become successor of a Buddhist, you know. So succession of Buddhist life is to receive transmission. So, of course, to receive transmission is to receive Triple Refuge, the three collective pure precepts, and the ten grave prohibitions.

[Section 16] By accepting the precepts, you will attain supreme enlightenment-the indestructible Buddhahood realized or to be realized by the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. Would any wise man reject this goal? To all living beings, the Buddhas have shown that when they accept the moral precepts, they attain Buddhahood-the rank equal to the Great Enlightenment -that-and that they are truly the children of the Buddha.

When you become successor of Buddha's life, you are children of Buddha.

[Section 17] All the buddhas dwell here and embrace everything in their infinite wisdom. All the buddhas dwell here and embrace everything in their infinite wisdom.

All the buddhas is in your life, you know, in its true sense-should be within your life. If so, within your life there should be precepts. And that is, at the same time, practice of zazen.

[Section 17, cont.] When all beings dwell here and embrace everything in their infinite views see no distinction between subject and object-when this happens, all things-whether earth, vegetation, fence post, brick or pebbles-take grace of the Buddhas. The resulting wind and fire, fanned by the profound influence of the Buddhas, drive us to intimate enlightenment. This is the merit of non-doing and non-striving-the awakening of the wisdom mind.

This is, you know, description of our life as a Buddhist.

[Repeats.] All the Buddhas dwell here and embrace everything in their infinite views. When all things dwell here and embrace everything in their infinite views, see no distinction between subject and object-when this happens, all things-whether earth, vegetation, fence post, brick or pebbles, take grace of the Buddha. The resulting wind and fire, fanned by the profound influence of the Buddha, drive us to the intimate enlightenment. This is the merit of non-doing and non-striving-and the awakening of the wisdom mind.

-awakening of perfect wisdom which has no within or without. We call it limitless wisdom-activity of one mind. Here he said "intimate enlightenment." This is something new, you know. You-always you say "great enlightenment" or "highest enlightenment," but Dogen-zenji says "intimate enlightenment"- "intimate enlightenment." Most intimate one is enlightenment. Most intimate one to you is enlightenment. Do you understand? Enlightenment is something within you, or-you cannot say "within you." If I say "within you," it is not intimate enough to you. It is [laughs] hiding within yourself. So-if so, it is not intimate. Of course, if it is something beyond you, that is not intimate. Even-if it is something to attain it, it is not intimate one. He says "intimate enlightenment." This intimacy to the enlightenment is our practice.

When you sit, just sit, you know, with big mind. That is intimate enlightenment. It is so intimate that you do not realize [laughs, laughter] enlightenment. That is what he means. Shitashii-shitashii-in Japanese, shitashii. Shitashii-"friend, good friend." We say "good friend." Shitashii-shito-shitashii-person who is intimate to-to you is shitashii-shito. It means, you know, "intimate friend."

And we say also, Shitashii nakani mo rei ni ya, you know. Even though man and wife is intimate, you know, but there must be some rules between them. That is our way. You may say if it is intimate relationship, there is no need to have some rules [laughs]. That is wrong understanding, because relationship between them is so intimate that it is necessary to set up some rules. So our rules is based on intimate relationship-not to make some harmony between us, but to

make-to make our life more meaningful we set up some rules. It is-to observe rules is to be appreciative of the intimate relationship. That is rules, you know. If there is no rules [laughs]-there is no-to enjoy within-within our relationship. If we want to feel something, then we should have some rules, or at least we should be appreciative to the intimacy. Do you understand? This is precepts.

So within our relationship between man and man, or man and woman, or man and nature, there is rules based on the intimate relationship. So in observing rules, there is no trace of a rule. Even though there is rules, there is no need to be caught by it, because it is the expression of the intimate relationship. It is expression of it. It is not something to-necessary to set up because of some unharmonious relationship.

So when-in our practice, there is no trace of practice, and there is no shadow of the rules. No trace of the rules and no shadow of rules. To have shadow of rules means, "I must do this." That is shadow [laughs]. Sometime [laughs] you [are] scared of the shadow of yourself [laughs]. That is shadow. We should not have shadow of the rules. Until you do it, that is not rule. When you do it, that is rule. When Buddha did something, that is rule. There is no shadow for the Buddha, or there is no obligation for Buddha. So we should not shadow of the rules or trace of rules. If you do it, that's all. That is the real Buddha. We sh- [partial word]-we should not be caught by what we did, even though it is right. We shouldn't say, "What I did was right [laughs]." We should do in the same way. That is-that means you leave the trace of the teaching or trace of the precepts.

So Dogen-zenji said, "Fish swim like a fish [laughs]. Bird flies like a bird [laughs]." That is Buddhist life. Fish swims, but there is no trace. Birds fly, but there is no trace of bird. There is no setup, you know, or trace for birds.

In original Japanese, "this bird" is beautiful sentence [laughs]. This translation is very good, but-and at the same time it is rather difficult to understand.

But in your practice, we, you know, repeat lecture after lecture, you know, talking [about] some advantage of zazen practice [laughs]. So naturally you will be-naturally it means I am selling some [laughing] drugs or sake to you, and you are buying it, and you are taking it [laughter]. This is not so good. So, you know, actually it is better to do it, you know, without listening [to] anything-just by the suggestion of the teacher. That is best way. And you should just stick to the teacher [laughs] with patience.

So pure mind is-interpretation of pure mind is purity of the mind and patient mind-patient mind. It should be, when you study Buddhism, the patience, you know-endurance is absolutely necessary, because we do not talk about-too much about the advantage of Buddhism. Until you

find out [laughs], we-we will wait. If so, both for the teacher and student, the most important thing is endurance-to wait for the chance to-which will become between us. If you give up, you will have no chance to understand it in its true sense because Buddhism is not something-some knowledge or intellectual understanding. That is why we say do not sell [laughs] Buddhism. Do not sell anything. Do not take anything. Cover your ears and eyes and mouth [laughs, laughter], and wait for the chance which will come to you [laughs]. Do you understand?

I cannot talk [said as he was covering his mouth with his hand] [laughs, laughter]. You cannot listen [laughs, laughter]. You cannot smell, even. That is how you study Buddhism. That is observation of precepts. So whatever the religion is, the most important thing is a kind of austerity. This element is very important for every religion. I don't know other religion, but the austerity is very important. "Let alone" [?] is not good. When you limit your life to certain extent, it is easier to find out the truth. If you do too many things [laughs], you will be lost in your activity. But if you limit your activity, you know, you can see. That is why we observe precepts. The precepts observation is very important.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (5/8/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Shushogi, by Takia Takishu and Azegami Baisen (1890)-a summary of Dogen's Shobogenzo. Suzuki-roshi discussed Section 1 in SR-66-03-13-B.

[2] This second version appears to be Reiho Masunaga's translation, in either: (1) "Shushogi: True Meaning of Training and Enlightenment," in Zen for Daily Living, Tokyo: Shunju-sha Publishing Co., Nov. 1964, p. 50; or (2) *ibid.*, in The Soto Approach to Zen, Layman Buddhist Society Press, Tokyo, 1958, p. 174. The source of the first quotation read by Suzuki-roshi is unknown. For the rest of the lecture, Suzuki-roshi follows Masunaga with only minor changes.

## **1966 februari (1)**

### **1 - KPFA Radio Interview**

Friday, February 18, 1966

KPFA Radio Interview with Elsa Knight Thompson  
KPFA/KPFB Studio, Pacifica Radio, Berkeley, CA

Elsa Knight Thompson: [1] ... by telling us something more about our guest, Suzuki-roshi.

Richard Baker: Shunryu Suzuki-roshi came to America about six years ago, and he was only going to stay for a year or two and [2 words]. Many Americans came to meditate with him. He kept postponing leaving and finally there was such a large group meditating with him in San Francisco [1 word] no more room and there wasn't an opportunity to study with him as well as if we had a place in the mountains. And we found Tassajara hot springs which is this beautiful, old, historical hot springs and historical sight in the San Lucia mountains.

Elsa Knight Thompson: Now, we're-we're still talking about Suzuki-roshi. Didn't he have a congregation in Japan prior to coming to this country?

Richard Baker: Yes, he-as I understand, now I-

Elsa Knight Thompson: We can ask him at what-prior to coming to United States-

Suzuki-roshi: I was appointed by our headquarters to Soko-ji temple. And when-while I was there, I sit every morning and many Caucasians started to join my practice. That is why I started sitting with them-with Caucasian. Mostly-

Elsa Knight Thompson: You were a Zen priest-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Elsa Knight Thompson: Who translated into American? Is that-in Japan you were a Zen priest. Attached to a monastery or a center? What would the proper explanation be?

Suzuki-roshi: I was the head priest of Rinso-in, which is pretty big temple, and I was always helping the monastery near there.

Elsa Knight Thompson: I see. You were attached to a temple and you worked also with the Zen monks there [?]. And you came to this country for a visit and acquired so many people who wish to study with you that there was first a congregation in San Francisco was there not? And then this whole situation expanded suddenly into something which is now the Zen Mountain Center. And perhaps Richard you could tell us how the Zen Mountain Center came about? Where it is and so on as you started to do a while ago, but I wanted the audience to have a little better acquaintance with Suzuki-roshi before we began on the center.

Richard Baker: It's in the San Lucia mountains down inland from the big



coast about ten miles. Do you-should I say something more about his background in Japan or anything like that? I mean, it wasn't exactly clear. Let me say that Soko-ji, which he mentioned, is the name Soko-ji. Soko stands as Japanese shortening for San Francisco-ji temple is the Japanese congregation in San Francisco which he was asked to come to because he knew English. And there are very few Zen masters in the- there's two major sects. There's Soto and Rinzai, and there's only about 20 Zen masters in-or less, maybe 10 in Soto. And we were lucky to have him come here, and he was only going to come for about two years and then he was going to go back to Japan. And then he-because of so many people needed him to stay, he stayed.

The San Lucia Mountains are part of the Los Padres National Forest which stretches from about Carmel Valley down to the Hearst Castle. It's about 350,000 acres of-much of it is a wilderness area. And right in the middle of it, the northern middle of it, there's a- there's Tassajara hot springs, and there's a 20-mile dirt road that passes from Carmel Valley up through the mountains over a 5,000-foot pass and down into this narrow valley where the hot springs are. And we bought the 160 acres surrounding where we're still in the process of paying two payments, about \$90,000 on it. We still have \$220,000 to go or something over the next two years. And we purchased it and-because so many people gave us money, we really weren't prepared to and helped us, we really weren't prepared to start a training and monastery operation right away. We felt obligated to do so and this summer we ran our first practice period with about-well, more than 200 students, probably, all together participated but 70 students at a time staying for a month or two months to a year.

Thompson: Well are there buildings and things of that sort that were connected with its previous use so that you have been able simply to move in and, for the time being at least, make do with the physical facilities there.

Baker: Right. The facilities are-are beautiful old buildings built along-the road itself was built which is rather-in Buddhism you talk about the dao or the way, well, the road itself was built by Chinese who'd worked on the railroad. And it's a road that couldn't be built now-it's too complicated and expensive. It's rather precipitous mountain country. And they built the road by handling stones up and then packing dirt on it, which the road still exists, and they built these buildings about 100 years ago. Quarrying the rocks themselves.

And we've-we've changed the buildings. Put a large zendo or meditation hall in the largest building. Made a guest dining hall in one of the other buildings so the people who have been coming there for years for the hot baths would continue to come. And made a dormitory and equipped all the cabins for the students. And have done an enormous amount of work making it-the students do all the work themselves. We cook for ourselves and take care of ourselves and grow food.

Thompson: Well, now you say about 200 people were there this-this summer. Do they-is it simply a cooperative effort or do they come there for specific training and-do they have to-is there fee for courses? How do you, you know, how physically do we go about all this before we get on to its significance?

Baker: In a Zen monastery, monastery is not such a good translation of the word that's used in Japan, because monastery in America usually means monastic life, and exclusion from outside society, and a place where you live maybe all your life. In Zen, if we call it-it would be better to translate it as practice center or something. It's a place where you go for an intensive study of-intensive meditation study and practice with other people and with your Zen master or your Roshi for a period of time. This may be three months, or four months, or a year, but it's not for a lifetime and your expected to go back into ordinary society. Generally, you stay two or three months and then go back into ordinary society and then back two or three months. Over a period of several years, you might [?] do this to develop your practice.

And students pay two dollars, if they stay a short time, a day or they stay-pay a dollar if they stay a longer time, and a few students don't pay anything if they're staying a year or something like that.

Thompson: Well, now another thing that monastic means is that it's all male.

Baker: This is men and woman.

Thompson: This is men and woman. [Laughs] I want to be clear about that. Well, now that explains more or less the physical aspects of the situation. I take it that Suzuki-roshi will in fact be in residence at the Zen Mountain Center most of the times so that the students will come and go, but you will remain more or less stationary. Is that-[1/2 words] Suzuki-roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: I was moving there so much so at first I didn't have that-that idea of staying there all the time. But recently, Japanese congregation agreed my stay-with my in Tassajara most of the time. Recently we had meeting and they agreed with it. So I can stay most of the time at the center or the monastery.

Baker: The Japanese congregation has been very reluctant to give him up.

Thompson: This is the Japanese congregation in San Francisco? Yes.

Baker: But they've helped us a great deal and we have two other priests, both younger Zen priests, one who's in charge in San Francisco named Katagiri-sensei, and a new, young, brilliant priest we brought

from Japan, for Tassajara, who's in-who's in Tassajara at the mountain center when Suzuki-roshi is not there. And he's there all the time and his name is Chino-sensei.

Thompson: Well, let me ask you questions which may seem to be completely beside the point. There have been a number of people who have lectured on, among them Alan Watts whom I believe is concerned with this center also. There are places where, in general, the problems of the mind and the spirit and psychology are discussed at length, like the Esalen situation. What would you say distinguishes what you are trying to do from the other things which appear to be in some way related? Now don't both of you sit there and ask the other one the answer. I will ask you to both answer in succession.

Baker: Who's first?

Thompson: I don't care which one of you goes first, but I want an answer from both of you.

Baker: Okay. I think there's a underlying, if you look at it sociologically or something like that, there's an underlying similarity between-or some change in orientation going on in society which is at the basis for people when they first get interested in Zen or when they go to an Esalen encounter program or the other things of that interest. But once your into the practice of Zen, it's quite different because we so thoroughly emphasize the identity of body and mind and though you practice-in some sense the practice is-you can practice from a mental point of view or a physical point of view but both really are one. We emphasize the directness of this kind of practice, really, that goes beyond mental or emotional or physical. And in order to practice, we emphasize sitting as calmly as possible so that your-you know your mind and body before it takes any activity. In other words, if you sit as calmly as possible in a meditation posture, it doesn't necessarily have to be lotus posture or anything like that it can be in a chair. But-with-and with a certain way of thinking about things, it frees you from conceptual ways of thinking about things, your mind and body become-you become to know your mind and body before they take any activity. And out of that they balance or almost a kind of silence, you take your activity. And this strong orientation in this direction is different from the others, I think.

Thompson: And your answer?

Suzuki-roshi: Please, continue.

Thompson: No, he said what he wanted to say for the time being I think. And we'd-I'd like to know from you. You would come into the American society at a certain very turbulent period in America's development in every way, when this country is, without doubt, the most powerful country in the world and in the minds of many the most dangerous. You came for a purpose. You are attempting to fulfill that

purpose. What purpose in the context of this society, which you have now had as an opportunity to observe for some time, where do you feel what you are doing-what contribution, what roll you-does your approach and the approach that presumably the people who will study with you have in-in the general context? Because we're talking to an audience which includes, not only many people who for years have heard Zen lectures about, but also many people whose views are largely political rather than spiritual in direction, but who have a great interest in. So, I would like to know from you what you feel the role of this group and this activity or lack of activity, since you are about engage in [1 word].

Suzuki-roshi: First of all, I think it is necessary for everyone, not only American people or Japanese people. It [?] for everyone the most important thing is to have more flexible mind, you know, which you can observe things as it is and accept things as it is without any prejudice or one-sided idea. This is-when I say like this [1 word] looks like quite easy, but actually it is not so easy. In this point, without directing our practice or our human life, in this point whatever you do will not be successful because you will create problems with each other, you know. Someone-when someone is successful, it means for some other person. It means it may be the difficulty. So, in this way we have various problem in this world and in this society-even in our family. So, first of all we should be-our life should be concentrated on each moment. Not without much-with much prejudiced or not much one-sided, rigid-

Thompson: What your talking about is a total awareness all the time.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Total awareness and to know our situation always. To be aware of.

Thompson: Yes. Now tell me, supposing one were-does train for total awareness, which is after all not exclusively a Zen concept-

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Thompson: But has been the concept of all great mystics throughout time, I believe. Doesn't that mean also being aware of-of what's wrong? Meaning, others words, so many times it seems to me, let me try to put it another way. So many times as soon as people become involved in this kind of idea and they grasp the idea intellectually, they begin to assume that they achieved purity rather than the beginnings of consciousness. And this, it seems to me, causes more difficulty with some of the practitioners and talkers about what everybody should be doing. Then the person quite frankly admits that they are-that they know that such a thing exists and might be possible, but that they are also infinitely aware that they have not yet arrived there. And this has always seemed to me to be the great problem with the promulgation-with getting people to understand this because they hear people talk about it and then they say but that person is not this and this and this and this and they are not. I want you to talk about this please.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Intellectual understanding of something may be sometime, if it is about future it will be-it will create some-it will be-it will bound our activity or it will restrict our activity. If it is about something you have done already, it is the limitation of the actual experience which should be forget, you know. And-but without forgetting about forgetting the previous intellectual understanding of something, that means you are bound by something which is not real. This attitude will create some other difficulties. So, in this way we are bound by future and past without knowing the-

Thompson: Without knowing the future or understanding the past.

Suzuki-roshi: Without knowing which is real-without any real understanding of anything [laughs, laughter]. Sacrificing most valuable present [1 word]. This is what we are doing and-not only we lose the true meaning of our life, we are creating problems for ourselves which exist only in present moment. This is [1 word] problems for human being.

Thompson: What if you know what you're doing at the present moment, you know, supposing-you-a person beginning with this idea knows that at the present moment he is aware of something, but he discovers that what he is aware of in himself is evil and he knows it. Isn't this part of the process? In other words, your becoming aware of something and you realize that you are covering your real motivations with good intentions, or pretending to yourself that you are doing something for one reason when actually you are about to do something for quite another reason. Isn't there a great deal of, well, I won't say suffering, but isn't there a great deal that might be discovered that would not be too easy to accept for people who attempt this path? Why don't you talk about that Richard because you, I understand, are doing just that.

Baker: When you-of course the experience of the person who's beginning to sit-to do meditation, to do zazen-meditation, again, is not too good a translation because you don't meditate on anything; you sit there ready for whatever happened [?]. You find that it uncovers many things, many things which ordinarily wouldn't happen in psychoanalysis or something like that happen to you, and many other things happen to you to. None of them do you give much importance one way or the other except as sort of occurrences. But, your-you find that the sitting-the process of meditation has a deep wisdom in it somehow, so that as it uncovers it strengthens you at the same time to be able to accept what it uncovers. And you begin by sitting so that you don't twitch and scratch your nose and move just cause you're restless. That imperturbability, which you begin to get physically and then mentally, helps you when visions or monsters or some very disturbing part of yourself comes to your awareness. You have a kind of imperturbability which just lets you let it happen and find out what's going on.

Now the earlier thing which you said-which you were trying to relate this kind of practice to the political situation and also to-does the person practicing feel he's achieved some purity or some special state which means that he doesn't have to do much maybe or something like that. I think to feel that you arrive at something is a completely mistaken idea. I mean Zen is completely against the idea that you ever arrive. There's only this moment. There can't be any achievement because there's nothing to compare that achievement with.

So Suzuki-roshi often says that the best way is to have a beginner's mind-just the beginner, who's just starting who takes everything from a fresh and spontaneous point of view because the expert mind is only capable of one or two things. The beginner's mind is open to everything. And then it's much better to say that Zen is something which makes you ready for any activity. So that if you, you know, are confronted with a world in which there are many problems, that your activity may be-in some way your-who you are is defined by your situation moment after moment. Right now I'm a person talking on a microphone. That's who I am. I'm not Dick Baker or something like that. I'm a person talking on a microphone. When I get in the car, I'll be a person driving a car.

So if I'm marching in a peace march, I'm a person marching in a peace march because that's the situation that's presented to me and I'm taking that. If I'm more for individual freedom in some way, then that's the kind of person I am at that moment. I-the Zen person becomes a person who responds and is at one with his situation moment after moment. So, if he's in an evil society, he should-society isn't really evil or good but there are many problems which occur in society. I think that your response will be, moment after moment, to bring things-yourself in tune with it and at the same time it in tune with the natural order of mind and you can almost say cosmic naturalness that you experience.

Thompson: Well, I was also sort of headed toward the idea of the difference between knowing that a thing can be done and being able to do it. I mean, I can accept as a fact that you or you may be able to be totally aware-mentally, emotionally, and spiritually from moment to moment, but the fact that I know that it's a fact doesn't suddenly put me in the same position, and I think that frequently when people have studied with their minds a great deal about any religious process, and I'm using the word religious in its broadest sense, they tend to confuse the desire for virtue with the achievement of virtue. And I-does it not take a long time for the achievement or is it-well, for example, when you're meditating-certainly if you're meditating, and again I'm trying to use it in the widest sense that you have referred to, and particularly in a beautiful place surrounded by people who love you in the biblical sense of that word, in the religious sense of that word, you might be able to be aware of everything from moment to moment. It might be a great experience, but is not the purpose so that you can in the market place be that same person.

Suzuki-roshi: Here, in your question, I think something-ach-you put emphasis on intellectual understanding or your point is intellectual understanding is not achievement itself. Here you put emphasis on achievement. But, actually we do not achieve anything, you know, in our practice. But just to be ourselves on that moment is the way. So, when-when you have-when you have some idea of achievement, just achievement is already something which you will achieve. So, that is not what you have right now. Achievement should be something you already have, and how to have it to forget all about the idea of self or to be one with the surroundings. That is how to achieve our goal. Our goal is [?] right here not some place [?] or in the future.

Thompson: And right now?

Baker: Your question or-are really-real expression of yourself in some way, I feel. It's quite interesting. It's so fully packed with ideas that it's hard to answer or respond to any of them almost. But one thing you said, and I'm not sure how it fits in but, one things you said is about take-can you know if-you may want to achieve something but can you know you can achieve it or that's not the same as achieving it. When [?] the emphasis on the nowness [?], which is sounds-everyone says the now, there are even rock-n-roll groups named the ever present now, but to really physically and emotionally be totally in this nowness, which is a rather radical-you really perceive first that you have a change to a perceiving space rather than time, and then almost where you don't perceive time or space. Past and future are totally in this moment, so that you'd act on the future only in the realistic sense in which what you do now has effectiveness-now as the future is present in this moment. So you don't sort of speculate or get yourself involved in situations which there's no-you don't find your mind putting yourself in situations which you actually physically and emotionally can't be effective in [end of tape side A]. In other words, if something-if you find yourself taking action on something, it's something which that future is present in this moment and that you can totally mentally, physically, and intellectually be involved in. Now, the other thing is, we don't-I don't think, at least from my own practice I've been sitting every day or every twice a day or longer for about six or seven years now, my experience is not one of having achieved anything or any special total awareness or something. I suppose it is-I notice some differences in the way I used to be. It's more-what I mean to say is-that's not quite right-it's not a freedom from problems, perhaps the sting [?] is gone from the problems, but life is still a constant series of inadequacies and problems and things you cope with. The change is the immediacy and spontaneity with which you cope with them more than that there are no problems.

Thompson: Well, I wouldn't certainly that, even if the problems weren't yours, that the world is far from free of problems.

Baker: Sometimes when you read the teachings though, it says things like you have to realize that the world is perfect as it is. That it is nir-

that samsara and nirvana in the-there's the something called the Majumika [?] school and out of this they had the idea which Zen is part of that school. Samsara-the world of delusion is the same as nirvana. The world of complete-

Thompson: Are one.

Baker: Enlightenment are one. So you can get the idea that well everything's okay. It's all nirvana, you know, we're all perfect, but on some way that's true but that doesn't mean that in the practicalities every day you still don't brush your teeth and take care of things and worry about the world's problems-least for me anyway [laughs, laughter].

Thompson: Go [?] on. You see to the average-let me try to put it in another way. To many people listening to talk about this sort of thing, is purely an intellectual thing, you know, they hear about it. The same as hear about [1 word] that there's been a demonstration in Oakland or anything else that they haven't been involved in, you see. But, I think that also people are very much interested-these ideas and ideas related are very current in our society today. I think that many of the younger people, without even knowing it, are withdrawing in many ways from what we call the establishment for reasons that in some way are related to these reasons. And therefore the relationship between what you in western parlance believe and your conduct, your ability to live in a society surrounded with violence, surrounded with poverty, surrounded with human suffering, and to do so from moment to moment with love and clarity is quite a project as to be envisaged by the average person, you see. And I wanted in this interview, if I could, to shed some light from your standpoint on those problems to the person who might be interested in involving themselves and to the-from the people who are already involved as Richard here is. Is there any comment you would-either one like to make?

Baker: It's pretty easy for the average person, maybe, if he practices something like zazen. That kind of practice is really a kind of shortcut, though even if your in it you have to be so-you have to really practice fully with your whole mind and body in order to make it work, if there's some idea of it working. But it's course, I don't think, you can't say that that kind of awareness is impossible for other people, but it's-it does seem, if you don't have some ideas and way of going about thinking and moving your body and life toward that orientation, then it seems impossible. But if you have some suggestion, like Zen Buddhism which is-in a way it doesn't exist, because ultimately it's a-it's a way of freeing you from all conceptions, all frameworks, all body or mind hindrances. So, whence [?] you really-when you really do it, Zen Buddhism doesn't exist, but it's certainly helpful to feel it exists for a while.

Thompson: Is there anything else you would like to say?



Suzuki-roshi: How to help people is very-not very difficult thing but it is rather difficult to explain how to, you know. To help people, in its true sense, is just to join [?] their life and [1 word] their life as they do and to be always friend of others. That is only way. And if they find me something different from them even though we are in same condition and living same way. This is, I think, how to help them and how to teach them real practice of Zen.

Baker: Can-can-we're ending soon I think.

Thompson: Yes.

Baker: I'd like to say one thing, is that the possibility of all of this occurring and the opportunity for many people to come in contact with Suzuki-roshi and with other teachers, is really only for the first time possible in America through Zen Mountain Center for any-on any-otherwise there's a few places where you meditate two or three times a week, that kind of thing. But with a real Zen master and with the situation of being able to live there for months or a year or something like that is [?] possible.

Thompson: Thank you both very much for being here.

---

Source: Copy of a commercially available tape. The original tape is believed to be in the possession of KPFA/Pacifica. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (3/04/01).

[1] Opening words were not recorded. Presumed to be "Why don't you start ...".

## **1966 maart (3)**

### **1 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-3**

Sunday, March 13, 1966

Sesshin Lecture: Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-3  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Good morning. This lecture is for advanced student in his practice, but I think this lecture will help you even though you haven't advanced practice. And at least some day you will understand this lecture. This is the gist of Dogen's teaching, and various offshoot are the 95 fascicle of-fascicles of his work. This is basic teaching-basic teaching of Dogen.

And we have finished the first paragraph, anyway: [1]

When all things are Buddhist ... [gap in tape of 21 sec.]

Tape Operator: Testing. [Blows on microphone.]

Suzuki-roshi: [phenomena, we have enlightenment and ignorance, studies, life and death, buddhas and people. When all things are without self, we have no ignorance, no enlightenment-][2] ... no buddhas, no people, no life and [no] death. The Buddhist way ... [gap in tape of 18 sec.]

[Operator blows and taps on the microphone.]

Suzuki-roshi: [is beyond being and non-being. Therefore we have life and death, ignorance and enlightenment, people and buddhas. However, flowers-] ... fall with our attachment, and weeds grows-grow with our detachment.

I can visualize Dogen-zenji, you know, who is just standing watching some flowers. He liked plum blossom very much. [Gap in tape of 15 sec. See SR-66-08-15-A, p. 4, for a similar comment.]

[Operator blows and taps on the microphone.]

Tape operator: One, one, two, three, four, five, one six seven eight nine ten eleven twelve.

Suzuki-roshi: ... in wheat, which is strong enough to come out through frost and snow. He is just watching it. And he is-this statement covers all of our life, and all of our history-human history, and Buddhist philosophy. This fascicle, from beginning to end, [is] based on this paragraph, so this is the most important point-the point of whole fascicle.

What I noticed here, you know, in observing your practice, you are not completely involved in practice-our practice. Your practice is part of [laughs] you-just a small part of your life. One hour or two hours in 12-24 hours [laughs]. That is your practice. So instead of practicing zazen here two hours, you think you can do something-if there is something good, better-it may be better to do something [laughs]-something else instead of practicing zazen. This is-I think you [laughs]-still you have this kind of attitude.

But Buddhism is not-our practice is not like that. Our practice-if we are not completely involved in our practice, that is not our practice. It is not one hour of 24 hours. So if you-if I scold you, you may [laughs]-you may go out. If I give you some candy, you will stay here [laughs, laughter]. I dare say you are impossible [laughs, laughter]. You are just like child [laughs], because, you know, you lack in-you lack in your confidence to study it as a whole life study. Actually, you cannot get out

of Buddhism. It is impossible to get out of it, but still you think you can, you know, go out from Buddhism, go out from Zen-from this zendo. Actually, once you enter, that's all [laughs, laughter]. Some day you'll have to come back. I know that [laughs]. I myself tried to get out of it many times [laughs], but I couldn't.

So sometime I may say, "You are bad now" [laughs]. But what is bad? Who is bad? Someone who is good is bad now [laughs]. Sometime I say, "You are very good." But someone is not good enough is good enough [laughs]. Same thing, isn't it? Doesn't make any sense-"good or bad."

You-in Japan, young people say, "This is absolutely good." It just emphasize-adjective [adverb] emphasizing good. But when we say "absolutely good," it is same thing as "absolutely bad" [laughs]. If it is absolutely good, that is absolutely bad. And if-when we say "absolutely good," it is-it does not mean good or bad. It is something more than good or bad. So in this sense, absolutely good is absolutely bad.

But sometime we say, comparatively, "This is good, this is bad." This is necessary-this two way of understanding of life is necessary. We have-sometime we have to compare something to the other, and we should say this is comparatively good. Or there will not be-no need to say "comparatively" always [laughs], but in this sense, we say, most of us-most of time, we say "comparatively good or bad." This is very important, but this comparatively good or bad life is created a lot of difficulties now. This comparison is the basic attitude towards science and philosophy and intellectualizing our life. When you intellectualize our life, eventually it will end in dead end. That is why we have difficulties in our time. Moreover, originally it is just comparatively good. We are comparatively good than some people. That's all. But nowadays we say, "Absolutely good. This is absolutely good." Here is the big mistake, you know. When you say [so], even by-even emotionally, that is big, big mistake. Nothing is absolutely good.

When you say "absolutely good," it does not mean good anymore. It is same thing as bad. If you understand-if you use it, or if you feel it in this way, when you say "absolutely good," that is all right. But when you say, "absolutely good" emphasizing something comparatively good, that is big mistake. You are forcing your way to others. You are deprived of freedom from others. This is big, big mistake. But, in this-in next paragraph, Dogen-zenji says:

What we move-that we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance. That things advance and understand themselves is enlightenment.

Here he is talking in the complete understanding of life. What is good? What is ignorance and what is enlightenment? What is good and what is bad?

We say "ignorance" or "enlightenment" without knowing what is ignorance and what is enlightenment. But when we say "ignorance" or "enlightenment," we should know what is ignorance in its true sense and what is enlightenment in its true sense. If you think what is ignorance in its true sense, when we-we say criticizing something that is-move ourselves toward something, you know, and criticize something, good or bad, that is ignorance. "That things advance and understand themselves is enlightenment." But when you-we have no particular concrete idea of good and bad-good or bad, and leave-and expose ourselves to their criticism and accept their criticism, that is enlightenment.

We may do many things intellectually, or intentionally, or in realm of consciousness, but those activity-most of those activity is more unconscious activity rather than conscious activity. And what is-which is true expression of yourself-conscious one or unconscious one [laughs]? Of course, 99 percent of your activity is unconsciously, and that is true expression of yourself. If you say, "I am right," that is, you know, a small part of your expression-just small part of your expression. So you cannot, you know, force yourself to someone else. As you understand yourself, we don't know what we are exactly. "We don't know" is right.

So if you understand in this way, that is enlightenment. Those two statement-ignorance-about ignorance and enlightenment, is-are based on one big understanding of life. Enlightenment is something which will happen to us sometime, and ignorance is something which will come over to us sometime [laughs], but we are big box [laughs] including enlightenment and ignorance.

So in our everyday life, there is enlightenment and ignorance. You cannot [laughs] escape from ignorance [laughs] to attain enlightenment, because enlightenment is not somewhere else within yourself. So actually enlightenment is, as he says, to be-to know what is ignorance is enlightenment. And ignorance is to-to be ignorant about enlightenment is ignorance [laughs]. Something good is something bad. If something bad-if I say something is good, that something should be bad [laughs]. Because-it is same thing if I say, "Good morning. You came in time this morning [laughs]. That's very good [laughs]." That means he does not come [laughs, laughter] on time usually [laughs, laughter]. If I scold him, "Why didn't [laughs, laughter] you come on time?" It means he comes every-almost every morning on time [laughs]. So it's same thing [laughs]. Maybe sometime opposite [laughs]? So we should not be disturbed by the word [?] of ignorance or enlightenment. Anyway, if we understand ourselves completely, there is no special thing as enlightenment or ignorance. Ignorance is enlightenment [laughs], enlightenment is ignorance.

It is buddhas who understand ignorance.

You see, he says, "It is buddhas who understand ignorance"-his own ignorance [laughs]. He is buddha when he understand-when he enlightened about his ignorance, and it is people who are ignorant of enlightenment. So there is no difference between buddha and people-same thing, same human being. But buddha is someone who understand our ignorance, and we are ignorant of enlightenment. But, if we-I say in this way, then there will not be no need to practice zazen [laughs]. If we are buddha-if we are same as buddha, why we should practice zazen? This is-when you understand this philosophy or statement, just intellectually, you will have this problem.

But anyway he says:

It is people who are ignorant of enlightenment. Further, there are those who are enlightened about enl- [partial word]-above enlightenment, and those who are ignorant-ignorant of ignorance.

"Enlightenment above enlightenment." If you retain the idea-consciousness of enlightenment, you know, that is not good enough. So you should, you know, go beyond enlightenment. So if you attain enlightenment, that enlightenment means enlightenment about-above enlightenment of ignorance, you know. So eventually you will go towards ignorance, you know. When you say, "I have attained enlightenment consciously," that consciousness is delusion. About what you attained enlightenment? You attained enlightenment about ignorance. What you, you know, grasp is ignorance [laughs], not enlightenment. There is nothing to understand, you know, but ignorance for enlightened person. There is nowhere to go-enlightenment or ignorance [laughs]. So if you attain enlightenment, you have to, you know, go back to ignorance because there is no other way to-for you to go [laughs]. So if you attain enlightenment, you have to go back to ignorance.

So "enlightenment above enlightenment": conscious enlightenment is not good enough. So you have to give up enlightenment. If-when at the moment you attain enlightenment, or when you actually attain enlightenment, what you grasp is ignorance-is your ignorance or our own ignorance. When you understand the ignorance of yourself-how ignorant you have been [laughs]-that is enlightenment.

So it is impossible for enlightened person to forget about enlightenment. It is impossible because you have found something which you had-you have had [laughs]. So how can you forget about enlightenment? You should remember. You should abide in enlightenment forever with people who have same nature as his own.

So someone who thinks "I attained enlightenment," although most of them haven't enlightenment-attain enlightenment yet, "I am only person who attained enlightenment" [laughs]. That is big mistake. That is just delusion. He has nothing-he didn't grasp anything but delusion. It

will soon vanished away from his memory-from his experience.

So even though we looks like doing same thing with people, there is some difference between the people who attain enlightenment and who haven't. But for enlightened one, constant-constant effort will be continued with people wherever he is.

And those who are ignorant of ignorance.

"Ignorant of ignorance" means people eventually will attain enlightenment. Those people ignorant-who are ignorant of his ignorance is-just now-is just ignorance-ignorant of his own ignorance. So he doesn't feel that he has same quality or same nature with-as enlightened person. That's all, but eventually, as long as his-he has same nature as enlightened person, he will-once he become enlightened of his ignorance, he will be saved.

When buddhas are truly buddhas, they are not necessarily aware of themselves as buddhas.

You see? So when it is-if so-if there is someone who attained enlightenment and go back to ignorance, and if there are someone, although he is ignorant of ignorance, eventually he will become enlightened of his ignorance. Then it is not-they are not necessarily-it is not necessarily aware of their-themselves as buddha. If so, you know, it is not necessary, even, to become aware of his buddha-nature. Anyway, we have it. The difference is those who attained enlight- [partial word]- who is awakened by his true nature, or he is ignorant of ignorance. That is the difference.

So strictly speaking, it is not always necessary to be aware of ourselves to be buddha. Same thing [laughs]. That is why I say you have come back to here [laughs]. Even though you are thousand miles away from this zendo, you are included [laughs] in this zendo. As our understanding is like this, whether you are here or not is not the point. Do you understand?

However, you may ask me what is the purpose of practice? Anyway, you, you know, I think you are relieved. You have forgotten all what you had on your shoulders now. Actually, there is nothing to do for you. There is nothing especially to do for you. But then why Dogen-zenji strived for this point, for many and many years, until he attained enlightenment in China and dropped off his idea of mind and body? It is so, you know, but, as he says, flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds grows with our detachment. In spite of-in spite of detachment [attachment], flower will go-will fall.

So-this is life, actually. And if you do not try to understand this point fully, those, you know, profound teaching is nothing to-for us. So actually, even though he says in this way, actually it is necessary to-to

practice-to continue our practice in realm of duality as unenlightened people. We are-we should be all unenlightened people, and we should strive for enlightenment. We should do that. While you are striving for it, you will really understand what he meant. Intellectually you have understood it already. Intellectually. But then you-you can remain doing nothing [laughs] in sunny place eating something which you want? Can you do that? Or can you always lie down in your bed [laughs] reading some interesting stories? Can you do that? No, we cannot. For a while you can do something, you know. That is [what] most people are doing. For a while I can read something. And if we [are] tired of reading, we will go out, or we will work. And if we earn some money to be lazy [laughs], we will come back from work. So continue your life in this way. You will have no result. You will not find out any meaning of life.

Someday or sometime you will have deep regret with what you did-you have been doing, and sometime you will be disgusted with yourself [laughs]. And you feel disable to help people, or disabled to love anyone. You know, you will be isolate-completely isolated from this world.

So you may care for something good-something which is absolutely true [laughs], and try to escape from this world, or commit suicide. This is what we will do [with] our life. But there is the way to resume this kind of deep-deeper understanding of life and work with people without any prejudice, without any discrimination, and help with each other with mutual understanding. The only way is to be cooperated-to share our joy of deeper understanding of life with people, and to participate worldly life more sincere effort. Then you will have-you will be a perfect human being as well as perfect Buddha's disciple.

When I went to Palo Alto-some new student who was studying Orient-Indian philosophy by Doctor McKarr [?]: "I read many books about Zen, and I know the term they use-'oneness of the duality.'" But actually, what is [laughs] 'oneness of the duality'?" he said-he asked me. I had no time to [laughs] discuss about the oneness of the duality [laughs] [with someone] who understand intellectually pretty well what is [laughs] oneness of the duality.

But-I wanted to help him, you know, but I s- [partial word]-I knew that it is impossible to help him immediately. Until he suffer, until he try to find out what is oneness of the duality, it may take pretty long time. By long effort, his understanding will, you know, be better and better [laughs, laughter] until, "Oh, this is oneness of the duality." [Laughs.] How you reach this kind of understanding is to suffer in the realm of, you know, actual life, or to think more about our life, or to practice zazen. One of the two.

So to practice Zen in noisy place itself is a way-this is very dualistic way, you know [laughs]-a way of the noisy-noisiness of the outside [laughs] [loud traffic noises can be heard]. Try to be calm. This is most

extremely dualistic way, but in this effort, there is, you know, big hint [?].

So after all those sharp, profound teaching, he [Dogen] just-he put some words like this:

However, flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds grows with our detachment.

He comes back to our actual life [?] without any thinking, and where we should make our effort.

When we see things and hear things with our whole body and mind, our understanding is not like a mirror with reflections, nor like water under the moon. If we understand one side, the other side is dark.

[Laughs.] This, you know, three lines is impossible [laughs]. You cannot do anything with those three lines. This is impossible word-statement [laughs], and it takes pretty long time to understand this. "When we see things and hear things with our whole body and mind"-without any idea of enlightenment or like idea of ignorance-when we do something and go beyond ourselves is to be enlightened by it-oh, no, no-"Our understanding is not like a mirror with reflections." You say the moon is a-the reflection is on the water or in the water, but it is not like that. When you watch the beautiful moon on the breaks of water, or waves of water, or calm silent still water, that is the moon. So when you see the moon, in the water that is the moon. When you see the moon in the sky, that is the moon. You don't see the moon on the water. It is impossible to see [laughs] the moon in the water and the moon in the sky at the same time.

So only way [is] to, you know, to appreciate the beauty of the moon in the water or the moon in the sky. But intellectually we say "enlightenment" or "ignorance." It means you are [laughs]-you are very busy [laughs, laughter] watching [?]. What shall I do? If you sit here, you have many [laughs], you know, disturbance in your mind [laughs]. If you are at home, you want to sit [laughs]. When you sit, you have-your mind is there. When you are there, your mind is here. And you are going back and forth [laughing, laughter]-or moon! Beautiful moon. Very busy moon.

So he says it is not like [laughs]-it is not like a mirror with reflection, nor like water under the moon. If we understand one side-sky or the water-or some images on the mirror, or some object, you cannot see both side at once. If we understand one side, the other side is dark. That is two. But usually you want to see the one side only [laughs], having some idea or some [laughs]-some desire for the other side. So you cannot accept what you are doing. You are always, you know, have something-something else in your mind [laughs]. You see some-one side, but the perfect way is just to watch one side. That is enough. This



is pretty strict, you know. Before you understand that, you will say this is perfectly-perfect teaching. It will take time because you will have some-something else, you know, something opposite in your mind always-always.

So Zen is something more than just practice. Actually, Zen is something more than just cross-legged position. But if you understand something more, you have to, you know, practice in-practice it in cross-legged position. There is no other way. One side is enough.

You may say, just to sit on your black cushion will not do anything for you. You cannot solve the problems of our life by just sitting. You may say so [laughs]. You may say so, but it means you are trying to watch both side-up and down. Pretty busy. In that way, your practice will not work. If you say, "I have to sit. That's all. Period." There is no need for you to think the meaning of zazen, even, if you would just sit. That will work out beautifully. This is our zazen.

So one thing is enough. One practice is enough.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/30/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi is reading and commenting on Shobogenzo "Genjo-koan."

[2] The missing segments quoted here are from Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell, 1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter]. In the fragments that are audible on the tape of this lecture, Suzuki-roshi is clearly following the Tanahashi/Aitken version.

## **2 - Shusogi, Section 1**

Sunday, March 13, 1966

Sesshin Lecture: Shusogi, Section 1  
Lecture B[1]

Soko-ji, San Francisco

Tape operator: Recorded March-March 13, 1966, Soko-ji Zen Temple, a lecture by Reverend Suzuki on the Shoshoji [sic]. Huh?

Second voice: Shushogi.

Tape operator: Is it? A lecture on the Shushogi. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: We started to recite Lotus Sutra-Shushogi. Shushogi is the-consist of various teachings from Shobogenzo written by Dogen-zenji. From 95 fascicle of his work, we compiled various teaching in a handy way so that you can recite it. This is Shushogi.

I want to explain Shushogi-the meaning of Shushogi little by little. Shushogi. This is translate-translation by Doctor [Reiho] Masunaga, Page 48.[2]

To arrive at thorough understanding of birth and death-this is a crucial problem for all Buddhists. If the Buddha dwells in birth and death, birth and death disappear. Understand only that birth-and-death is itself nirvana; there is nothing to avoid as birth-death and nothing to seek as nirvana. You then slough off the chain that bind you to birth-death. This-the supreme problem in Buddhism-must be thoroughly penetrated.

The problem of birth and death-this is actually the big problem. The problem of-when we say problem of birth and death, we mean suffering of this world-birth and death. You may say birth is not suffering, but birth is suffering, and death is suffering too [2 words unclear]. When we say birth and death, we mean birth and death, not just physical pain or fear of-mental fear of death or birth. But this problem is vital problem for human being-not just physical or mental problem. Because of this suffering, we can live in this world. And because of this suffering, we have to study more. And because of this suffering-result of this suffering, sometime we fight [laughs]. This is fundamental problem of human life. So this suffering is not just suffering of human being-mental or physical suffering.

Mental suffering or physical suffering is-we say one of the-we say ju[3]-one of the five skandhas. But this suffering is not suffering. This suffering include all human suffering, including mental and physical suffering. The Sanskrit-in Sanskrit, we say dukkha. Dukkha means it-it wouldn't go-it doesn't go away. Why our life does not go away, or why human being has various problem is because of this suffering. And why we suffer is because we have attachment or love. But [by] "love" here we mean some attachment. We always attach to something. Because of this attachment, we fight. Because of this attachment, we find this world very disagreeable-because we feel some restriction. We want to do something, but there is many restriction. Because we attach to freedom too much, so we cannot act as we want. We cannot live exactly [as] we want. This is fundamental cause of suffering.

So we say "thirsty love." Thirsty love is to, you know, to crave for something and to attach to something. And we feel as if we cannot live without some attachment to some special thing. Sometime you may say

it's much better to die if I lose this valuable thing. That is suffering. This suffering is more than-more deeper than problem of just physical or mental death-birth or-and death. But people do not know why we have so much trouble in this world. And instead of reflecting on our life, we want to-to establish some perfect world where there is no suffering-perfect world. This is also, you know, from Buddhist viewpoint, wrong-wrong way. It is because there is no perfection in this world. This is just attachment to the idea of perfection, and this is actually the cause of suffering-cause of world [word?]. And you may feel very pessimistic or sad, as I felt when I was young, when you hear this world is not constant.

In Japan, when I was young, they were striving for-to their descendant to save some money to build some beautiful, strong house for their descendant. But if they are fortunate-if they are lucky, they will be successful in building beautiful house, having big property, and a lot of money. But this fortune he build up will not last long. We say "third generation." They will put notice on their house-house to [laughs] sell or rent. "House to rent" for third generation [laughs]. "House to rent" for third generation. And my member[4] used to say to me that, "You are third generation from [laughs]-from your master. So you have to be careful." [Laughs.]

And their warning at last came to true [laughs], and I came to America [laughs, laughter]. My temple is now house to-temple to rent [laughs, laughter]. And my boy is striving for to take over [laughs] notice "House to rent." This is our life, but when you are young, this is not so, you know, so critical or some cold observation of the-our life.

So in this truth there is no exception-no exception [laughs]. We should know that. No exception. All of us-all of human being should be prepared for this truth. All the cultures-all the human cultures must suffer this suffering without exception. So from this point of view, our human history is the succession of suffering-human suffering. How we suffered-we have had suffered is our human history. Do you say Rome-Rome is not-do not last long? We-that is true. For everything that is true. If you ignore this point and attach or seize the prosperity you have, you will make big mistake. And you should be always prepared for next act or next stage.

When you are prepared for next step, then your culture is quite sound and strong. But when you just attach to the prosperity you have, this is very dangerous stage. It is not matter of-of power or wealth. There is strict controlling power-strict truth to everything. That is powerful enough to deny all the human power and wealth. No spiritual power doesn't work on this point. This is Buddha's teaching. And how we live in this world is Buddha's teaching.

This kind of suffering we mean is very deep and has been very critical to-to the people who has too much self-centered idea. So to appear

means to disappear. That something disappear-only something that disappears is true existence. Something which does not disappear is illusion. Don't you think so? It is illusion because everything disappears [laughs] without any exception. So if you say this one-this flower does not disappear or die, that is illusion. When you think this flower will die pretty soon, that is real flower.

So something which does not disappear from this world is illusion for ourselves. So if you want to live-if you want to enjoy your prosperity, you should be prepared for the next step. If something you attach [to] disappear, what you will do next is a problem [laughs]. You should be prepared for next step. Something which is going should go [laughs], and we should work on something new. It is foolish to, you know, to try to bring back something which is going. This is very silly way of life. Something which comes should be welcome. As soon as it come, it will go [laughs, laughter].

So we have to be prepared for this situation-this kind of situation. And to have to face-to be prepared to face this kind of situation is our spirit, and to have this spirit is true spirit to live in this world. So to know [that] this world is world of suffering is wisdom. And to accept this kind of suffering is our true nature. If so, our history of human being from Buddha to us-the history of unfolding of true nature-true nature revealing-revealed itself through our human life. This strict truth and strict way of earth [?] unfolded itself from Buddha to us. This is another, you know, interpretation of human history. So our history of human being is history of suffering. And for Buddhist, it is history of true spirit-unfolding of true spirit.

So here we have the perfect understanding of birth and death. If so, this true understanding of birth and death-in other word, true understanding of suffering is nirvana itself-the unfolding of nirvana or unfolding of buddha-nature.

I don't want to be too-too critical [laughs] to our civilization, but most of you-most of us are already pretty critical to our civilization, and this is the time where we should let our civilization go [laughs] and try to establish new civilization. Something which is going should go [laughs]. There is no way to take them back. The sun is going there, so how can you pull the sun back to east again? The sun is just going; no one is responsible for that. No particular person is not responsible for that. It is just going, by nature [laughs].

So in this sense to live in this world is actually the suffering itself. But this suffering-if you prepare to accept the suffering and create it enough-vigorous enough to create new civilization, then you are following the truth. If you reflect on ourselves, what kind of effort we are making, you will find out how Buddhism is necessary for us to believe in.

This century, especially from Second World War or even before the Second World War, we came-our civilization reached some point where we have to think more. And if you-if people still making the same effort, you have to be [laughs] rather critical to [laughs]-to their effort, because you know what kind of effort they are making-the useless effort.

We cannot be-we cannot help being critical. It is the effort some people are making is too ridiculous. But at the same time, we should be-we should not forget this point, what we make-what makes us critical? On what ground you become critical is-should be at the same time reflected-to be reflected. Some people become critical and their criticism is based on some-also some perfection-to, you know, to favor [?] some perfect social framework. This is also mistake. They will repeat same error because of their perfectionism. There is nothing perfect in this world. Where we live, nothing perfect. And we-we have nothing to worthwhile to attach because there is nothing perfect.

So even though it is not perfect, something-some effort should be done. Even though it is not perfect, something new must be welcome. But it does not mean that is perfect [laughs]. So at the same time we have no excuse to force your way. You may call it collectivism-collectivism: to do something by group. This is not [laughs]-that is forcing your way on someone else. For an instance, Communistic way may be good, but the big mistake is the idea of the perfect, last framework of society. There is no last framework of society in this world. The-our social framework should be renewed and renewed and renewed. Their idea is not perfect at all. So here they have big mistake. What they are thinking is maybe good, but when they try to force their way to others by number, by strength, by material, or political power, that is big mistake.

So in short, we have our spiritual kingdom within ourselves. No one can invade into our spiritual kingdom. Our spiritual effort will provide better-better framework for our society, and this effort should be continued forever as long as human being exist. There is no time where-there is no-there is not necessary to make any effort, relying on some social structure. So everyone should have spiritual kingdom within ourselves. If this point is ignored, there is no human being in this world. We will become good pet [laughs]-pet of some social pet in or animal in the zoo [laughs]. Even though we may have good-something good to eat [laughs], temperature of the-our room may be perfect [laughs] for us. But we cannot-as long as we are human being, we will not be satisfied with perfect zoo. This point is very important for us. So some suffering is indispensable element for human being. Because we have some problem, to work on it we are human being. If there is no problem to work on it, we become animal in the zoo [laughs].

So to realize that we are in the world of suffering is to realize that we are in nirvana. That is oneness of birth and death and nirvana.

[Aside in Japanese.]

So we want to repeat his translation again:

To arrive at a subtle understanding of birth and death is-birth and death-this is the crucial problem for all Buddhist. If Buddha dwells in birth and death, birth and death

### **3 - The Way-Seeking Mind**

Saturday, March 26, 1966

#### The Way-Seeking Mind

When we feel the evanescence of life, or when we have problems for ourselves, and direct feeling of the problems-of the fact you have to face-is how you arise the way-seeking mind.

Usually when we set ourselves to studying something, we put our everyday problems aside, concentrating our attention for a time on something of particular interest. That is how we study generally. On Sunday you may go to church, but to you going to church and your everyday life are two completely different activities. Eventually, however, you will feel some contradiction in your everyday life, and some uneasiness, feeling you have nothing to rely on. It is this feeling which gives rise to the way-seeking mind.

When you are young, young enough to act as you want, you can choose something good, ignoring something bad, and by working on something good, you may feel good enough to spend your early life. But some uneasiness, some dark feeling will follow in your life. Even though you try to appease your conscience by working hard and exhausting yourself on what you are doing, this kind of effort will not give you any conviction. Jumping around in this world without conviction may be the pitiful life. You will be pitied by someone who has strong conviction and deep wisdom concerning our life. Thus we should be ashamed of doing something proudly, vigorously, with some ecstasy even, ignoring the other side of the world, the dark side of our life.

By nature human beings have good and bad sides, half and half. When you want to do something good, at the same time you don't want to do something good. [Laughing.] If you want to get up early, at the same time you say, "I will stay in bed five more minutes. It is too early!" At the same time you want to get up, you will say to yourself, "No, yes, no!" "Yes" is fifty percent; "no" is fifty percent ... or more! Bad things sixty percent; good, forty percent."

The more you reflect on yourself, however, the more conscientious you become. Because you become more and more conscientious, you feel as if you are doing ninety-nine percent bad things! That is actually human nature. It is not a matter of what is good and what is bad. It is a matter

of our human nature. When you realize this fact in your everyday life, you have to wonder what we should do. If you realize this fact, you will not be fooled by anyone. You may take some pleasure in entertainments, but you cannot fool yourself completely. You cannot deceive yourself when you realize the true state of our human nature.

Some people say, "If we have a perfect social construction, we will not have these difficulties." But as long as there is human nature, nothing will help us. On the contrary, the more human culture advances, the more difficulties we will have in our life. The advancement of civilization will accelerate this contradiction in our nature. When we realize the absolute presence of our contradictory nature, the way-seeking mind arises, and we begin to work on ourselves instead of the material world. Most people who are interested in Buddhism are more or less critical of our social condition, expecting a better social framework. Some people have become disgusted with our human life. We cannot approve of these criticisms fully, however, because they do not rest on the full understanding of our human nature.

Human nature is always the same. Some people may say our spiritual culture will progress when our material civilization progresses. Strictly speaking, however, as long as we have human nature, it is impossible to obtain a perfect idealistic spiritual culture in our human world. We should fully realized this point. Because of our uneasiness, we are too anxious to achieve something perfect in our spiritual life. Here we have some danger. Our spiritual life cannot be regarded as we have come to regard our material life. You cannot work on your spiritual life as you do your materialistic life. Even though you talk about our spiritual life thousands of times, it will not help you. It is necessary to know actually what is our human world, or what is our human nature. This is a very important point. If you fail to observe our human nature fully, even though you study Buddhism, what you acquire is not what Buddha meant.

For many years we have been practicing zazen here at Zen Center. And we think it is time we made some progress. I think so. You think so as well. But when we feel in this way, we should be careful not to mistake our way. We should know what is the way-seeking mind, what is human nature.

Some people may say, if human nature is always the same, then it is useless [laughing] to practice zazen, to study Buddhism. But our study is based on this fact. Our study is not to improve upon the actual fact that we have good and bad, half and half, as our human nature. We should not try to improve upon this actual fact. Even Buddha accepted this truth ... he started Buddhism based on this fact. He accepted this truth. If you try to change this truth, you are no longer a Buddhist.

Buddha said our human life is a life of suffering. This is a fundamental truth. Knowing this fact, having this deep understanding of human

nature, we may continue our life step by step helping each other. Because we have good and bad, half and half, we can help. If all of us (laughing) were good, it would be impossible to help one another. It is a good thing that we have good nature and bad nature ... we are able to feel the improvement, however slightly we may change. It would be wonderful if we could help another even by a hair's breadth. It makes no difference what sort of problems or situation in life we have. If we have something to work on, it is enough. Because we have good and bad, half and half, because we can find some way to help others, if only by the width of a sheet of paper, by a few words, we can enjoy our life.

The way-seeking mind should be realized in our actual world, which includes flowers and stones, and stars and moon. The true way-seeking mind can only be actualized in full scale. Where there are human beings, there is the sun and stars, land and ocean, fish and grass and birds. Without this vast area to live in, where we can have our various problems, we cannot survive in this world. But forgetting this vast realm where we have absolute freedom, we seek for something merely for the sake of ourselves, just for human beings. Thus we have to suffer our nature, which has good and bad, fifty-fifty. When we become aware of this big realm, which includes everything, then we have big, big mind and big, big trust. We have perfect eternal freedom within this big realm.

Actually the way-seeking mind is the conviction to fly as a bird that flies in the air, to enjoy our being in this vast world of freedom. Enjoying our nature as a part of this vast world, we have no uncertainty because we don't know there is nowhere to go. Life and death is not our problem anymore. We attain enlightenment in this big realm. We suffer in this big realm. We are ignorant of the limit of the world. Here we don't have even the problem of attaining enlightenment. Ignorance is good, enlightenment is good; zazen is good, to stay at home is good. Every activity will take place in this big realm. Our human effort, our human culture should be based on this kind of imperturbable conviction. Our effort should not be limited to ourselves. That is what I mean by the way-seeking mind.

When Dogen-zenji attained enlightenment, he said he forgot all about his body and mind. This means he found himself in this big world. So our activity should be limitlessly small and at the same time should be limitlessly great. There is no difference in the greatness of our activity, and what may seem a trivial small activity. They have the same value. Our pleasure and conscience will be fully supported by this big, big realm. In this way we practice zazen. We should strive for enlightenment, of course. We should try to calm down our mind. But it is impossible to obtain enlightenment or to calm down your mind without realizing the fact of this big realm which supports us. If you don't realize this fact, trying to calm your mind is the same as arguing which came first, the chicken or the egg. The moment you say the hen came first, the egg is already there as her mother. There is no end to



the argument.

That we appear in this world means we should disappear from this world [laughing]. If you were not born in this world, there would be no need to die. To be born in this world is to die, to disappear. That we can do something good means that we can do

## **1966 mei (2)**

### **1 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-2**

Wednesday, May 25, 1966

Sesshin Lecture: Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 1-2  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco[1]

The secret of all the teaching of Buddhism is how to live on each moment. Moment after moment we have to obtain the absolute freedom. And moment after moment, we exist in interdependency to past and future and other existence. So in short, to practice-if you practice zazen, concentrating yourself on your breathing moment after moment, that is how to keep precepts, how to have the actual understanding of Buddhist teaching, and how to help others, and how to help yourself, how to attain liberation. Why we call true Zen the capital city of religion is we have actually m- [partial word]-gist of teaching and secret of practice-to understand various religion and various way of practice through and through.

As I said this morning, we do not aim for or emphasize some particular state of mind or some particular teaching. Even though it is perfect and profound teaching, we do not emphasize the teaching only. We rather emphasize how we understand it, how we bring the truth into practice. And this practice also does not-does not mean some particular practice. When we say "Zen," Zen include all the activity of our life.

This morning, Reverend Katagiri explained our monastic rules. And Dogen-zenji said, our practice-we are like a water and milk. When we, each one of us practice-are concentrated on this practice of Zen, we are not anymore each separated being. Oneness of the all the students or monks is there. When you live in each moment, each one of you are independent being. And at the same time, each one of you [is] obtaining absolute independency. You attain the same buddhahood that Buddha attained, that various patriarchs attained. So having-living in each one's absolute freedom, we attain same attainment.

So we are-each one of us is independent in the same realm. When this realm is understood, there are student, there are teacher, there are someone who serve tea, there are someone who drink tea, and there are independent being. And we are practicing the practice which was started by Buddha-buddha-sangha. In this way, Buddhism was carried out by Buddhist.

So although Buddha was born 2,500 years ago, but Buddha is right here when we practice his practice. Buddha lives in our age with us. But Buddha is Buddha, and we are a student. So you may say there is student and teacher, but we are all the same-we are all practicing the same practice exactly the same way as he did-as they did at their time. Actually, we are practicing same practice with them. If so, whatever we do, that is Buddha's practice, and this is how we kept practice-precepts.

In Buddha's day, there were-their way of life-in China there was Chinese way of life, in Japan there is Japanese way of life. But when we live in that day, in that age, in this way, although the way of living is different, but actually what we do does not differ from what Buddha did because we-there we express absolute freedom. There is no two absolute freedom.

So when in China-when they are too much interested in Buddha's-Buddhist philosophy, they ignored how to live in Buddha's way. In other word, they ignored how to keep precepts. To keep precepts is not to keep Indian way of life. When you eat here, you should eat here. You cannot [laughs] eat in India all the time [laughs]. Strictly speaking, if you want to keep precepts literally, you have to go to India [laughs]. Then you can keep the-keep precepts completely.

Eisai-zenji[2] referred to very interesting story in his work. There was some Chine- [partial word]-some monk from India [laughs]. When he came to India-China, he could not observe Indian precepts because the custom is different. So he returned to India because he was very much afraid of breaking Indian precepts [laughs].

So if you-misu- [partial word]-do not know how to observe precepts, or if you emphasize just written precepts without knowing how to keep it [laughs], then Buddhism will die immediately [laughs, laughter]. But if you know how to keep our precepts, Buddhism will continue and will develop as Zen developed in China. Various Mahayana school was lost in China except Zen because, you know, they-they were too much interested in the philosophy of Buddhism without knowing how to actualize the teaching. So eventually they ignored precepts, but they may say they did not ignore. "Zen student ignored it," they may say, because Zen student did not observe it literally. But Mahayana schools observed it as Indian Buddhist did. And they thought this is Buddha's way. So Buddha's way eventually separated from their everyday life. But Zen student understood precepts as a-as their way of life. So they do not mind the formal way of life-formality. And they were so sure that their way of practice was how to actualize Buddha's teaching. And how to actualize Buddha's teaching is, in short, to live on each moment. And that is the conclusion of Mahayana philosophy-how to live in this moment, how to attain enlightenment. How to be Buddha is how to attain perfect freedom. How to attain perfect freedom is how to live in-in this moment.

So in China they established Buddhist-Zen Buddhist established new precepts, which is called pure rules. New precepts for themselves. For other Buddhist, precepts is some rules Buddha observed, but for them precepts is their own way of life: how to live on this-in this moment in that place. When we are not so sincere about our practice or about our way of life-about ourselves, you may say there is teaching. "I am priest," you know, "but they are layman" [laughs]. "I am priest, and Buddhist teaching is written in the book-in some particular book."

So if you understand Buddhism in this way, they can ignore the precepts. Precepts is written in the book, and precepts is for some particular person. But if you realize the religion is for everyone and should be our way of life, you know, the some certain precepts, which is written in some particular book, cannot be actualized-cannot be bring into practice-everyday practice. So when we become sincere about our everyday life and the meaning of religion, we cannot live in old precepts which was set up for some other person. We should have our own precepts.

So in this way, Hyakujo-zenji established Mahayana precepts for the first time in eighth century. Mahayana Buddhism introduced in China in, maybe, four[th] century. For many years, they observed Indian precepts. It is impossible, you know. They say they observed it [laughs] but no one can believe [laughs]-no one can trust them. It is impossible for Chinese people to observe Indian precepts [laughs]. It is ridiculous. If they think they observed it, they are very selfish people. They observed it just for himself, for priest only, ignoring how-what kind of life usual, ordinal [ordinary] people have.

Excuse me, if you-if your car is in front of the door, will you [laughs] move it [laughs, laughter]?

So Zen Buddhist was very serious about their way of life and people's way of life, so they established-they renewed precepts-Indian precepts. So in India, you know, they practice zazen to attain-maybe they could practice zazen all day long if-it-it was possible as a group, even, because the monks were supported entirely by people. After they finish their household life, they became monks. And their boys and girls supported them. So [laughs] for them it was possible. But for Chinese monks who must support themselves, by themselves, cannot sit all day long. And whatever they do, it should be Zen. So they developed the practice more to everyday life. So Chinese Zen was more practical. They knew how to apply the-apply Zen in everyday life.

And how to apply in everyday life is not difficult, because if we live on each moment, that is Zen. Whether you are sitting or working, when you live on each moment as you practice Zen, that is how to practice Zen. So Zen is in our everyday life. So you may say Indian way was rather lazy way [laughs], not active enough. So eventually-naturally

Indian Zen emphasized some state of-some mysterious state of mind, but in China they emphasized more the attitude or way to have direct experience of various experience.

In this way, the Buddhist philosophy actualized in Zen practice. And oneness of the practice-zazen practice and everyday activity was brought to our society. So Zen is the source of the philosophy, and source of art, and source of various religious life.

In-in Genjo Koan, at-in first paragraph he-Dogen-zenji gives us the whole pattern of Buddhist way: [3]

When all things are Buddhist phenomena-

-when all things are Buddhist teaching, you may say-

we have enlightenment and ignorance-

-something to study or something to observe-precepts, or sutras, or problem of philosophical discussion of life and death, or enlightened one, or the ignorance-ignorance.

When all things are without self, we have no ignorance, no enlightenment, no buddhas, no people, no life, and no-no death.

When all things are without self-when all things-all what we do is done in realm of selflessness, like milk and water, there is no water or no milk. When the whole textile is woven completely in various colorful thread, you know, what you see is not piece of thread, what you see is one whole textile. Do you understand? So [laughs] there is no need to say "this is water" when you drink milk. Do you say this is water and this is milk [laughs]? You drink just milk, and there is no water or no milk.

So he says:

When all things are without self, we have no ignorance, no enlightenment, no Buddha, no people, no life and death.

Buddhist way is beyond being and non-being. Buddhist way-we know each colorful thread, and we know also the one whole woven textile. We know both side-both way-we observe things in two ways without any contradiction. But when we are not sincere enough, you may say, "This is Buddhism [laughs], and this is other religion. We are monks, and they are layman, that's all." So they don't understand the whole beautiful textile.

But Buddhist way is beyond being a thread or a textile-beyond thread or textile. Therefore we have life and death, ignorance and enlightenment. Still we see the various color in the woven textile, and we appreciate the

color of the-the textile.

So he says:

We have life and death, ignorance and enlightenment, people and buddhas.

-and so many interesting colors on the piece of-one whole piece of cross-cloth.

However, flowers fall with our attachment and weeds grow with our detachment.

However, even though we are Buddhist, we live with people seeing the flower fade-fading away day by day. With our attachment, the thing that we-bring out the weeds day after day with our detachment.

That we move ourselves-

-he explained more about it. Here in the second paragraph, there are many-various idea and various practice, not only Zen but also Pure Land school-way of Pure Land school and various way of religion. But those are, for him, one beautiful textile. So it is-so that is why his teaching is called the source of all religion-not "source," but [laughs]-not source but, you know-each religion makes sense, you know. Thread does not-a piece of thread is not useful. When you make beautiful cloth with it-it, you know, it is-it become useful-it become perfect religion.

So each schools of Buddhism and various religion find its own meaning in big religious-human religious life. It makes sense. It means to weave a beautiful cloth with thread. Each religion is just a piece of thread. Maybe it is colorful, you know, maybe it is beautiful, but if you weave something with it, you can use it as your beautiful dress. In this sense, his teaching is called-not "source," but [laughs]-sometime we say capital city-not "cap-" [partial word]-because various road come to the center.

Anyway, in this sense our way has two faces. One is as a secret of the religion: how to find the meaning-true meaning of religion. And, on the other hand, we remain as one of the school of Buddhism or one of the various-one of the many ways of practice.

So we have two face [?]. We are actually-we-I belong to Soto school. I am a just a-I am just a piece of thread [laughs]. But we know how to, you know, how to make ourselves a piece of useful material. This is Soto way. Without knowing how to make ourselves useful, to observe some lofty way of acting [?] does not make much sense, you know.

So in the second paragraph he says:

That we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance.

He give the definition of various thread-this is red thread, this is pink, this is blue-like this. "That we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance." Then what is enlightenment? Enlightenment is:

That things advance and understand themselves-that is enlightenment. It is buddhas who understand ignorance.

Who is Buddha? Buddha is someone who understands ignorance. Who is people? People are ignorant of enlightenment. So he says:

It is people who are ignorant of enlightenment. Further, there are those who are enlightened about-above enlightenment-

-like Soto school-

and those who are ignorant of ignorance-

-like Pure Land school.

When buddhas are truly buddhas, they are not necessarily aware of themselves as buddhas. But they are enlightened ones and advance in enlightenment.

I-we are not necessary-necessarily be just Soto priests, you know. We are one of the Buddhist [laughs]. But we cannot practice all the ways of practice. Although we practice just Soto way, but we are-nevertheless, we are Buddhist [laughs]. That's all.

So here you will find out how important it is to live in each moment. This-our way to live-to live on each moment makes everything possible-makes precept observation possible, makes attaining enlightenment possible, makes to attain absolute freedom from various sectarianism possible. And, first of all, this practice makes us possible to attain perfect, complete satisfaction in our life.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (5/4/01).

The dates of various lectures for the Genjo Koan series at Soko-ji are inaccurate. Based on the sequence of paragraphs Suzuki-roshi commented upon, as well as comments such as, "We have already finished the first paragraph," the following sequence is suggested:

1. SR-66-05-25V (¶¶ 1-2)
2. SR-66-05-26V (¶¶ 5-13)
3. SR-66-03-13-A (¶¶ 1-3)
4. SR-66-06-19-B (¶¶ 7-9)
5. SR-66-06-19-D (¶¶ 11-13)
6. SR-66-06-19-A (¶¶ 1-11, recapitulation).

These and other paragraphs were discussed in the later series of lectures on the Genjo Koan that Suzuki-roshi gave at Tassajara in 1967 (for which no tapes are currently available):

1. SR-67-08-21 (¶¶ 6 and 9-11)
2. SR-67-08-23 (¶¶ 12-14)
3. SR-67-08-20-A (¶¶ 15-18).

[1] The date is highly suspect. On the original tape it was listed as Saturday, 5/25/66. But 5/25/66 was a Wednesday. The date of 5/25/66 was arbitrarily retained and the day was changed to Wednesday. No sesshins were listed in Wind Bell for May 1966. This is probably the first lecture in Suzuki-roshi's 1966 series of lectures on Genjo Koan given at Soko-ji. For the probable sequence, please see the end of this lecture.

[2] Myoan Eisai, Yosai, Senko (Zenko) -kokushi: 1141-1215. Japanese Zen master of the Oryo lineage. Dogen practiced at his monastery, Kennin-ji.

[3] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell, 1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter].

## **2 - Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 5-13**

Thursday, May 26, 1966

Sesshin Lecture: Genjo Koan, Paragraphs 5-13  
Thursday, May 26, 1966[1]

Sunday Morning

Firewood turns into ash, and it does not turn into firewood again. But do not suppose that the ash is after and the firewood before. We must understand that firewood is at the stage of firewood, and there must- and there we find-there we find its before and after. And yet with this past and future, its present is independent of them. Ash is at the stage of ash, and there we find its before and after. Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it's-after it is ash, so does not ret- [partial word]-so a-so man does not return to life after his death.

In this paragraph, he [Dogen-zenji] taught us the absolute independent-independency of our various existence, which covers everything. Because it include everything, it is independent being. So here we find the absolute liberation. When we practice zazen, concentrating ourselves on each breathing, we are absolute independent being.

When Ummon[3] said, "follow waves and drive waves"- "follow waves and drive waves," when we completely follow the waves, waves of being, we are completely-when we are one with waves, we are absolutely independent being.

So "follow waves." "To follow waves is to drive waves." When Dogen-zenji talks about time-time, he didn't say so, but time drive being-time follow the being, and time drive being. When time-time is originally one with being. Twelve hours is the duration of the time. When the sun rise and set in east is same thing. Twelve hours means the sun-for the sun is duration of time. It is the activity of the sun, rising from the east, setting in east [west]. So it is same thing.

So "drive"-you may say, "drive being-follow being and drive being." That is Ummon's practice. When you follow your, you know-when your mind follows your breathing, it means your mind drives your breathing-follows breathing and drives your breathing. So your breathing and-your being and your mind is one. So here we have absolute freedom. Here we become one independent being. We obtain absolute freedom.

So we should not say "firewood became ash." Ash is ash [laughs], firewood is firewood. Firewood is independent being. Ash is also independent being. But ash include the firewood, and firewood includes the ash with everything. Not only include-not only ash include firewood, but also it include everything. So firewood is independent being, and ash is also independent being. So one breathing after another, you obtain the absolute freedom when you practice-when you are concentrated on each breathing: exhaling and inhaling.

In Gakudo-yojin-shu[4]-Gakudo-yojin-shu is the important-ten important instruction for practice of zazen-ten instruct. And in-in the first instruction, Dogen-zenji talks about evanescence of life. And in-in



it, when he talks about the evanescence of life he says, "Exhaling-what is your exhaling and inhaling? After all, what is the inhaling and exhaling?" There is no self. When you are completely absorbed in your breathing, there is no self. What is it, you know-what is your breathing? That breathing is not you or air. [Laughs.] What is it? That is not self at all. When you are completely involved in breathing, there is no self. When there is no self, you have absolute freedom. Because you have, you know, silly idea of self [laughing], you have a lot of problems. So he said, "Your problem are home-made problem" [laughs, laughter]. Maybe very recent [?]. That is why you like it, on the other hand. If you like it-as long as you like it, it's all right [laughs, laughter].

Now it is specifically taught in Buddhism that life does not become death. For this reason, life is called "no-life." It is specifically taught in Buddhism that death does not become life. Therefore, death is called "no-death."

It is not matter of life or death. When death is accepted as death through-and-through, it is not death any more. Because you compare death [laughs] with life, it is something. But when death is understood, completely, as death, death is not death any more. Life is not life any more when life is life through-and-through [laughs].

Nishida[5]-the outstanding philosopher in Japan, says, "Stone is-people say stone is-looks like frog or mountain, but stone is not-is not valuable because it looks like frogs or mountain. Stone is valuable when the stone is stone through-and-through." [Laughs.] Do you understand? When we are ignorant through-and-through, we are not ignorant any more.

So in the last page [of the Genjo Koan handout], I think, he [Dogen-zenji] says:

When we first seek the truth, we are far away from its environs. When we discover that the truth was already being correctly transmitted to us, we [are] ourselves at the moment-at that moment. If we watch the shore from a boat, it seems that the shore is moving. But when you watch the boat directly, we know that it is the boat that moves. If we examine all things with a confused body and mind, we will suppose that our selves is permanent. But we are-but if we practice closely and return to our present place, it will be clear that nothing at all is permanent.

Now the one [counting]-two-three-the four-fourth-four-fourth paragraph [of that page]:

Life is period of itself, and death is period of itself. They are like winter and spring. We do not call winter the future spring, nor spring the future summer.

We finished up to this paragraph.[6]

We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Although its light is wide and great, the moon is reflected even in the puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a drop of dew in the grass.

So even for a moment, when you practice zazen, whole universe is within you as the moon is in the drop of dew in the grass. This is what he meant.

Enlightenment does not destroy the man, just as the moon does not break the water. Man does not hinder enlightenment, just as a drop of dew does not hinder the moon in the sky. The depth of the drop is the height of the moon. The period of the reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dewdrop, and the vastness of the moonlight sky-moonlit sky-moonlit sky.

[Repeats last two sentences:]

The depth of the drop is the height-height of the moon. The period of the reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dewdrop, and the vastness of the moonlit sky.

It is-he is repeating same thing by another parable.

When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough. When the truth fill-fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing. For an example-for example, when we g- [partial word]-when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks-it looks circular and nothing else. But the ocean is neither round nor square, and its features are infinite in variety. It is like a palace. It is like a jewel. It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time. All things are so. Though there are many features in the dusty life and the pure life, we only understand what our study can reach. And in our study of all things we must appreciate that although they may look round or square, the other feature of oceans or mountains are infinite in variety, and universe lies in all quarters. It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here-even in a drop of water.

You say you attained some stage in your practice, but, you know, that is just a trivial event in your long life. It is like-it is like to say the ocean is round, or ocean is like a jewel, or ocean is like a palace for a dragon-ocean is a palace for a fish-ocean is big house-home. For a human being, the ocean is water [laughs]. So there must be various understanding.

When ocean is palace, it is palace [laughs]. You sh- [partial word]-you cannot say it is not palace. For a dragon it is actually a palace. If you laugh at a fish who say that is palace, Buddha will laugh at you when you say it is two o'clock-three o'clock [laughs, laughter]. It is same

thing [laughs]. So if we know this fact, we cannot laugh at fish. So when we do not know the truth, we think we found out something [laughs]. But when we think so-think in that way, we are far from the enlightenment.

If we know the truth, we think something is missing-not "missing"- "something"-not "something is missing"-we-we think that is not all. In Japanese, you know, famous writer Fumiko Hayashi,[7] you know, she always said, "This-this is not all my ability. This work is not all my ability." [Laughs.] This is very interesting statement. He wrote-she wrote and wrote and wrote. And at last she became a very famous writer. But she al- [partial word]-people say she is a good writer, but, "This is not all my ability. This is not what I want to write." [Laughs.] People say he is-she is good, but she says, "I am not good writer. I-I cannot express my feelings yet. This is more what I want to express [explain?]." "Something is missing" in this sense, you know. When you are ignorant through-and-through, when you are-when you are unable to explain yourself through-and-through, it is good, you know. When [s] he says, "This is exactly what I [laughs], wanted to say," she-she may not be so good one [writer].

When-when a fish swims in the ocean, there is no end to the water, no matter how far it swims. When a bird flies in the sky, there is no end to the air, no matter how far it flies. However, the fish and the bird do not leave their elements.

Elements being water or sky.

The bird-the fish and the bird do not leave their elements. When the use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in a small way. Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once. Water makes life, and air makes life. The bird makes life, and the fish makes life. Life makes the bird, and life makes the fish. There are the further analogies possible to illustrate, in this way, practice, enlightenment, mortality, and eternity.

Mortality or eternity or practice or enlightenment or ignorance should be understood in this way. But before you understand the true meaning of mortality or eternity or enlightenment or ignorance just by intellectual, without having a deep understanding, mortality is something which is different from eternity. Enlightenment is something which is different from ignorance. Practice is something to attain enlightenment, and practice and enlightenment are two completely different things. After you attain enlightenment, there is no ignorance, but if you understand what is enlightenment in its true sense, enlightenment is ignorance too. When he is not aware of his own ignorance, that is not enlightenment.

Do you know Asahina Sogen?[8] He is the abbot of Rinzai-Engaku. After his long practice-after-long after he attained enlightenment, he get married [laughs]. And his followers, I think, must have been

disappointed [laughs]-very much sad, I think. But what he says, recently, is very very meaningful and interesting. And he knows that people may [be] disappointed with him [laughs]. But he has, you know, some confidence or some faith in it. He did not get married just to [because], you know, he wanted his friend-his particular friend. But he felt, you know, "something is missing" [laughs] with his [1 word]. So he wanted to be that ignorant, ordinal [ordinary] feeling [fellow?] after he attained enlightenment. He wanted to know-he acknowledged his humanity. I think that is true enlightenment. He does not say so, actually. He is laughing at himself [laughs]. This is very very meaningful.

Once he secluded-once he retired in remoted mountain with his good friend. That friend was Soto priest [laughs]. He secluded himself with Soto priest in remoted mountain. They practiced in the mountain because they could not satisfied with their practice. That-the house they built was-I don't know how many miles in your counting-but very very far away from the last house in the village. And they raised their own food in the mountain and supported themselves. His practice was so hard, and after hard practice [laughs] like that, he got married with some lady [laughs, laughter]-he married his boy- [partial word]-girlfriend. The usual people, you know, who understand mortality and eternity-enlightenment ignorance, in something different way will be disappointed [laughs] with him.

But eternity is in mortality. When we are a mortal being, through-and-through, we are-we will acquire the immortal life. When we are absorbed in the fear [pure?] ignorant practice [laughs], you have enlightenment. So after all, how to be the true Buddhist is to find the meaning of life in your limited activity. There is no need for you to be a great [person]. In your limited activity, you should find out true meaning of yourself. If you pick up a small-even a small stone, you have whole universe. But if you try to pick up pebbles of the gallon [?], you will be crazy, and you will be sympathized with [laughs] people.

When a fish swims in the ocean, there is no end to the water.

This is a very interesting point. There is no end-there is no end in our practice. Because there is no end in our practice, our practice is good. Don't you think so? But usually, you expect our practice could be effective enough [laughs] to put an end in your hard practice. If-if I say, "Practice hard just two years" [laughs, laughter], then you will be interested in our practice. If I say, "You have to practice whole life" [laughs, laughter], then you will be disappointed. "Oh, Zen is not good. Zen is not for me." But if you understand what is practice, and if you [are] interested in practice, the reason why you interested in-you are interested in practice is the practice is endless. That is why I am interested in Buddhism. There is no end. If there is some end, I don't think Buddhism is so good. There is no end. Even [if] human being vanish from this earth, Buddhism exist. That is why I am interested in

Buddhism. Buddhism is not always perfect. It is not perfect at all. Because it is not perfect, I like it. If it is perfect, someone will be-many people will be interested in it, so there is no need for me to work on it. Because people are very much discouraged [laughs] with Buddhism, so I feel someone must practice Buddhism.

The other day, when we had wake-up service in the first [2-3 words], I thought it might be better to bow in our way. But they said if you bow in that way, people may be discouraged [laughs, laughter]. It is true-very true. I know people will be discouraged. I know we are giving a lot of discouragement. For a long time-when-in Japan they bow to each other [laughs, laughter]. I know that very well. So I bow nine times. I will not practice zazen so hard as I do in America [laughs, laughter]. So same thing will be understood in completely different way, you know. And I know how they feel-exactly how they feel. But why I am interested in Buddhism is it is not complete at all. And Buddhism wants our effort always. Eternally it wants our [laughs] constant effort. That is why I like Buddhism.

So until you are interested in this point, you cannot understand Buddhism. In this way, practice, enlightenment, morality, and eternity: morality-normal- [partial word]-mortality makes eternity. Eternity makes mortality. Enlightenment makes practice. Practice makes enlightenment. In this way, there is-"further analogy is possible to illustrate our practice." Bird makes sky, sky makes bird. Fish makes bird, bird makes fish [laughs]. In this way, there must be further analogies possible-further possible illustration of our practice. So, in short, it is enough if you do one thing with sincerity. That is enough, after all. There is no need to try to know the vastness of the sky or depth of the sea.

Now if a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place. When we find our place at this moment-when we find our way at-at this moment-

[Aside:] Might mean this is [1-2 words].

-when we find our place at this place, when we find our way-

[Aside:] -oh, no, no-it's all right- [Sounds like he is talking to a student and declining an offer of something-not rejecting the translation.]

-when we find our place at this moment-when we find our way at this moment, then practice follows, and this is the realization of the truth.

"When we find our place at this moment-when we find our way"-when we do something at some moment, at some place, in some way, that is the realization of truth.

For the place and for the way are neither large nor small-

It is not matter of big or small, good or bad.

-neither subjective nor objective-or-neither subject nor object. They have not exist from the beginning, and they are not in process of realization.

"They have not existed from the beginning." The realization of the truth did not-was not existent from the beginning, or before we realize it-before realization, you know. You may say now realization of the truth take place through my activity. But it is not so. Or you may say it is the process of the realization. It is not so. The-each realization of the truth is one absolute realization of the truth. It is not happened in-on this moment, or it is not-it will happen in some other time again. For you, the realization of the truth is-realization of the truth you have now is the absolute realization of the truth. You cannot compare your realization of the truth with some other realization of the truth. Each one who realize this fact and who practice your way with sincerity has absolute freedom.

So he says:

It is not-they have not existed from the beginning, and they are not in the process of the realization.

Your realization is-does not become other's realization. Not at all. But we-all the realization of the truth is exactly the same. Your realization of the truth is same as Buddha's realization of the truth. There is no difference at all. So it is not just happen to you at this moment or it has happened three thousand years ago. So this is not mortality or not eternity.

Fundamental truth-excuse me [laughter]-some [?] piece of paper.[9]  
Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Bill Redican (5/4/01).

[1] The two dates do not agree. The original transcript stated "Sunday morning," but 5/26/66 was a Thursday. Both of these dates are questionable.

[2] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell,

1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter]. "Page 2" here refers to a reproduced handout of the koan distributed to the students.

[3] Yunmen Wenyan (Ummon Bun'en): 864-949. Chan master of Tang China.

[4] Eihei Dogen, Gakudo-yojin-shu: Collection of Concerns in Learning the Truth (1 fascicle), 1234.

[5] Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945): an important 20th-century Japanese philosopher. Suzuki-roshi entered Komazawa University, Tokyo, in 1926, at a time when Nishida Kitaro was probably widely discussed.

[6] In SR-66-05-25, Suzuki-roshi discussed only Paragraphs 1 and 2, which is further evidence that the dates of this series are generally quite wrong.

[7] Fumiko Hayashi (1903-1951): Japanese novelist and short-story writer.

[8] Asahina Sogen: Primate of the Rinzai school and abbot of Enkaku-ji Temple, Kamakura, Japan.

[9] Suzuki-roshi appears to be borrowing or returning one of the pages of the koan.

## **1966 juni (6)**

### **1 - Evening Lecture**

Wednesday, June 01, 1966

Evening Lecture, Summer 1966  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Buddhism has many annual layers like a big tree. It is our tradition to respect those efforts which our patriarchs have made for more than 2000 years. There has been a great effort, we have made a great effort to develop Buddha's way. This is a very important point for Buddhism as a religion. Without appreciation for the efforts of our patriarchs it is difficult to have a religious feeling in Buddhism.

This temple was founded in 1934. At that time there were not many priests in America and the founder made a great effort to collect the donations to buy this building. He was able to raise only part of the cost and the Japanese members year after year paid on the mortgage. Even when they were in detention camps during the war they collected money for the mortgage. This was an important effort they made in the camps, but it is nothing compared to the effort and devotion of our ancestors

and patriarchs in India, in China, and in Japan in preserving and developing Buddhism. Even one line of a gatha or scripture is the result of their actual effort. That is not just teaching. We should continue these efforts generation after generation forever. Our responsibility as a Buddhist is to continue this effort wherever they are.

As I said this afternoon, it is necessary to have an aim in our life. The most important aim of a Buddhist is to be a successor of the patriarchs. If you do not understand this aim you are studying Buddhism from the outside. For outsiders Buddhism is nothing. When you accept Buddhism as your own and try to develop it as your own, then Buddhism will have tremendous meaning to us.

Intellectual study of Buddhism is of course necessary, but you should not stay at the edge of Buddhism. Intellectually, Patriarchs made a great effort. Even though they were often treated as heretics, they studied from a pure intellectual point of view and tried not to ignore the smallest illogical point of Buddhism. Historically there is some doubt about our lineage especially before Bodhidharma. Today everyone knows that the names and connections are not historically perfect, but we also know that Buddhism has been transmitted from warm hand to warm hand from Buddha's time until our own day. The fact and spirit of the teaching have been transmitted. Historical or scientific studies are not perfect. There is a limit to scientific truth.

The artistic expression of Buddhism is also not perfect. But that which is painted may be more real to us. It is the same with our teaching which is more human than actual human nature. The precepts which are most difficult to follow are the ones which appeal more directly to us, encourage us more, and help us more, than worldly rules which it is possible to observe.

The usual meaning of rules and law is that we observe them to protect citizens for the benefit of society. But Buddhist precepts are for each one of us and not for some one else. The precepts which look unreal and idealistic are really more practical for each human being and better satisfy our inmost request.

It looks like a very impractical waste of time to sit here all day on your cushion; but if you understand yourself you will understand why we practice zazen. The necessity of zazen and the precepts is within yourself and not outside.

I am a priest and you are laymen. You may say that Buddhism written in a book is for some particular persons; and you as laymen can ignore the precepts. But if you realize that religion is for everyone and should be observed as our way of life, you will know that book-precepts that cannot be actualized, cannot be part of our everyday practice.

When we are sincere about our everyday life and about the meaning of



religion, we will not be able to live with precepts which were set up for some other people. We should have our own precepts. In this way Hyakujo-zenji [720-814] established Mahayana precepts for the first time for Mahayana Buddhists. Mahayana was introduced into China in the beginning of the first century; and over many hundreds of years they observed the Hinayana Indian precepts. Probably just the priests observed the Hinayana precepts ignoring the life of the ordinary Chinese people. The Zen Buddhists were very serious about their own and the people's way of life and they renewed the Indian Hinayana precepts. In India the monks were supported entirely by the people, while in China the monks had to support themselves and so could not sit all day long. Whatever they did the felt should be Zen. So Chinese Zen was more practical.

A single piece of thread is not useful until we make a beautiful cloth with it. So each single school of Buddhism is meaningful as part of the overall religious life. In this sense our way has two faces. One is how to find the true meaning of religion through our own way, and the other is how we remain one of the schools of Buddhism. I belong to the Soto School. I am just a piece of thread, but we know how to make ourselves a useful piece of material. This is the Soto way.

Without knowing how to make ourselves useful, to observe some lofty way of practice does not make much sense. So as Dogen says, "That we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance." He gives the definition of ignorance. This is red, this is pink, this is blue. Then what is enlightenment? Enlightenment is, "that things advance and understand themselves." The whole cloth. Who is buddha? Someone who understands ignorance. Who are the people? Those who are ignorant of enlightenment. "When buddhas are truly buddha, they are not necessarily aware of themselves as buddhas. But they are enlightened ones. They advance in enlightenment." We are not necessarily just Soto priests, we are Buddhists. We cannot practice all the ways of practice. Although we practice just the Soto way we are nevertheless Buddhists.

Everyone knows zazen is very difficult. You cannot practice it completely. But we should not give up. There are enough reasons why we should continue. Zen was developed in this way; and in a busy country like America there must be some time to spare for zazen. We should have more composure in our life and we should respect our tradition, both Buddhist and Christian.

Thank you very much.

Will you just stand up and bow to Buddha from your standing posture.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **2 - Afternoon Lecture**

Wednesday, June 01, 1966

Afternoon Lecture, Summer 1966

Most of you are beginners, so it may be rather difficult for you to understand why we practice zazen or meditation in this way. We always say "just to sit." And if you do, you will find out that Zen practice-just to sit-is not easy. Just to sit may be the most difficult thing. To work on something is not difficult; how to not work on anything is rather difficult. When we have the idea of "self," we want some reason why we work on something. But if you do not have the idea of self, you can remain silent and calm whether or not you work on something. You will not lose your composure. So to remain silent and calm is a kind of test we receive. If you can do it, it means you have no idea of self. If your life is based on the usual idea of self, what you will do will not be successful in its true sense. There will be success in one way, but in another you are digging your own grave. So to work without the idea of self, is a very, very important point. It is much more important than making a good decision. Even a good decision based on a one-sided idea of self will create difficulties for yourself and others.

So for students of Zen, to work on something or to help others is to do things with our single mind. Our effort is concentrated within ourselves. This is the activity of our essence of mind, according to the Sixth Patriarch. He said that in the realm of our essence of mind, we do not do things outside of mind. All that we do is the activity of our essence of mind which is not dualistic. By essence of mind he means the Big-Mind and not the selfish mind. Of course there is dualistic activity, but it takes place within the big mind. This kind of single-minded activity is distinguished from ordinary dualistic activity.

When you practice zazen you will of course have physical pain in your legs and mentally you will have some difficulty. You will find it difficult to be concentrated on your breathing. One after another images will come into your mind. Or your mind will go out for a walk and wander about. I have many difficulties in my practice, so I think you, too, will find it very difficult to sit in good zazen.

All the difficulties you have in zazen should not take place outside your mind. Your efforts should be kept within your mind. In other words you have to accept the difficulty as not being other than what you are. You should not try to make some tentative particular effort based on your small mind like, "my practice should be better." My practice you say, but zazen is not your practice, it is buddha's practice. Your effort is based on big mind which cannot get out of. If your small self begins to act without the care of big mind, that is not Zen. What you do should be well taken care of by big mind. Our practice should be based on mind or original way-seeking mind which works on and on continuously.

The secret of practice is also true in observation of Buddhist precepts. The dualistic idea of whether to observe or not observe the precepts takes place within your mind when you practice Zen. There are no precepts to break and there is no one who is violating the precepts. To make up your mind to make the very best effort to observe the precepts constantly, forever, whether your effort is complete or not, is Buddha's-Buddha-Mind's effort. But if you put yourself outside the precepts or Buddha-Mind then there is no time to observe them completely. If your activity is involved in Buddha's activity, whatever you do is Buddha's effort. The even if it is not perfect, you are manifesting Buddha's mercy and activity.

Dogen-zenji was enlightened when he heard his master strike and say to the disciple sitting next to Dogen, "What are you doing? You have to make a hard effort. What are you doing?" That effort is Zen.

That effort is to observe the precepts. If we make our best effort on each moment with confidence, that is enlightenment. When you ask whether your way is perfect or not, there is an insidious idea of self. When you do your best to observe the precepts, to practice Zen, within the Big Mind then there is enlightenment. There is no special way to attain enlightenment. Enlightenment is not some certain stage. Enlightenment is everywhere. Wherever you are, enlightenment is there. Whenever you do with best effort enlightenment follows. This is very important for our Zen practice and our everyday life. We should make our effort in our everyday as well as in practice of Zen.

In order to have this kind of practice in everyday life, you want your friend, you want your master, you want the precepts we have. Some form is necessary because it is not possible to be concentrated on an uncertain way. There must be strict rules to observe. Because of the rules, of the way of sitting, of the way of practice, it is possible to be concentrated. It is the same thing in your everyday life. Without purpose or aim you cannot organize your life.

My master Kishizawa-roshi used to say that we had to have a vow or aim to accomplish. The aim we have may not be perfect in its strict sense, but even so it is necessary for us to have it. It is like the precepts. Even though it is almost impossible to observe them, we must have them. Without an aim in our life and the precepts we cannot be a good Buddhist, we cannot actualize our way.

We should be very grateful to the rigid formal way of practicing Zen and Zen precepts. You may think these precepts are useless if we cannot observe them perfectly. But they are the traces of human efforts based on the great mercy of Buddha. The life we have now is the result of such useless effort. From one-celled animals to monkeys. I do not know how long, but we wasted much time, many efforts until we came to this human life. The giant redwood trees of Muir Woods have annual rings or

layers and we have these annual layers in our human life too, I think. That is precepts in its wide sense. You say we don't want them, but you have them. As long as you do, you should sit, and thus you have to know how to continue your effort to have another annual ring. In this way we will develop Buddhism more and more forever.

Strictly speaking we must have more precepts in America. You think two-hundred and fifty precepts for men and 500 for women is awful and that it should be made simpler. But I think you have to add some more to the precepts we have in Japan. Actually, I think you will have more difficulty in practicing zazen in America than we do in Japan. This kind of difficulty should be continued forever or we will not have peace in our world. Without the precepts there can be no congenial life for human beings. By reflecting on our human life and by respecting the precepts and rules of humanity, we will know the direction in which to make an effort and we will have the right orientation in our life. This is how we practice Zen and how Buddhism has been developed.

Do you have any questions?

Student A: You think we may need more precepts in the United States. Can you suggest some.

Suzuki-roshi: No, not now. I do not want to disturb your practice.

Student B: What is the basic difference between Rinzai and Soto Zen?

Suzuki-roshi: Each has some characteristic differences. We are concentrated on a fundamental way or traditional way originating with Buddha. Rinzai emphasizes more its own characteristic way or "family" way. Soto does not emphasize our family way so much. We treat Zen as Buddhism itself-Zen and Buddhism are the same.

Student C: What does it say over the door at the zendo?

Suzuki-roshi: That was written by Takashina-zenji, [1] the present Archbishop of Soto Zen. It says, "To take refuge in the Buddha."

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

[1] Rosen Takashina, former abbot of Eihei-ji.

### **3 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 1-11**

Sunday, June 19, 1966

Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 1-11

Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: Someone has my-my paper.[1]

Student: [4-6 words unclear.] Wednesday night-[6-8 words]-  
Wednesday night.

Suzuki-roshi: Wednesday?

Student: Yeah. Finish the whole thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student: Wednesday night we finish the whole thing.

Suzuki-roshi: No, Wednesday we do Shushogi.[2] Do you finish until the  
bottom part of Page 3?

Student: No, I think we finished the whole thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Whole thing.

Student: Wednesday night we did it.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. [Laughs.] Wednesday night? Oh. [Laughs, laughter.]  
Oh. Big mistake. Okay.

Student: Maybe there are some here Sunday morning that weren't here  
Wednesday night.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. All right. Then-paragraph-in each paragraph, I-  
I think you want some brief comment so that you can understand-

Aside by Suzuki-roshi: It's all right.

-so that you can understand all the-whole part of-whole [laughter]  
fascicle.

The first paragraph is the framework of whole Buddhism. First  
paragraph:

All-when all things are in Buddhist way or Buddhist phenomena, we are  
enlightenment and ignorance, something to study, life and death,  
buddha, and people. When all things are without self, we have no  
ignorance, no enlightenment, no doubt, no buddha, no people, and no  
life and no death. The Buddhist way is beyond being and non-being.  
Therefore we have life and death, ignorance and enlightenment, people  
and buddha. However, flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds grow  
with our detachment.

This is, you know, the most basic understanding of-of Buddhism or Soto Zen, which include all the teaching of Buddhism. The teaching is- Hinayana Buddhism is based on when all things are Buddhist phenomena, we have enlightenment and ignorance, something to study, life and death, buddha and people. The teaching about ignorance or enlightenment, or something to study, or problem of life and death, buddha and people, is actually written in scriptures and actually which was told by Buddha. But although Buddha told various teaching, it is just appropriate medicine for the-for patients. So it is not absolute teaching. It is just temporal [temporary?] remedy for the people.

So from this standpoint, the Buddha's teaching is something more than that-more than which was just told by him. It is based on his [1 word] great mind. And that mind is not just Buddha's mind, but that mind-the mind include everything, or big mercy, or big mind, or-not only it is big, but also it is very subtle and intuitive mind.

So from this viewpoint there is no particular teaching. Particular teaching is just remedy for the people. So from this viewpoint there is no teaching. Some particular teaching is not fundamental teaching. So from this viewpoint there is no teaching. This is actually means Prajñāparamita-sutra group, like Hannya-shin-kyō[3]-this one [probably holding up sutra card]. "No five skandha or no-no death or no word [?], no people or no buddha." This kind of statement is-belongs to Prajñāparamita group. But those two groups is not-fundamentally it is not different. When we understand those two groups is not different-taking su- [partial word]-taking superior viewpoint, that viewpoint is called middle way or superior way-the viewpoint of Tendai school.

From this viewpoint, there is flower, there is weeds, and flowers and weeds is not different. And flowers and weeds comes out in spite of our discrimination. And our discrimination is good sometime, but when we attach to it, it is not good. So everything is, in one hand, it is good, on the other, it is bad. So both is right and both is not right. This is the third viewpoint. This is framework of whole Buddhism.

And second paragraph is in short-what is his talking about-what is ignorance and what is enlightenment from the standpoint of the third superior aspect. From the-so this is the terminology of enlightenment and practice from the viewpoint of superior aspect.

And it looks-and the third paragraph is very important because third-here he says:

When we understand one side, the other side is dark.

This understanding bring our-brings our practice into everyday life. "When we understand one side, the other side is dark." So for us the most important thing is to carry our activity on with sincerity. That is the only way to attain enlightenment. Because when we absorb in our

activity, there is enlightenment whether or not we realize it. So this point is very important.

It is necessary for you, I think, in-when you study Zen, it is necessary to think more by yourself, you know. Not to-not just to rely on my [laughs] talk. You have to have some question, you know, or doubt, we say. Here in his, you know, statement, if you just read it you will have various question, I think. For an instance, here he says:

When the truth-

-the bottom part Page 2, bottom part-

-when the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough. When the truth fill our body and mind, we know that something is missing.

And he says:

For an example, when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks like circular and nothing else. But the ocean is neither round nor square; it is-and its feature are infinite in variety. It is like a palace. It is like a jewel. It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time. All things are so.

And he says at the end of the paragraph:

It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here-even in a drop of water.

This statement, you know-when you-he says, "When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough. When the truth fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing" [laughs]. This statement and I said just now when you do something you should be completely absorbed in it [laughs]. This is contradiction isn't it? [Laughs.] When you feel something is missing in what you do, you cannot be absorbed in what you are doing [laughs]. This is contradiction. Don't you think so? I think you have-here you have one question at least [laughs].

When, you know, whatever you do, that is-if you absorb in your activity, that is enlightenment-I say and he says [laughs]. But here in this paragraph he says, when the truth is not fill-filled, you feel you have enough. When you are filled with truth, you feel something is missing [laughs]. If you take it literally, you know, you have this kind of contradiction. But what he means by, "When the truth fills our body and mind we know that something is missing," something is missing-it is, you know, this translation is maybe [laughs]-

Student A: Something is missing [laughs, laughter].

Maybe [laughs, laughter]. [2-3 words] at least. He mea- [partial word]- what he means is actual truth is not be understood completely. Here he means: you think when you see the world on the boat you think that is square-world is square. When you study Buddhism and when you have some understanding, you may think that is Buddhism. Buddhism is wonderful [laughs], you may say. But that is not Buddhism. Here he said-here he criticizing our intellectual understanding here.

So "something is missing" actually means something-the understanding is not perfect. That is what he meant. In his understanding-his understanding is not perfect. That is actually what he means. Or his understanding is just-or if he thinks his understanding is perfect, that is not right. What-that-that is what he means. We say this-so intellectual understanding is not perfect. That is what he means. If intellectual understanding is not perfect, what kind of understanding is perfect? The perfect understanding is the direct experience in your activity. That is perfect understanding. So there is no contradiction.

So the third paragraph:

When we see things and hear things with our whole body and mind, our understanding is not like a mirror with reflection, nor like water under the moon. If we understand one side, the other side is dark.

This-this is not just intellectual understanding. By intellectual understanding you-your understanding is the moon on the water or things on the mirror. But true understanding or direct experience is not like water under the moon or mirror with reflection. That is what he is saying.

And so:

To study Buddhism is to study ourselves. To study ourselves is to go beyond ourselves. To go beyond ourselves is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to free our body and mind, [and] to free-free our body and bodies-the bodies and minds of others. No trace of enlightenment remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.

Here he says, direct understand-explains direct understanding in realm of subjective and objective-objectivity. There is no subjective understanding or objective understanding in-in the direct experience there is no subjectivity or objectivity. So to study ourselves is to study everything. That is study of Buddhism.

To study ourselves is to go beyond ourselves. To go beyond ourselves is to be enlightened by all things.

So enlightenment comes from all things to us. And when we attain



enlightenment, everything comes, you know-enlightenment comes from all things. You may say enlightenment. "They [laughs] made me enlightened," or "I attained enlightenment." That is same thing in direct experience, but in intellectual understanding it is not same. I understand something. But in direct experience, "I understand something" means a truth came to me, although I didn't expect to-I didn't try to understand it [laughs], but they made me understand.

So:

To study ourselves is-to go beyond ourselves is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to free our body and mind, and to free our body-bodies and minds of others.

So no trace of enlightenment remains because there is no subjectivity or objectivity in our enlightenment. So, "There is no trace of enlightenment, and this no-trace continues endlessly."

So:

When first we seek the truth, we are far away from its environs.

When you say, you know, "I attained enlightenment," that-you are far away from the direct experience of enlightenment.

When we discover the truth is already being correctly [inherently] transmitted to us, we are ourselves at the moment of enlightenment.

It is not, you know, matter of effort or practice anymore. Our practice is not just effort or [laughs]-our practice is-should I say?-you know, you-you-you come here and study or practice zazen so that you understand what is Buddhism, I think so [laughs]. And I [laughs]-I'm making effort to give you some understanding of Zen. That is true. That is actually what we are doing here [laughs]. But until-I shall be very much disappointed if you do not come when you think, "I know what is-now I know what is Buddhism." [Laughs.] So there will not be no need to [laughs]-to practice zazen, to study Zen. That is, you know, I shall be very disappointed. I want you to come here even though you understand what is Buddhism [laughs]. I am not selling you something [laughs, laughter], you know, but I want you to be my customer [laughs, laughter]. And I want to live with [laughs] your support, and I think I shall be very glad if you have some joy in practicing with us here. That is actually Buddhism. It is not matter of [laughs] enlightenment or understanding.

And why we are continuing this kind of practice-we will-what should I say?-we will be a perfect, you know, character, we say. The character-building is-we cannot force anything, you know, to others. But it is necessary for everyone to do things over and over again until the-you acquire some acquisition-perfect acquisition which will-which will not

vanish from you. It is like a to-like to press your dress, you know, trousers. It is-you want iron, you know. Just to fold your trousers is not good enough. You [laughs] should press. If possible you should put something on it, you know, after-even after you put iron. This kind of effort is necessary, but this effort is-when this kind of effort is forced on you, that does not work [laughs]. That kind of effort should be continued without effort, with mutual encouragement. In this way, our practice will be continued.

So when we-when we know-when we think we know what is truth, that is not enough, and that is "far away from its environs. When we discover that the truth has already been correctly or-correctly transmitted to us, we are ourselves at the moment." When we find our true nature or our way of life as the most suitable way to our inherent nature, that is enlightenment.

At first it looks like, you know, you are trying to do something, but when you understand what is the purpose of practice, you will understand that that was my nature but I didn't know. I feel someone is always [laughs] mean to us, and someone is forcing his-the practice to us. Or you may think, "I practice for a long time. It may be [laughs] enough for me. And it doesn't look like I made any progress" [laughs]. So that may be not, or if you go to Eihei-ji, you may say, "I have been Eihei-ji for one year [laughs]. I cannot speak any Japanese, and intellectually I don't," you know, "I cannot study anything here. Just what we are doing is eat and work and recite sutra and practice zazen in the same way always [laughs]. What does it mean? I know everything already, quite well." [Laughing, laughter.] That is what you may say.

But he says, when you say so it is "far away from its environs." When you discover that the truth has been transmitted to us inherently long before, and now I have found it. That is true understanding. You have to continue it until you find your true nature in your practice.

That is realization of the truth. What you study is, as he says, what-"to study Buddhism is to study yourself"-ourselves, you know. When we find out ourselves in our study, in our practice, that is realization of the truth.

So as long as you try to find out your true nature by practice, you know, you cannot find out. But if you find out your true nature in practice, or if you think the practice itself is your true nature, that is enlightenment. And our past sages found out their true nature in our practice. So-so we should find out our true nature in the same practice. That is true realization.

The practice is not something-some means to attain enlightenment. In-in practice, you should find out your true nature. Before you attain enlightenment, you are just ordinary [ordinary] people. After you attain enlightenment, you are sage [laughs]. Before-so he says-he says, "That

we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance." You know, when we try to attain enlightenment by practice, we are ignorant. But things-when things come to us and understanding themselves, including us, that is enlightenment. So ev- [partial word]-truth will come by itself, and we will find ourselves in the truth, in the practice. That is enlightenment.

So practice is first, enlightenment is second [laughs]. Next. So we- anyway, we should be absorbed in practice until you become one with practice, until you build up your character by practice, you-until you become Zen itself-Zen practice itself. Like a rock [laughs]. That is enlightenment. A rock doesn't know who he is [laughs].

"When we discover that the truth has been transmitted inherently," even before we are born [laughs], that is true enlightenment. And we find ourselves in transmitted, inherent buddha-nature in our practice. That is enlightenment. So, "When we discover that the truth has already been inherently-correctly-"inherently" is better. Correctly, you know, is not strong enough. Inherently is better. "Inherently transmitted to us" before-before-even before we are born, it was transmitted to us, and when we realize that true nature in our practice, that is enlightenment. "We [are] ourselves at the moment." The moment we practice our practice with our utmost-utmost effort, that is enlightenment.

If we watch the shore from a boat, it seems that the shore is moving. But when we watch the boat [directly]-

This is just parable.

-we know that it is the boat that moves. If we examine all things with a confused body and mind, we will suppose that our self is permanent. But if we practice closely and return to our present place, it will be clear that nothing at all is permanent.

We are caught by some ideas-some permanent or impermanent or ourselves or others. As long as we practice our practice in this way, we cannot realize what is true. Just when we do it, we will understand what is our true nature.

And here the second paragraph on Page 2:

Firewood turns into ash, and it does not turn into firewood again. But do not suppose that ash is after and the firewood before. We must understand that firewood is at the stage of firewood, and there we find its before and past.

Its own past and future.

And yet with its own past and future, its present is independent of others-of other. Ash is at the stage of ash, and there we have-we find

its before and after. Just [as] firewood does not become firewood again after it's-it is ash, so man does not return to life after his death.

We say we attain enlightenment-we ordinal [ordinary] people attain enlightenment, just as-just like firewood become ash. But this is mistake, he says. We cannot suppose-we cannot-we should not think in that way. You say, "I attained-I will attain enlightenment tomorrow." And ordinal [ordinary] people become [laughs] sage, like firewood become ash. But he says, ordinal [ordinary] people is ordinal [ordinary] people [laughs]. Ash is-sage is sage, and ash is ash, and firewood is firewood. Firewood has its own past and future, and ash has its own past and future. So ordinal [ordinary] people has its own past and future. Future will be a sage [laughs], and sage has also its own past and future. In past, he is ordinal [ordinary] person [laughs]. What is the difference [laughs]? The same thing. So we should not say fire-we should not say ordinal [ordinary] people become-became a sage, as we shouldn't say firewood become ash. What-that is what he says.

So when you practice it, that is it. Don't say, "By practice I shall be buddha [laughs] tomorrow." That is what he-he said. So when you just practice it, you are at the moment a buddha. That is true [laughs]. Don't you think so? You are buddha anyway [laughs, laughter]. You cannot escape from it [laughs]. But you make some excuse [laughs] why you are not buddha [laughs, laughter], that's all. Maybe it is convenient for you [laughs, laughter]. But because you are actually buddha, you do not feel so good when you make some excuse [laughs]. That is what he is-what he says here.

So:

Now it is specifically taught in Buddhism that life does not become death.

Ordinal [ordinary] people does not become sage.

For this reason, life is called "no-life."

For this reason, ordinal [ordinary] people called no-ordinal [ordinary] people [laughs].

It is specifically taught in Buddhism that death does not become life.

Sage does not come back to ordinal [ordinary] people.

Therefore, the death is called "no-death."

Therefore, sage is called "no-sage" [laughs]. Ordinal [ordinary] people [laughs], no difference. When we practice in this hall, there is no teacher or no student. We are all sage [laughs]. Even though your practice is not good enough, we cannot say your practice is not good

enough. It is good anyway. You have your own past and future. You have future-bright future to be a sage [laughs]. Don't worry [laughs, laughter].

Life is a period of itself; death is period of itself. They are like winter and spring. We do not call winter the future spring, nor the spring the future summer.

"Life is a period of itself." Enlightenment-sage is a period of itself, and ordinal [ordinary] people are-they are like winter and spring. We do not call winter the father [future?] of spring. We do not call ourselves-so we shouldn't call ourselves future sage [laughs]. You are sage, not future sage. "Nor spring the future summer." You are sage.

We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken.

If you practice it by yourself without any aid, you are sage. Even though you are sage, you do not lose your nature or form or character.

We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water.

Even though your practice is not good enough, you may say-

The moon does not get wet-

The moon itself in your practice no-nor the-

-nor is the water broken.

You will not broken. You are just as you are. And when you are just as you are, through and through, there is enlightenment.

Although its light is wide and great-

Although enlightenment is-truth is wide and great-

-the moon is reflected-reflected even in a puddle in-one inch wide. The whole moon and the whole sky are reflect-reflected in a drop of dew in the grass.

So in your practice there is enlightenment.

And he continues:

Enlightenment does not destroy the man just as the moon does not break the water. Man does hinder enlightenment, just as a drop of dew does not hinder the moon in the sky. The depth of the drop is the height of the moon. The period of the reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dewdrop and the vastness of the moonlight [moonlit]

sky.

And here he emphasize oneness of the practice and enlightenment from various viewpoint.

And next paragraph I already explained. This is-in next paragraph, he emphasized you should not think enlightenment is some state of mind or some intellectual understanding. It is beyond our consciousness, or it is-enlightenment is there before you become conscience of it. He emphasize this in next paragraph.

Will you please, you know, read the next paragraph from the-yeah, after-from the-

Student: Second paragraph.

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. From the second paragraph. "When the fish swims in the ocean"-what does he mean with it? If you think over and over, you know, you will find various meaning in it.

Thank you very much.

Student: Sensei [?], do you want us to keep these this time, or do you want to collect them now?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Yeah. Yes. If you come next time, please take it and read it at home, before you come for next Sunday service.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/30/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell, 1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter].

[2] See Lecture SR-66-03-13B. However, 13 March 66 is probably the wrong date.

[3] The Heart Sutra.

#### **4 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 7-9**

Sunday, June 19, 1966

Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 7-9  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco[1]

[Now it is specifically taught in Buddhism that life does not become death.] [2] For this reason, life [is] called "no-life." It is specifically taught in Buddhism that death does not become life. Therefore, death is called "no-death."

Life is a period of itself; death is a period of itself. They are like winter and spring. We do not call winter the future spring, nor spring the future summer.

Here he talks about life and death. But this life and death does not just mean the problem of life and death. By "life and death" he means understanding of existence and non-existence, or unconditionality and conditionality. When you practice Zen, our purpose of religion or goal of the religion is not in-to attain some state of mind non- -called non-existence. We want to attain enlightenment in realm of-both in realm of non-existent and existent. This is a Buddhist way of understanding-Buddhist way of practice.

So nirvana is both existent and non-existent, and both not-existent [laughs] and non-existent. This is nirvana. If I say in this way, you may feel [it is a] very unusual statement, but it is not so. For an instance, he says here it is not like-in next paragraph he says:

We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken.

The moon-what do-does he mean by the moon, and what does he mean by water? The water-you say "the moon reflect on water." It is not only the moon that reflect on water. Everything will reflect on water. And what is the water, and what is the moon or some other object which will reflect on water? Usually we think if you see-as long as you see something on water-on the water-as long as you see something on the water, you do not realize that there is water there. But when everything vanished, you will realize that there is water. When you are alive in this way, you know, what you see, what you feel, what you hear is you-according to understanding that is your life.

But when you do not see anything anymore or do not hear anything anymore, you may say that is end of all [laughs]-end of you. Nothing exist after you do not see anything or do not hear anything. That is usual understanding of life, maybe. That is why you become very anxious [laughs]. You become very uneasy when you think of your death because you think you cannot-there is nothing exist after your death. That is quite usual understanding. And some people may think if you-that is quite ordinal [ordinary] understanding, but when you believe in some God or some heaven, you will not have this kind of anxiety. After death you will go to heaven [laughs]. Even though you are various

problem just-in this world, if you attain enlightenment by your practice, you will find out where you go after your death. That is enlightenment, you may say. But this kind of understanding is not our understanding at all.

Our understanding-according to our understanding, that the moon-that the moon exist, it means that the water exist. Because water exist, you can see the moon on it. If there is no water, you cannot see anything. That water exist means that the moon exist. If the moon does not exist, you cannot see water. In this parable we say "water," but by water we mean unconditionality, and by the moon we mean conditionality. Our life is conditionality of-succession of conditionality of unconditioned-unconditionality. Conditionality-conditional experience of life is uncon-[partial word]-unconditioned state of-conditioned state of unconditionality [laughs]. Do you understand [laughs, laughter]? If there is no unconditionality, there is conditional-there is no conditionality. When we-that we exist here means something, you know, which is unconditional. That we are unconditional being-because we are unconditional being, we change [laughs]. According to the condition, our life may change. So on the water many things will appear. The same-it is same thing with your life. Various experience will come out in your life because your life is originally unconditional being. You are unconditional being. That is why you have various exis- [partial word]-experience, including death.

So when you see nothing, what will exist is-the original unconditionality will exist-still exist. It is the same thing, even though projector stops. When-even though you cannot see any picture on film-on screen, when the projector stops [laughs], but film exist. By "film" I mean unconditional being. Film is unconditional. That is white. Film is just white being. So on-it is possible-because it is white-pure white, it is possible to reflect various color on it, and various form on it. But usually after projector stop projecting the picture, you think there is no more picture [laughs]. You say no more picture, but film exist. By "film" we mean the unconditional-unconditional eternal being. And you cannot-but you cannot obtain-acquire a perfect renunciation or perfect composure by just understanding-by just idea of unconditional being. Even though I say you are unconditional being, it does not make much sense [laughs]. It is obvious that-logically it is obvious that we are unconditional being. Not only each one of us, but also various existence is unconditional being just like a picture on the film. That which exist is the screen, but no one [is] interested in the just white picture. But if I say that unconditionality is eternal present or now, you may be surprised. By "unconditionality" Dogen-zenji means, now, this moment. So this unconditionality is the eternal being in which Buddha live [?]-in which we live. But that is one eternal being and one eternal succession of present or now.

This "now," this moment is where we should go after you are dead [laughs]. You go to this eternal present, and you appear from this



eternal-not "from"-you appear on this eternal present. And to obtain this eternal present actually is to practice Zen. So in your practice if you find out, this nothingness-this not "vacuity," but this eternal present, you will be-you have no more anxiety. But when-when you just thinking about it, you have still emotional anxiety. But if you actually feel or emotionally feel this present moment in your practice, you have no more intellectual anxiety and emotional anxiety. So you have perfectly free from the problem of birth and death.

So when you reach this point in Buddhism:

How-now it is specifically taught in Buddhism that life does not become death.

Life is, you know, one conditioned period. Life is conditional expression of unconditionality. Death is conditional expression of unconditionality that is unconditionality itself. So we do not say "life become death." Life and death is the same.

For this reason, life is called "no-life."

Life-what is life? Life is conditioned-conditionality of unconditionality. So death is unconditionality of-death is conditionality of unconditionality, and life is also conditionality of unconditionality. So there is no difference.

So in Buddhism we do not say "life become death."

It is specifically taught in Buddhism that death does not become life.

Death does not become life because death is not something different from life. Death is conditionality of unconditionality, and life is conditionality of unconditionality [laughs]. So it is the same thing. So we do not say "death become life."

Therefore death is called "no-death."

Death-this "no" means emancipation or liberation. Why we put "no" means to point out the thing itself. It does not mean-it is not negative. It is emancipation or to point out thing itself. Death is death. Life is life, you know. When we point out something directly, we say "no." Because when you say "death," you are comparing death is to-death to life. We do not-when we reach this understanding, death is death, life is life. And death and life is same. Both are conditionality of unconditionality.

So based on unconditional being. Life is based on unconditional being. Death is also based on unconditional being. If you see death through and through-if you understand what is death through and through, there is no more death which life result. When we say "death," period. That's all [laughs]. No more life. When we say "life," that is period. No more

death. Death and life is same thing. It is the -just picture on the film-no, on screen. But when you see the picture, there is screen, you know [laughs]. You do not just realize-you do not just see it, but without screen there is no picture.

So this "no" means emancipation or direct experience-direct experience of death, [and] direct experience of life. Life is period of itself, death is period of itself. Death is death, and life is life. They are like winter and spring. When we-winter-winter is the unconditionality of the climate-conditionality of unconditional climate. And summer is also some special season based on our various-based on one universal weather [?]. So:

We do not call winter the future spring, nor spring the future summer.

When we say spring, you know, when-there is no need-why we call it spring is we want to know whether it is warm or cold, you know. When we say spring-"Oh, that's wonderful!" [winter?] [laughs]. If you-if you-I say, "This is future summer," you will feel [laughs] funny. Future summer or future winter [laughs]. You-you feel as if you are going back winter [laughs]. So when spring come, you should feel very warm [laughs], and you should feel very happy. That is why we say it is spring now. So it is ridiculous to say this is future [laughs] winter. It is ridiculous to say life is future death [laughs]. You may say death is future life. This is-this statement gives you some [laughs] hope, but not exactly. Still you have some, you know, anxiety until you see it [laughs].

So as your religion is based on this kind of understanding, it will not work [laughs]. Even though you die, by re- [partial word]-by reincarnation you will appear in this world, but someone will want to stop [laughs] reincarnation. It's awful to be born to come back in such a nasty, uncomfortable world again. It's much better to stay in heaven [laughs, laughter] indefinitely. This kind of understanding will not help you at all.

So perfect composure or unperturbable compatibility of your life should be attained in-on each moment without just [being] caught by conditioned state of life. Actually conditioned state of life-why we have many conditions is because we stop our think-because we have some particular understanding of life. You cannot stop your life, you know. You are always changing into something else. Always. Incessantly.

So there is, strictly speaking, there is no-nothing called "now." Now is always going. To live in now means to live in eternal-eternity. So strict-in our practice, we do not think anything. Just let ourselves go as we go [laughs]. That is our way.

You know, the atom has no-no weight or no size [?], as you know. It has no weight and no size [?]. It is same thing with time: Time has no length. It is smallest particle imaginable-imaginable. So we can imagine

how small it is, but [laughs] there is no such thing exist. You say the atom is smallest particle of material imaginable [laughs]. That imaginable. That is just theory. There is no such thing exist. If so, we do not exist. What exist is unconditional being. "Is" exist. One unconditional being exist. If you want to attain liberation in realm of time or space, there is no other way to explain in this way. But at the same time, it means we should not try to attain liberation by the idea of good or bad, long or short. How-the only way is to understand our life in term of being or non-being. Good or bad. In term of just we understand the material by the idea of atom. That-that is just idea. That is just some way to-of understanding of life. But actually those way is just way. It does not mean-it means something but that-this understanding means is one big unconditional being. Not particular trivial event.

It is same thing to divide big thing in various way. You can cut one radish in various way [laughs]. How to-according to the skill of the person who cut the radish it, you know, looks very beautiful. But actually what exist is one big radish [laughs]. When we reach this kind of understanding, I think we have understood what Dogen-zenji meant by Genjo Koan. All the koan is to mean-means of explaining our life. Even though we say "attainment," or we say "like" [life?], we should not be [1 word] [laughs]. Even though we say "ignorance" or "death," we should not be disappointed. That is just, you know, explanation of our life. Life does not change.

We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Although its light is wide and great, the moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and whole sky are reflected in drop of dew in the grass.

This kind of, you know, wonderful composure-absolute meaning of our life will be realized when we reach this understanding. There is no more big-or matter of no more problem of big or small. Each moment of our life is one expression of conditionality of one unconditional being. It is not matter of long or short. According to some psychologist, the moment of our-one moment for us is three or six seconds. Three or six second in-is for us one moment. When we say, "I see something," you know, that means that image will stay in your mind-imbedded state three or six minutes [seconds?]. That's all. After three or six minutes [seconds], it will turn [into] to some idea. So direct experience stay three to six minutes [seconds] only-oh, not "minutes," "seconds" only [laughs]. But three or second-we cannot say three or second, you know, strictly speaking. In that three or six second, the moment you see, you know-I-we don't know the-there is no length, you know, the moment [laughs]. When you see something, there is no length of time. It is not even one second. But in that moment, it-the object you see will be clear and genuine. But in next moment, it will, you know, change into something which is not so actual-accurate to you.

So "this moment" or "this world," we say, but what is this world? So it is

silly to-to try to find out something in our-just in our conscious world. So here he says there is no more problem of good or bad, long or short:

The moon is reflected even in puddle an inch wide. The moon-the whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a drop of dew in the grass.

We cannot say the moon is bigger than drop of dew. It is the same. It is one period of our life, long or short. Three or six minutes is one period of our life. And seventy or eighty years of our life is also one period of life. Which is long and which is short [laughs]? You cannot compare. The way of understanding is different. But the life you understand [is] originally the same. There is no particular life for us. We are just expressing our unconditional being, which is universal to everyone.

So that is why we say even though you are eating, there is Zen. There is unconditional being. When you sit, of course [laughs], you are unconditionality itself. But before you have some experience of unconditional-unconditionality of the being, you cannot, you know, accept it. Even though you do not have the experience, it is better not to try to attain enlightenment somewhere else [laughs]. You will be lost.

And it is obvious that you cannot attain absolute composure by comparing this world to other world. It is useless. It means nothing [laughs]. If you find out there is no other way to attain enlightenment, even though it is hard, we should attain the absolute attainment by right practice. If you do so, sooner or later you will attain it. Even though you do not attain it, you can practice your way with conviction. Do you understand? If you practice it with conviction, that practice works. Even though it does not work, it's all right [laughs]. It is working, actually, but you do not think [laughs]-you yourself do not think that is not working. But actually it is working. That is our practice. So there is no problem in our practice.

So whether you attain enlightenment or not is secondary problem. The first of all you should stop comparing this world to the other world, this moment to the next moment. We should live in eternal present. Here we have eternal life in its true sense. No one can deny this eternal life we mean. And no one can ignore it. If you-if they ignore it, they will be sympathized by us: "Oh, he-[laughs]-he is wondering about-he is just caught by one side of the view of life. Existence-or existent or non-existent, when life is existent and non-existent, conditional and unconditional. That's all."

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/30/01).

[1] This date is almost certainly wrong: Four lectures on one reel-to-reel tape had been assigned the same date.

[2] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell, 1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter]. The tape for this lecture appears to lack the opening sentence(s) read by Suzuki-roshi, so the single sentence in brackets has been restored here.

## **5 - Precepts**

Sunday, June 19, 1966

Precepts

Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco[1]

Last time I explained the ten prohibitory precepts:

Do not kill.

Do not steal.

Do not be immoral.

Do not lie.

Do not sell intoxicating liquor.

Do not speak of other's shortcomings.

Do not praise yourself or blame others.

Do not grudge giving to charities material or spiritual.

Do not be angry.

Do not speak ill of the Triple Treasures.

Those precepts looks like quite common precepts and nothing-nothing special. It is not [laughs] quite usual, and almost all the people know it. But this is pretty difficult to observe it. This is well-known fact. It is quite simple, but it is quite [laughs] difficult to observe it.

So in this point there is some reason why we have to emphasize those ten precepts. And those precepts is in Buddhism-have special meaning

because our precepts is not to attain some special achievement mentally or spiritually. To be a good citizen [laughs] is just why we have to be a Buddhist, you know. There will not be no need for us-for all of us to be a-to be sages [laughs]. If we are good enough to be a good citizen, that's enough. If we are quite good as a citizen of America, then I think we will [not?] have any more war [laughs] because we are too good. That is why I think we have to fight. If we are just good, common citizen, there will not be no need to fight. This point is very important for us. Our precepts should be so very common and should be very usual.

And those ten precepts may be, you know, well-understood custom among human being. And it will be unwritten rules, but sometime those ten commandments [are] set up as a law. Here-here we have-because it is difficult for us to observe it, we have law. So when it become-when those precepts is-are understand as a law of the country, someone may think it may be permissible to some extent to do something wrong-will be permissible if some attorney will say you can do as much as is [laughs]-to some extent it is good. That is precepts when they are understood as a law. And sometime it may be understood as a moral rules. In morality-it is some rules which we should observe. So it-in morality we emphasize the negative sense of the precepts. We-"You should do this; you should not do this" is morality.

But this understanding of the rules of human being does not work properly, because under the moral rules we feel some-we do not feel freedom-we have no freedom in moral realm. But in religious realm, we have two side of the interpretation of the-our rules. One is prohibitory meaning. One is more positive meaning-we have to do it or we want to do it instead of we should do it. When we say we should do it, that is moral precepts. But when we say I cannot help doing so, or I have to, you know-no, no-I want to refrain from doing something bad, that is religious understanding of our rules.

So in this realm, we have freedom. But here religious faith is wanted. Without faith or without finding out your inmost request, you cannot obtain this kind of freedom. Because you-when you find out your inmost nature or buddha-nature, you don't want to do something wrong, and you want to do something good. Here you have negative sense-you understand precepts in negative and positive sense. This is why we have to have precepts.

So here precepts is not just contact between people or between countries, or it is not the law of the country or law of the society. It is-this contact will be-bring into the relationship between Buddha and sentient being. So there we have no chance [laughs] to break it, you know, because we want to do it. When you want to do it, there is no chance to break it.

So here, again, you come back to the-to animal stage. Animals do not

[do] anything wrong. What he-what they do is always right. But human beings have some ability or [laughs]-I don't know what to say-freedom to do something good and bad. So in human realm, we have to have some conduct between us. So that we might not get into confusion [laughs] there is some rules. And we have two chances: to do something good and to do something bad. Morality is for human being.

So, as Buddha said, human being has some destiny to, you know, fight or-not "fight," but to struggle with himself and with others. That is the nature of human culture. But when our human culture is emancipated to the stage of religious culture, we have perfect freedom. In this sense, we emphasize precepts. Even though we-the difference between asceticism and Buddhism is this point: We acknowledge our human nature one hundred percent [laughs]. We are one hundred percent good. We accept it. Whether someone say good or bad, we have human nature. We have to accept it, and as long as we are human nature, we cannot be a god in-in Christian sense. We cannot be a god. We are human being through and through. When we are human being through and through, we are, you know, buddha. But how to be buddha-buddha must not have-must be-must obtain perfect freedom. So when we find out our true nature, we are buddha. And for us there is no chance to do anything wrong. That is why we should observe our precepts.

So we do not observe our precepts by any gaining idea. Just to be human being is the purpose of observing precepts. There is no other purpose. Just to observe the precepts because we want to do it. That's all. That is the precepts. Ten prohibitory precepts.

So ten prohibitory precepts may be the Three Refuges-or no-three corrective precepts, "the precepts which enjoin us to complete good behavior-the precepts which enjoin us to complete good deeds. The precepts which enjoin the completion of benevolence or loving kindness to all beings." [2] Here we emphasize positive side of-side of the precept-precepts. And here, in three corrective pure precepts, we emphasize both negative side and positive side. So when we-oneness of the positive and negative side is attained, we-we say pure. By "pure" we mean oneness of the duality always.

When the Sixth Patriarch [3]-as the Sixth Patriarch said, there are-it is not-there is no practice and enlightenment. There is practice and enlightenment, and enlightenment is enlightenment, and practice is practice [laughs]. But you-he said, you should not think after you practice it you will attain enlightenment. So our practice is a mean[s] need to attain enlightenment. That is not right understanding, the Sixth Patriarch said. And when he say so, he say you should not have a polluted idea of practice and enlightenment: stained idea. Stained idea means dualistic idea. Practice-if you think practice and enlightenment is two different things, that is stained idea. If you understand the practice and enlightenment is one, that is pure, you know, unstained idea of practice. So he said, although there is practice and enlightenment, you

should not have tainted idea: zenna in Chinese or Japanese.[4] Zenna. Zenna sinko torii zai.[5] "You should not have tainted idea." That means you should not have-you should have pure understanding. By pure understanding, we means understanding which is more that just intellectual dualistic understanding.

So here it is-here we say the "three corrective pure precepts" because this precepts express the oneness of the negative and positive attitude of observing precepts. And whether those positive and negative attitude of observing precepts will be attained when we realize our true nature and take refuges in Buddha and law-Buddha, law, and sangha. That is why we have sixteen precepts.

The first Triple Treasures means our fundamental nature to take refuge in Buddha, or the truth, or the sangha. And this-when we realize our true nature, that-it means we have the-both negative and positive way of observing precepts in everyday life.

But as we have some human nature which is special to human nature, we have to emphasize more-more negative, prohibitive side of the precepts, you know. It is more, you know, suitable for human being to emphasize the negative side. When we realize our true nature, we-naturally we will emphasize-we will have some-not [2 words] but negative understanding of life. Because when we realize our true nature-before we realize our true nature, we emphasize rather positive [laughs] side until you are completely caught by [laughs]-caught by your positive side of the activity: ignoring not to kill, not to steal, or not to be immoral, not to lie, you know.

It is quite true when Dogen-zenji says human being like something wrong [laughs]. That is quite true. And ignoring something true [laughs]. We are not so interested in something right, something true. If we start to [be] interested in something true-always all of us [are] interested in something which is completely right, then all the social activity will be stopped [laughing]. There will be no newspaper, no magazine, no movie, no traffic, no airplane, no trip to the moon [laughter]. Our world-human world will be completely blocked up. That is true [laughs]. We-we should know that.

So it is quite-Buddha was quite wise to accept both [laughs] sides [laughs]. Half and half. And for-for his-because of his mercy, he emphasized the negative side with little more-more than positive side [laughs]. There is no need for us to emphasize the positive side. We are quite positive anyway. This is the structures of the precepts.

So precepts eventually goes so far as the formality or behavior or demeanor which no moral rules or law of the country cannot reach, you know. Whatever you do you have, to some extent, you have freedom. Even though you do not behave like a good citizen, you should not be put in jail [laughs]. So you have to have-you have some-to some



extent, you have freedom.

But in religion, religion goes deeper than that. So it bound you so far as it goes to the demeanor of-not only behavior, but will go how to smile or how to blink [laughs] eyes. It should go so far, you know, because what will happen to you if your boyfriend makes [laughs] his eyes triangle [laughs, laughter]. That is, before you say anything, that is the end of the [laughs] friendship. Religion goes so far. It is-religion is deeper and it is more, you know [laughs], real to us. That is religion. So it goes very deep.

But when you take-when you understand religion as you understand some social contact, or rules, or law of the country, you know, religion is very bad, you know. It is terrible [laughs]. When a religion lose its faith and lose its freedom to believe in, religion is worst, you know, [laughs] thing which you will have. So when-if you believe in religion, you should believe in [it] from the bottom of your heart, or else religion is worst thing to observe or believe in.

So anyway we should have a complete freedom in religious faith.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (5/9/01).

[1] This date is probably wrong: Four lectures on one reel-to-reel tape were assigned the same date. The previous recorded lecture in which Suzuki-roshi commented on the ten prohibitory precepts was given on 21 January 1966, so this lecture may have been given shortly thereafter. (See SR-66-01-21-A.)

[2] It sounds like Suzuki-roshi is quoting someone, but the source is unknown.

[3] Daijan Huineng (Daikan Eno): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Patriarch of Zen.

[4] zenna or zenma (Jap.): to defile a pure mind with a delusory one; to be attached to a dualistic view.

[5] Phonetic guess only. Transcriber is assuming the next sentence is the English translation of the Japanese phrase.

## **6 - Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 11-13**

Sunday, June 19, 1966

Genjo Koan: Paragraphs 11-13  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco[1]

When the truth-

-the last paragraph in Page 2.[2]

When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that-we think that we have enough. When the truth fill our body and mind, we know that something is missing. For an example, when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks circular and nothing else. But the ocean is neither round nor square, and its features are infinite in variety. It is like a place-it is palace-it is like a palace. It is like a jewel. It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time. All things are so. Though there may-there are many features in the dusty life and the pure life, we only understand what our study can reach. And in our study of all things we must appreciate that although they may look round or square, the other features of oceans or mountains are infinite in variety, and universes lies in all squares [quarters]. It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here-even in a drop of water.

In the-in the last part we have studied, he said:

Enlightenment does not destroy the man, just as the moon does not break the water. When-a man does not hinder enlightenment, just as a drop of dew does not hinder the moon in the sky. The depth of drop is the height of the moon. The period of reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dewdrop, and the vastness of the moonlight sky.

Here he says, even though we are not aware of enlightenment, enlightenment is there when we practice zazen and when we do everything in our everyday life as you practice zazen. If we say so-if so, you may say, there will be no need to take some special consideration in your everyday life or practice. And there is no need to study Buddhism, you know.

But-so he tried to correct our misunderstanding in this paragraph. "When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough," because you do not know what is the truth. So that is why you say there is-there will not be no need to practice anymore [laughs] or from the beginning because you think you have-anyway you have truth. You obtain truth, and everything obtain truth. And everything talks about Buddha's teaching. If so, there will not be no need even to listen to [laughs] because we know that. That is quite usual mistake for us. But it is not so. That is-why you make such understanding is because you do not know what is truth.

When we-when the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that

we have enough. When the truth fill our body and mind, we know that something is missing.

When truth is actually fill your body, you think that something is missing [laughs]. Do you understand what does he mean? Something is missing-"something is missing" means if you understand truth, you know, actual truth, truth is not-truth is-truth reveal itself in eternal present. Not only this moment, but also eternally it will continuously reveal itself through our activity. So what we do just now is not enough. We have to take another, you know, activity in next moment. So what we-just what we do is not enough.

That is why-that is true meaning of "to drop off our body and mind," or, for me, "nothing to grasp," or Bodhidharma's "I don't know" [laughs]. "I don't know" means there is many things to know. Because I don't know, I have to know many things. That is true meaning of truth. Truth is not some particular, you know, thing. If I say truth you think some special theory [laughs] or-theory-mathematical theory or scientific theory. But we don't mean such concrete, static logic by "truth." Truth is unconditionality or eternal reality. Reality does not take any form. That is why we call it reality. There is no other word for that. So sometime we say unconditionality. Because it is unconditionality, you know, it takes various condition. It accept various condition. If so, there should be various-there should be innumerable variety in its form and color. Then:

When truth fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing.

When we become one with truth, we start to take various activity according to the circumstances because we feel something is missing. So we will start continuous study, continuous practice, because we feel we should study more. When you think truth is some particular theory or teaching, you think that is enough. I know that that is enough. So you don't want to study. But when you realize what is truth actually, and you feel what you should do, you should-you will start continuous truth-true practice.

For example, when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks circular and nothing else. But the ocean is neither round nor circular [square], and its features are infinite in variety.

You think the truth is some particular thing-some particular, concrete theory. So you think this is truth. But it-that is exactly the same as you saying ocean is round or square. It is not. Like it is not square or round, there should be various infinite feature. "It is like a palace. It is like a jewel." For a fish it is. For dragon, it may be like a palace. For fish, it may be a jewel. "It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time." It seems circular as far as our-our eye can reach at the time.

He had pretty hard time [laughs] when he went to China across the ocean-across the ocean.[3] So he is referring to the voyage here. "As

far as our eye can reach, the ocean is circular." But at-that is only at that time. When storms come [laughs], black and dark cloud, there is no ocean. So at-he says at that time, we don't what kind of ocean we will have tomorrow. "All things are so." Everything is like this. Though there are many futures in the dirty life and pure life-so-called-it "our dirty life" or "our pure life," there are many futures. We only understand that our study can reach. We say "this is awful" or "this is wonderful," but we-only that is our particular understanding-one of the many understanding of life at that time. And in our study of all things, we must appreciate that although they may look round or square, the other future of ocean or mountains are infinite in variety, and universe lie in all squares.[4]

So if we understand actually what is truth, we will have this kind of feeling. So what we do is not enough. This feeling should follow when you realize the truth. "I am not so good," you may say. Why you say so [is] because the truth is within yourself. The truth, you know, says "I am not so good" [laughs]. But you-but-but if you think, "I feel I am not so good," that is self-centered idea [laughs]. Truth says [laughs], "You are not enough" [laughs]. Like some-like Fumiko Hayashi,[5] the famous writer-famous Japanese writer said, "This is not my best work" [laughs]. "This is not my best work." That is so. This is not only my work. There should be various work for-for her.

"It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here." "It is not so around ourselves but also directly here." If we say so, you know, you may look around and-and say the truth is infinite variety. "We have to watch" [laughs]-or that's what you may [laughs] say. But that is not, you know, right even. The truth is directly here on this moment right here. Don't look around [laughs, laughter]. You are-when we say something, you know, we are caught by the statement [laughs]. So he, you may say, not just around yourselves but right here. When you are standing up, you are standing on the truth [taps the table several times] right now. "Don't look around," he said.

It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here-even in a drop of water.

Here we have come back to the last part [?] is of study-last paragraph: the moon is even in a drop of water. If someone ask you what is truth, you know, you may say, "I don't know"-you can say, "I don't know," or you can say, "What is it?" [Laughs.] What is it? "What is it?" means you stop and think, or you appreciate life in that moment. We are-we live in eternal present, but we even know that we do not aware of present even-present time even. We are just doing-continuously doing things one after another.

So you don't know-you are not aware of your life even. But if someone ask you what it is, you may say, "Oh, what will it be?" [Laughs.] That is the answer, you know. "Oh-oh, I am doing something [laughs]. What am I doing [laughs]? This is the answer. What are you doing? "Oh my! I

am watching the fish!" [Laughs, laughter.] That is the answer. Do you understand? "What am I doing? Oh, I'm practicing zazen." That is true practice. That is true answer. "What is it?" is the answer, you know. "Oh, I don't know" is also. "What are you doing? "Oh, oh my-I don't know!" [Laughs, laughter.]

When you are actually one with truth, things happens on your life in that way. That is true life. When you discuss about the truth, what it is [laughs]-the more you discuss, the more [laughs] you will be separated from the truth. But when you know that, it's all right-if you are answering to the question-someone's question who do not know what is the truth. So you are trying to answer. Just you say, "Don't be silly, I am just eating." [Laughs.]

When a fish swims in the ocean, there is no end to the water, no matter how far it swims. When a bird flies in the sky, there is no end to the air, no matter how far it flies. However, the fish and the bird do not live-leave their elements.

It just fly. It just swim. And there is no end to-to the-for the fish. There is no end of the water or sky for the fish or bird. And fish does not realize it's swimming. A bird does not realize it's flying. But where the fish swims, where the bird fly, there are water or sky.

When the use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in a small way. Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once.

So that you practice Zen is that you practice enlightenment. So enlightenment and practice is not different. So he says, "Use-when use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in small way." But you cannot compare which is large what-which is small, which is good and which is bad. So each practice is absolutely-each practice is enlightenment itself, as when a bird flies there is sky.

Anyway, it is impossible to be diverted [?] from the enlightenment for us. "When the use is small, it is used in a small way." It follows anyway. And how it follows-it follows in the same way, with the same value. There is even-there is no two-two kinds of water for small and big fish. Water is same.

Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once.

"Though it flies everywhere"-though some big bird like eagle flies-will fly everywhere, but even-even so, if a eagle said, "I can fly anyway now. I am big enough to fly. So I don't want any more sky." [Laughs.] If he say so, the eagle will-may die at once [laughs]. So in this sense, there is no big eagle or no small sparrow. Sparrow and eagle is the same-are the same. Not different at all. Anyway, they must fly in the air.

Water makes life and air makes life. The bird makes life and the fish make life.

Water and-water and-water and fish, sky and bird, you may say [are] different, but actually it is not different. So he says:

Life makes bird and life makes the fish. There are further analogies possible to illustrate, in this way, practice, enlightenment, mortality and eternity.

There may be various dualistic ideas in our thinking, but practice and enlightenment, mortality and eternity are the same in its true sense. So is the other dualistic-dualistic thinking.

Now-

Here is problem:

-if a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place.

So he says true practice will be established in defilement [?]. Before we attain enlightenment-before we [are] aware of enlightenment, we attained enlightenment. Because if a bird or a fish tries-it is impossible for a bird or a fish to know what is air or water before they move in it. So enlightenment should be attained before we [are] aware of it. [Laughs.] Do you understand? True practice should be established before we attain enlightenment-before we know what is enlightenment. Do you understand? If you move in the practice, you cannot, you know [laughs], know the end of air or water. As you cannot know what is enlightenment or what is defilement before you move in-before you practice it, when you practice it, you know, enlightenment is there. If you doubt it, you are trying to know what is enlightenment-if you are a fish [laughs] or a bird who wants to know-who wants to practice, who wants to move in it after you realize the end of the water or sky.

If a bird or a fish or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place. When we find our place at this moment-when we find our way at this moment, the practice follows, and this is the realization of truth.

-in its true sense.

Pretty difficult [laughs] to accept it. Pretty difficult to be a fish [laughs] or a bird who is just move in water or sky. Because we are not a fish or sky, we, you know, try to know the end of the sky or water before we move in it [laughs]. May be quite natural for you to want to know what is enlightenment, what is water or sky before you practice or before you move in. That is why I'm trying to, you know, explain what is enlightenment, and Dogen-zenji worked so hard to explain what is

enlightenment. But before he write so many works, he said so [laughs]-he said this way-he said this way. He worked-he will-he worked so hard to let you know what is water, what is sky. But yet he says, you should not, you know, try to-if you say after I understand Buddhism intellectually, quite well, I will study Buddhism. Don't say so, he says. That is like a bird who try to move in-move in the sky after he knows the end of the sky.

Of course, we do not ignore the intellectual understanding of Buddhism, and especially someone who have-who have time to explain it intellectually. It is their duty to explain it intellectually. But we students for-for the students, it is necessary to start practice you understand completely what is Buddhism. You will have no time [laughs] to realize what is Buddhism.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/30/01).

[1] This date is almost certainly wrong: Four lectures on one reel-to-reel tape had been assigned the same date.

[2] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Eihei Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan," following the translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi with Robert Aitken that appeared in: (1) Shobogenzo Genjo Koan: An Analytic Study (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center); (2) Wind Bell, 1967, VI (2-4), pp. 60-62, and (3) the [Honolulu] Diamond Sangha [Newsletter]. According to Kaz, Suzuki-roshi handed out a printed version of the translation to students.

[3] In 1223, Dogen (age 23) made the hazardous journey with Myozen by ship to Sung China across the Sea of Japan: "through a voyage of countless miles, entrusting my transient body to the billowing waves" (Eihei Dogen, Record of the Baoqing Era).

[4] The Kazuaki/Aitken version has "quarters."

[5] Fumiko Hayashi (1903-1951): Japanese novelist and short-story writer.

## **1966 augustus (4)**

### **1 - Genjo Koan**

Monday, August 15, 1966

Genjo Koan  
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: The second paragraph [of the Genjo Koan]:

That we move ourselves and understand all things is ignorance. That things advance and understand themselves is enlightenment. It is Buddha who understand ignorance. It is people who are ignorant of ignor- [partial word]-enlightenment. Further, there are those who are enlightened about enlightenment, and those who are ignorant of ignorance. [Recording stops.][1]

Tape operator: Uh, what would you like me to say into the microphone?  
[Recording stops.]

Suzuki-roshi: ... trace of enlightenment-enlightenment- ... trace of enlightenment-enlightenment- [Fragments only.]

[2]... among many instructions about how to sit: to keep your back straight, pull your chin, and about mudra in your hand. The most important thing is, we say, to stop thinking or to keep your mind on your breathing. Dogen-zenji says, "Think non-thinking. Think non-thinking." This is a very important point, and at the same time this is very difficult practice because your mind will be easily carried away. Sometime I-when you feel very good, but as soon as you feel you reached a certain stage, your mind will be carried away because you felt something [laughs], and your mind is not on your breathing any more [laughs]. So if you want to concentrated on your breathing, you should not mind even the state of mind you are in your practice.

So as Hinayana Buddhist-in Hinayana Buddhist practice, the best stage is the stage where you have no mental joy and physical joy even. The mental attachment or consciousness or joy is not so difficult to overcome, but it is the physical consciousness which is difficult to be free from it. Why we emphasize this point is because we have to live on each moment. We have to be ready. We-our mind should be absolutely free from everything spiritual and-spiritually and physically. And we should be ready for-we should be ready for responding to mental and physical stimulation which may come. And we should be-we should have power to react to everything which may come. When your mind is fortified with something, you feel-you yourself feel very safe [laughs], but actually it is not safe. Some stronger-you cannot protect yourself by preparing something. When you are ready to adjust yourself, you are-you have immense strength. But usually we always-by nature we try to fortify ourselves spiritually and mentally and-or physically. That is why we lose our freedom from our surrounding.

So in our practice, we sh- [partial word]-we open our mind and we just follow our living nature. We say, "Stop your mind." Why we say stop



your mind is your mind stops your living activity. So [laughs] to stop your mind is to let your mind work. To stop, you know-your thinking faculty is usually stops your actual living faculties. So if you stop the faculty which stops your living faculty or nature, [it] means to let your mind work. Do you understand? When you think you stop or you limit your activity, when you do not think, or when you do not fortify yourself by your thinking faculty or rational faculty, your true nature will obtain the perfect freedom.

The clock is always moving: Short hand and long hand are all constantly, you know, moving. But when you think, "It is two o'clock" [laughs], clock stops. And when you prepare something in your-by your thinking, that-it means you fortify or you fortify yourself two or three miles ahead [laughs]. You think, "Now I'm all right [laughs]. I can sleep [laughs]." But that is not-that makes you uneasy more, you know. You try to be, you know-you try to feel safe, but actually at the same time you have a fear-fear of being destroyed the fortified front. So that makes you more [laughs] uneasy.

So thinking-you think so that you find out some conclusion and rest on that conclusion, but actually by thinking you make yourself more uneasy. But if you do not fortify yourself, you have no fear of being invaded. You are always welcome [welcoming] [laughs] your enemy. Whatever come you are ready. "Please come." [Laughs.] Then you have no fear. That is to stop thinking.

So not only to stop thinking but also we stop some emotional contrivance. When we sit we just sit, keeping our mind on breathing. We have to live, so we have to take breathing. So this is absolutely necessary for us. So we just sit and keeping our mind on our breathing. We do not prepare anything. We just sit. And here the important thing is to have conviction, to have selflessness. This is most important thing. Without this conviction, you cannot stop your thinking, or you cannot stop your emotional activity. If you want to stop your emotional activity and thinking activity, you remain in your selflessness.

It is not attained, this selflessness, after you attain enlightenment. Before you practiced zazen, you fixed your mind in this truth which no one can deny it. We think we have self, but actually, as you know, there is no such thing as self. You think-usually people thinks, "I am here," but actually we do not exist here. This is the truth Buddha found out. Not by just-for his own truth, but as the truth for everyone. It is absolutely true. If you cannot deny it, you have to accept it [laughs]. If you cannot accept it, it's better not to practice zazen [laughs]. This much conviction is necessary. If you have some doubt in his teaching, you may study it until you accept it completely. But it will not take so long time before you accept his teaching: his teaching is so true.

So when you practice zazen, you have to be prepared to accept the truth as truth, and stop useless thinking and useless emotional activities

which will not help you, and to live on each moment is how to practice zazen. On each moment we have to renew ourselves as the clock goes. We say in-in San- [partial word]-I am not-I don't know Sanskrit so well, but to attain-how to attain detachment is to watch or to gaze at something-upeksha, they say. Upeksha means to watch. To watch means to follow the reality-to follow the reality-to follow reality like clock goes. It does not go so fast, but it does not-it is not stopping. It is moving, but it doesn't go so fast.

But our mind [laughs]-in your practice because we are so accustomed to preparing something or making some useless effort to protect ourselves, so sometime our hand moves very fast and waiting [laughs]. You know, it is-I think you set your clock-alarm, and you think this is all right. It means you-you move your-you move the hand of the clock fast-six hours fast or ahead, or seven hour ahead [laughs], and you-you will feel very good. That is-that is all right, but usually we do something like this: You save a lot of money, and you feel very good. It is the-you want money when you want it. When you hungry, you have to buy something. That is why you have to have money. But you save a lot of money, and-and after all you become interested in saving money. It means you are, you know, moving your hands of the clock, and you feel very good. But actually it means you stop your clock. Clock is necessary because it goes as the sun goes.

If we want to live in its true sense, we have to live one moment after another moment. One breathing after another. This is exactly how we should live. Forgetting all about breathing and thinking something wonderful [laughs] when you are practicing, its [it does not] make any sense. It is not how to live in this world. This kind of useless effort will be completely forgotten when we get accustomed to our practice in its true sense. It is very difficult for anyone to give others instructions one event-one thing after another. But if you know this secret, this secret will help in whatever you do. If you know-if you see what they do, you will find out how important it is to live on each moment.

In monastery, the most important teaching is Dojo daishuni ichini.[3] It means: Do is "movement." Jo is "calmness" or "to stop activity." "Our activity should be with people." That is the most important teaching in monastery. You may think in big monastery there must be some rules to control people [laughs]. I thought, when I saw the notice in the monastery, "Oh, of course it is necessary to do things with people at the same time, or else they cannot control us," but the more you think about it, the more you will find out the mean-true meaning of it. It means selflessness. It means not to move your watch, your clock ahead of the time.

Dogen-zenji, early in the spring, would watch the plum coming out in cold winter-cold morning. In Japan, you know, plum comes up in end of the January or February. Even the cold wind blowing over the icy field, it comes out. And Dogen-zenji liked plum-Japanese plum very much. And

he watched-he gazed at it, appreciating its beauty. He just, you know, watch it. That is upeksha. That is detachment.

Detachment means to live with people, with everything, with the beauty of the plum. That is detachment. It doesn't look like-the flower does not looks like [it is] moving, but actually it is moving like a clock. It's moving. So it may fade away in two or three days. He may watch-he would watch every morning the same flower, and his mind follows as the plum goes. This is detachment. This is at the same time to appreciate flower, while attachment is to stop the plum. To attach to flower and stop its beauty it means to appreciate dead flower. If you want to appreciate living flower, you cannot be selfish. Your mind should be instead in the state of selflessness. You should be prepare for discouragement when the flower fade away.

This is how we stop our thinking in our practice. So "think non-thinking." Usually you will think "think thinking" [laughs]. Think thinking means "think-stopping." Think non-thinking means "think something actual, something real." But usually when we think, we think something which is dead. Nothing thinks. Everything just alike [alive?]. Only human being thinks without knowing what he is doing. Human being is ac- [partial word]-really human being when he understand what is his thinking. Then thinking will work. But when we think without knowing what is thinking, we will be completely separated from reality. This is why we say stop your mind.

So in your practice, don't try to attain some particular stage in your practice. Of course, in your practice you will have many experiences, but those experiences is valuable-is not valuable-is valuable because it is some special experience. It is valuable because-it is valuable when you follow-when you catch the experience in its true sense with detachment, with full appreciation.

Experience is not valuable. When you catch it, appreciate it in its true sense, it is valuable. Do you understand? So you should not say I attained this stage [laughs]. This stage-some particular stage is not important. That you have attained that particular stage also is not important. The way you attained-the way you had that experience is important. That way may be the same way when you suffer, when you have disagreeable experience. Same way. So you may realize that. Which is valuable is not some stage or some particular experience, but the way how you have had that experience. According to Dogen-zenji, we do not mind the loftiness of the teaching or beauty of the experience. But we should mind the way to attain the experience.

When you have zazen, zazen become zazen. When you have zazen, zazen makes sense. So when you become you yourself, zazen become true zazen. When you are omitted from zazen, zazen does not become zazen. Zazen is not to polish a tile [laughs]. Zazen is-excuse me, zazen is not some way to make tile a jewel. When you polish a tile, that is

zazen. So your-how you polish it is the most important point. Whether it is tile or jewel is not the point. What kind of, you know, attainment you will have is not the point. Have you faced-confront the problem is the point. How to confront the problem in our practice is to open up ourselves and to see-to accept-accept things as it is, is the fundamental way. Do you understand?

So to think is very silly-silly [laughs]. It is as silly as to hitch a wagon to a star [laughs]. It is useless for a star to have stick [laughs]. But you feel very good when you have some stick. Brush [laughs] star, but it doesn't work. It's much better not to have anything, and just watch the star. It's very beautiful if you watch stars without anything. But when you start to brush the star [laughs], they are not beautiful anymore. But you may feel very good if you brush star [laughs]. It may be more-it-for you, you think it become more bright. But everyone will become sympathetic with you. "He is [1-3 words] [laughs, laughter]. What is he doing? Look very silly." So when you sit, you just sit. That's all. Don't forget the story [?]. Whatever you do, this attitude is very, very important.

Then without attaining enlightenment, enlightenment will come to you. This is why we emphasize to stop thinking, and why we emphasize the way-seeking mind. Dogen-zenji says you should attain enlightenment before you attain enlightenment [laughs]. Do you understand? Before you attain enlightenment [laughs]. It means way-conviction.

[Sighs.]

I think you have understood [laughs] why we say stop your mind. Think this point over and over and find out its true meaning.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (5/10/01).

Operator's Recorded Contemporaneous Commentary

for Tape No. SR-66-08-15-A-D

This is a rather mixed-up lecture, with this lecture, which I've called on the back of the box "Number D"[4]-"Letter D"-starting on tape No. 1, marked tape No. 1, and ending on tape No. 2, starting on the end of Track 2 of tape No. 1 and ending on the end of Track 2 of tape No. 1-of-ending on the track-Track 2 of-excuse me-ending on Track 1-soo it's very complicated because the plastic reel is numbered 2, and it should be really Track 1. It's actually Track 1. Maybe I'll rewind it and leave it on-and then there'll be 1 on the other side-uhh-let's call it track Side 2,

Track-or then that would be same as Track 2.

Well anyway, D ends on Track 2 of tape No. 2-begins on Track 2 of tape No. 1 (near the middle). Uhh. The first words of Lecture D were-are missing. Uhh. Just the sentence, "There are many ways to study Buddhism"-approximately that sentence-which is the beginning sentence of the lecture, which begins on Track 1, Lecture D.

The transition between tape No. 1 and tape No. 2-uhh, several minutes were lost: Four, three-four minutes, two-three minutes-in which he described how, when you turn your hands forward, or turn your hands so that there's a-thumb and forefinger are a parallel line-this turns your arm, and your arms are out from your body. This turns your arms out a little and opens your chest up at the top. And for the beginner-so the upper part of your lungs, right, and your shoulders are used-for the beginner this is important because he finds it difficult both to maintain good posture and to breathe deeply with the diaphragm, pushing everything down to make more room for your lungs. Later, he can both deep-breathe with the diaphragm pushing down to make more room for the lung and maintain good posture, which keeps the upper parts of his lungs functioning so the hand position isn't very important.

He does say, and I don't know if this was missed or not, that the little finger should touch the stomach if possible. And then the thumb and forefinger should be in a parallel line-parallel vertical line. However, for more extrovert-type people, and I don't think this was lost-it may be all right to turn it in so both little finger and even thumb more turned up somewhat touch the stomach, or toward the stomach so it's not a vertical parallel but at an angle-of course, still in line but not vertical. And for more introvert people it should be more open out.

Umm. I think that's the gist of what was missed between the two.

Sorry. Thank you. Goodbye.

[1] It sounds like the tape was re-recorded, at a later date, from this point onward with a different lecture. That is, the tape for a lecture originally on Genjo Koan Paragraph 2 was later recorded over again with a different lecture. (Or the first part of the "... among many instructions" lecture was recorded over with Paragraph 2 of Genjo Koan.)

[2] This is the earliest surviving part of the lecture, although the opening words are missing. In a contemporaneous recorded explanation, the tape operator stated that the opening sentence was approximately: "There are many ways to study Buddhism." That commentary is appended to the end of this lecture.

[3] Japanese: dojo: "temple, meditation hall"; daishuni: possibly from

daishu, "all the monks in a temple," + ni; ichini: possibly from ichi, "one," + ni. See also lecture SR-69-08-18.

[4] This is probably Lecture A in the current numbering.

## **2 - (kort)**

Monday, August 15, 1966

Lunch Lecture

[mic noise}-cannot appreciate our teaching in its true sense. When you listen to the teaching, our teaching, we should accept it, but if you have some prejudice, you cannot accept the teaching. So do

sound problem

## **3 - Intellectual Understanding**

Monday, August 15, 1966

Intellectual Understanding

For us to think everything out or else we-we find it pretty difficult to have firm conviction in our understanding and practice Zen. Originally Zen is not some practice based on some particular intellectual teaching or understanding. But Buddhism is one of the religions which is highly intellectualized. So for us, especially for us who are much intellectualized, even though each one of us is not so highly intellectualized, but you read and what you hear is based on some highly intellectualized thought.

So what we talk about, what we read is based on some intellectual-intellectual, deep understanding of-of our life and everything. So it is necessary for us to-to have some intellectual understanding of Buddhism. Before we read Shobogenzo, intellectual understanding is necessary because his teaching is very, very intellectual. It is pretty hard for us to understand without any intellectual understanding. That is why-I have to continue this kind of talk.

Yesterday I talked about Buddhist psychology of eight consciousness. What is five sense organs and sense data and sensation? And what is mind? And what is mind-what is the faculty of the mind which makes-makes us make many mistakes? And what is the innermost mind which is universal to everyone. And this eight consciousness is not just what we see or what we hear or what we understand. It is the innermost origin of every existence-physical and spiritual, subjective and objective. But I did not talk about the inner most origin of the existence-every existence. And next was the holy nature in ordinary sense. The holy nature is something which is always constant and eternal existence which is completely different from usual existence which we see or which we hear or which we think. It is a kind of thinking faculty based

on our holy nature. This is the usual understanding of divine nature.

And I talked about our function of our mind in different way. The most subtle, delicate function of our mind. And more vivid function of mind. The subtle function of mind is-are the-there are three subtle function of mind: First one is so-called it slightest movement of the mind which is called sometimes ignorance. When our mind makes slightest movement, at the same time we will have subjective-subjectivity or objectivity of the mind. Those are the subtle function of our mind. Usually we do not aware of those three functions.

The more vivid function is to like or dislike. And we-we will have idea of continuity of mind. This mind will create the idea of self-I exist here. This is actually the continuity-the idea of continuity of mind. If the continuity of the mind take place, we will be attached to what we see. This is the attachment. The third one of the latter six. The fourth one is chronological [?] conceptions. We will put many labels on our ideas-this is Buddhism, this is [1 word], this is communism, this is capitalism [laughs]. Those are our labels. But those ideas-although-although the ideas-conceptions supposed to be a pure conception-conceptions but actually those conception is firmly rooted in continuity of mind or attachment. It is almost impossible to separate the [1 word] conception from attachment or continuity of mind which is selfish mind or faculty of the mind-dualistic faculty of mind which is-which is like or dislike or good or bad write or wrong.

So actually we-we can talk about pure conception but actually there is no pure conception. And furthermore we will put those conceptions firmly rooted in selfish attachment, put into actual action. That is why we have suffering, we have confusion in our world. So the fifth one is karma-karmic action. The last one is suffering. Why we suffer is because our structure of the mind-mind function is consistent-consists of those elements. This is another interpretation of our life.

And today I want to talk about-this is-I want to talk about cause and effect-theory of cause and effect or causation. The Buddhism is-the most important teaching of Buddhism is causation. This is very important. If you do something good, you will have good result, you know. This is-this kind of idea or teaching is pretty important for us. But if you carelessly accept this teaching, your understanding will not be our understanding because this is the same-you will make same mistake as some heretics do. When you say, if you do something good you will have bad result, you know, it means, you know, you-the idea of you is here, you know. If you do something good, you will receive you, you know-you will receive some bad result. So what you do-there is what you do and you yourself. And you is always constant and what you do is different and not bound. So you have permanency of the mind-idea of permanency of the mind and idea of impermanency of the objective world. This is-for us this is not right understanding. This is so-called it [1 word] view of life.

So when you believe in-when you accept this teaching of causation, it is necessary for you to have deeper understanding of what is time and what is various existence and how everything exist in this world. Things forms, you know, this world. In this world [laughs]-I'm sorry this is so, [laughs] so sober [laughs]. Not so interesting but please listen to me [laughs, laughter]. Things forming one world by acting each other-you are acting each other. It means, you know, you say you are things acting with each other, but if you carefully think [?] this acting with each other-things which is acting with each other, it means there is no more you or [laughs] others it-when you area acting with each other, you know. By acting with each other-acting on each other, you will lose your character and others will lose their character too. You cannot replay same character when you acting with each other. This is-this point is very important. You say when you do something good result will be good, you know. When you do something good, it means acting with each other. You are acting on something else. And something actually acting on yourself too. Then what will happen to you. There is no more constant you and there is no more constant others. Others may change and you will change. This is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism.

Everything changes moment after moment. Everything changes from formed to the phony [?], you know. Something formed is next moment something formed will change into something phony [?] [laughs]. This is fundamental teaching of Buddhism. When you believe in the causality, you have to-you should not forget this point. Then you will have perfect understanding of causality.

And next point, which is very important for you in believing in causality, the causality takes place on, you know, on some particular life. Moral, good action will create-will result moral, good result. Material good will result material good result. If you save money, you will have a lot of money [laughs, laughter]. But even though you save money, you cannot be wiser [laughs]. But sometime you make this kind of mistake. If you offer, you know, \$100 to church [laughs], what will happen to you? You know, you will lose \$100 [laughs, laughter]. Church will get \$100. That is material cause and effect. But the mentality or your spirit who donate-that donate \$100 will result religious good.

So this kind of understanding, clear understanding is very important. If you are not sure about-about this point, you will make many mistakes in believing in religion. You will mixed-up religion and some other way of life-religious life and ordinary life. Religious life is religious life and ordinary life is ordinary life. You should not mixed-up. But unfortunately, we mix up religious life with something else. But as I shall tell you, religious life through and through will result various result in various field.

A Japanese philosopher condensed this-condensed this kind of way of thinking in this way, "Things forming one world by acting each other



means that they are thought as part of one world, but things acting on each other in space means that things have no special character. When it comes to space in exact sense of physics, forces are [1 word] in changes in space." When things-when things acting each other, it means it is not no more each existence. It is replaced by force which changes-which is changing always. This is, you know, science of-strict science-modern science will tell you this truth. And even atom is not material. It is force. It is energy, just energy. It has no weight or no-it occupy no space. It is just force. But when things are thought as parts of whole-one whole, it means that when things are thought as parts of one whole, when many things are supposed to be a part of one whole, it means that concept of acting each other is lost. When you definitely say, here is many things, it means that the concept of acting each other is lost, you know. When you say I am here and you are there definitely, the concept of relationship [end of tape side A] is lost-concept of acting each other is lost.

Second, the world becomes static. Three, reality is lost. It is not reality anymore if you have a definite idea of each existence. There is no more reality. That is not real. Actually everything is acting on each other. The world on reality is essentially a world of mutual determination of single [?] being [?]. Mutual determination of a single being. Such world essentially moves from the formed to the [1 word]. This philosopher is the-the most famous philosopher-philosophers-philosopher in contemporal Japanese philosopher. Nishida [?], do you know Nishida-Nishida? His name is Nishida. And he always sit in meditation and think, and think, and think. And sometime he just practice shikantaza-just to sit in shikantaza and created those marvelous philosophy. This-his philosophy of course accord with the Buddhist philosophy completely. Of course he must have studied Shobogenzo and other Buddhist philosophy. This kind of understanding is necessary when you understand-when you try to understand what Dogen-zenji said.

In Rinzai school, some-always students work on koans-koan. Those are actually koan [?] for you. The purpose of koan is to work all koan out, you know. Work it out. It is not just to concentrate the part-it is not just for concentration. It is not just means of concentration. So if you pass one koan, it means you have passed the rest of the koan. So it takes pretty long time to pass one koan. There is-you know the enlightenment means many things, you know. I attained enlightenment you may say. But enlightenment is-perfect enlightenment is quite different. There is great different in-between kensho and perfect enlightenment. Just you-just you see your true nature when you understand something more-little bit more than your usual understanding. That is so-called it kensho. You took glance at your true nature. That's [laughs]-so this experience is the experience of-experience in term of consciousness. It is not [1 word]. You know what it is. You saw something. You experienced- experienced something and you believe in something, you know, that is true. That is true experience. But the experience is just-you just experienced for few moments [laughs]. That is not perfect

enlightenment. When you attain perfect enlightenment, after attain enlightenment, you will have work [?] on it for many years or sometime maybe rest of your life. This is how you study Buddhism.

Here is many-interesting words. To put a head upon a head, you know, to put head upon a head-mistake over mistakes. [4 words] over [4 words]. To put a head upon a head-what exactly [?] you think it means? It is a kind of riddle [laughs]. To put head upon a head [laughs]. You try to understand something, you know. It means you are trying to put one more head upon your head. There is no need for you to study anything because you have-you exist in the way you should exist always. But you forget all about your head [laughs]. So the moment you see some good head-oh, that is my head [laughs, laughter]-you put-you try to put [laughs] some good beautiful head upon your head. But that is not possible, you know. The way is-the two, you know, to find out your head is our way. Intellectual understanding of Buddhism is to put a head over-upon your head [laughs]. But this kind of teaching we study is not to put a head upon a head. It looks like intellectual understanding, but if you study those teaching, you will forget-you will find out how useless it is to put a head upon your head. But for the people who do not realize that you have your own head always, it is necessary to tell them you have your head [laughs]. This is, you know, why we study those teachings or Shobogenzo.

And Dogen-zenji disgusted [?]-discussed it [?] with the people who have many heads [laughs]-not only one head-not only one head but also many and many heads-fame, profit, [1 word], and [1 word], and popularity, health, wealth [laughs]. They want many heads. So he was disgusted with people. So he told them you have this kind of head-you are trying to have this kind of head and another kind of head. But it is useless. The best way is to find your head-own head which you have. This is why Dogen-zenji left Shobogenzo for us. But the people who-who is so busy in finding their many heads, it is almost impossible to find out their own head. So he thought it may be better-it may be better not to try too hard to tell them you have your own head because they are too busy.

So some-some day, someone will understand my teaching. And someone will find his own head. But this is not the appropriate time for people to find out their head if you study Japanese history-what kind of life Japanese people had at that time. So I want you to-just to understand-my talk is just to make you realize how useless it is to be-to devote yourself in material-material life-just material life. Or to devote yourself to strive-to build-up some big ego. This is quite useless for us. When we find out what we have within ourselves all the rest of the treasure is ours.

Mistake over mistakes. Mistakes-mistake over mistake-mistakes means to-means that we are always making mistake and we are striving for-we are developing our mistakes without knowing what we are doing. [1

word] and vein over [1 word] and vein, you know. This is also to find out various useless understanding of religion. But he used those words in the opposite sense. Where he used this was, for an instance, to put a head upon a head means to use one head in various way [laughs]. Although he-you don't put head upon a head but you use your head in various way. If you have-if you realize what is your head, you can use it as if you have many heads. So to put a head upon a head for him means, to use your original head. Mistakes over mistakes is to express true way in various way. Why we call it mistake is because we do not attach to some-something which you do. Tentatively it is right but next moment it may be mistake. So after you did it or that was my mistake, excuse me [laughs]. I'll do it better next time. And you may say, "Oh, that was mistake too. This time I'll make it right."

So this is the way we should be, you know, we should do [?]. Mistake over mistake is right. Right thing after right thing is wrong. You are forcing something to others. "This is right. You should obey [laughs]. What I-you should obey me," you know, this is not completely, you know, right. Tentatively, "Excuse me I want you to-I have a favor to ask you. Please help me." That is alright. But it is not-it should not be complete anyway. When you say this is right, that is wrong [laughs].

So he is said mistake over mistakes. This is right. They-[1 word] and [1 word] over [1 word] and [1 word]. This is how we help-how we act on each other. It is not so simple. We should be prepared for the hard work we will have. We should not-we should be always prepared for-we should have firm conviction to work it out. But the way should little by little, step by step. If you want to do it with hasty mind, you cannot do anything. So to find out [1 word] over [1 word] is right way, right observation. But usually we prefer easy way-simple way. But that is-it means you are not sincere enough.

So we should be always prepared for those fact-ultimate fact. Whatever you say this is true. So Dogen-zenji always used this [2 words] in opposite way. So he said you should find out [1 word] over [1 word] when usually people say don't find [?] out [1 word] over [1 word]. When people say do-do things correctly [?], Dogen-zenji says you should do-you should do mistake over mistake [laughs]. That is right. You should-to put a head over-upon a head means to turn one's own face to his own [?] [1 word]. This is maybe-in English it is quite different but in Japanese both way is possible. To turn your face-your [2 words]. You have to do right thing. This is-it means to-to have two or three or more heads [laughs]. Sometime you [1 word], sometime you [1 word]. This is-should be the way. You should not attach to some holy expression of yourself [?] [laughs]. This is not right.

This kind of preparation is necessary when you try to understand what Dogen-zenji said in the fascicle of [2 words]. [2 words] is Buddha-mind itself is Buddha. This is maybe rather hard-this is maybe pretty unfamiliar way of thinking, but we have-we have too much concrete

ideas. So our mind does not work properly. So it is necessary to cut off those concrete idea when you want to study-when you work out or when you think out. But proper way of practice is just to practice and teaching is mixed [?]. Practice is past, teaching is mixed. Instruction or lecture is [1 word] [laughs] but some accommodation [laughs] may be necessary. I have to accommodate [3 words] as Dogen-zenji did. But his way of accommodation is quite strict [laughs]. So we have to be prepared for his strict understanding of things.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (5/8/01).

#### **4 - Sesshin Lecture**

Monday, August 15, 1966

Sesshin: Lecture

The first day of the sesshin is almost finished. In the first day, I wanted you to establish a good posture. It is rather-it was not appropriate to give you some-something to work on intellectually, but as you have been physically worked so hard, so for change I'll give you some intellectual problems in Buddhism.

We are now coping with the problem of causality. This-I think [2 words] must have told you something about this, I think. But this problem is very big problem. So big that it covers all the area of Buddhist philosophy. The one of the philosophy which suggest us right understanding of causation is [1 word] sutra. In [1 word] we have a famous statement in Japanese [Japanese phrase]. Things [?] are-things are one of many-things exist one of many or many of one-as one of many or many of one. The one-the understanding of one of many is rather mechanical understanding of existence. And many of one understanding of many-existent as many of one is theological [?] understanding of existence. But both understanding will reduce to the one understanding which is eternal present.

Things as one of many, which is mechanical understanding, is possible when you ignore-not ignore but when you-when you do not take the-when you do not take the truth of changing-dynamic changing of things out of [1 word]. Then things exist as in one of many. You are a part of it. But actually it is not so but ignoring that you are acting on each other and you have actually no-you have no time to hold [?] special character when you are acting with each other. Actually you change-you changes-you change and other things changes. But in the smallest particle of

time you exist mechanically as one of many. You are a part of many or one of the many.

But as I pointed out last time-no, no yesterday, it is not true because dynamic-as long as dynamic change is going on, on and on, we have no time [laughs] to exist in one of many. You are included-you are involved in-always involved in dynamic change of the world. So when you have full understanding of the one of many then you will find out really what you-what-how you exist is in eternal present. You are-you exist in eternal present. On this present-on this present you have future and-past and future connected with present. In this present, you have future and you have past. Future is the time which does not come yet but it showed itself in present. The past is the time which passed already but it doesn't-it hasn't passed yet, you know-some connection is in present. So in this moment we have past and future.

So in static logic it is possible to say present include past and future or past and future is connected with present. This is possible to say. But this point will be more clear to you when you apply the [1 word] logic. Past-past is-past and future is one pair of opposites, you know. Past-past conform-confront future. Future confront past. So in [1 word] logic past and future is completely different idea. Past and future is confront with each other. But at the-at the same time it conform with each other. Because-because of the idea of past we-we will have idea of future. So it-actually past conforms future. Future conforms past. When this conformation take place, the actual meaning of past and future will be transcended. When this take place, past is not past anymore, future is not future anymore. And past and future will be involved in dynamic change of the world.

So anyway, Buddha's teaching that things changes or his understanding of things in this world is-this world is the world of dynamic change is always true. And this truth is a key to solve those problems we-intellectual problems. Without this key, this contradiction cannot be solved. Whether there will be eternal dispute whether this world is world of-this world is going to some particular result or this world-in this world many things just exist mechanically. But because of his teaching, the world is the world of transiency. The world-and world of dynamic change. We can solve this problem. And conclusion is we live in eternal present. We can touch the eternal-the eternity-eternal life or else we have no time to touch the immortal life. Even though we are mortal-even though we are mechanical existence in one way, it is possible for us to touch to the eternal truth-eternal eternity-eternal being. And we find ourselves as a immortal being. And we live in eternal present.

When we live in this eternal present, we have absolute freedom. Actually, when you understand this truth, your past cannot determine your present. Your future [1 word] cannot determine your present. So you are-your way of life is quite free from [1 word] understanding and materialistic understanding of our life. This is how you achieve the

absolute freedom or [1 word] freedom. This is how we acquire religious life in its true sense.

The teaching of causality, if you do something wrong the result will be bad, it is [1 word] understanding of life. But if you understand [1 word] understanding in Buddhist way-applying the truth this world is the world of dynamic change-you will not be caught by just future result. You have freedom from future life. And you will be free from your past life. But it does not mean to ignore the truth of causality. Believing in causality, we will be free from our past and future. This is [1 word] one and many. Things-one is one of many. Many is many of one. One is-one of many is mechanical understanding. The many is many of one is [1 word] understanding. Understanding of many is-many of one is, you know, to believe in causality and to start our activity expecting some result. So result comes first and our present will be, not sacrificed, but comes next. This is the weak point of the teaching of causality, you know. If you believe in causality, you have no freedom as determinism teach us-teaches us. You have no freedom because you will-your present will be determined by your past and as long as you have some future idea you will-you have no freedom. You have to sacrifice present for [1 word] future. But this is not a completely right understanding. So essence of Buddhist teaching is the teaching everything changes and everything is-this world is world of dynamic change.

This morning we-I talked about several stuck [?] word of Buddhism and difference between Dogen-zenji's way-way of using it and usual way of using it to put head upon a head or mistake over mistakes or [3 words] over [3 words]. To put head on a head means to exist in this world as a one of many, you know, there is many things [laughs], so we have to see many things. So we want many heads. One head is not enough [laughs]. But usually to put over-upon a head is most ridiculous [laughs] thing. But for Dogen it is not ridiculous because he has deeper understanding of life. We say one or many heads but one or many is-fundamentally is not difference. You say sometime one and you say sometime many but one-one head you have is result of many [laughs]. Many [1 word] one head like this. You have-you have many heads. Many things and many things result in one head. And one head-this one head will-you may understand this one head is many because this head will-this one head, according to the [1 word] understanding of our life, this one head is mechanical understanding. This one head is result of many. But [1 word] understanding, this one head will be sacrificed for one. It means you go back to past from present [laughs]. Do you understand? It is rather difficult. Mechanically, you know, your head is result of many-many factors result one head. But [1 word] understanding of head is, you know, opposite because the result come first and cause comes later, second. So this one head will result-will work-will be sacrificed as one of many and will result one. It goes back to past. As Dogen-zenji says, times go from future to past and sometime from past to future he says, [laughs] which is ridiculous you may say [laughs] but it is quite true. It is the difference of your

viewpoint you take.

Mechanically, you know, Buddha passed away 3,000 years ago attaining oneness of the one truth. But when we strive for Buddhism, Buddha's teachings-teaching come first and our effort comes next. It means Buddha is here and our, you know, effort comes later. So it means time goes back to Buddha from present to past because, you know, his attainment is-his teaching is here now. And to attain his teaching-his enlightenment we strive for in various way. So our effort comes later. And teaching comes first. It means time comes-time pass from present to past. But if you have deeper understanding of the truth, you will not surprised even though Dogen-zenji said times elapse from present to past [laughs]. It is quite natural for us. And we are doing-some of us Buddhist doing this kind of thing-teaching first-Buddha first and our effort is next. This is not right way of studying Buddhism.

We should find out Buddha right here. [end of tape side A] But it does not mean to sacrifice our life which we have present-which we have now. It means to live in eternal present without sacrificing anything, without appreciating this moment as an eternal present. In this way we can believe-firmly believe in our teaching no matter whatever viewpoint you take, no matter what kind of view of life you had. As long as you have this truth, there is nothing to be astonished. When you just understand teachings, many teachings intellectually, you will be astonished. You will be-you will have many difficulties in understanding-in accepting teachings. But if you have deeper understanding of reality, whatever they may say it is all right. You will-you can accept it.

So according to Buddhism or especially Zen, this world is world of contradiction and in contradiction we will find out-we will directly experience identity of the contradiction. We can identify, we can accept the contradiction of the teaching and we can appreciate the contradiction. Instead of confronting with each other, we-we will conform with each other as man and woman, you know [laughs]. We can, you know-if you confront-if man confront with or if a woman confront with a man, you know, it is rather [laughs]-you will waste-your life is waste of time. But if you conform yourself with man or with woman, you can identify yourself with-with another. This is how we live in this world. By conforming with each other we can study Buddhism. There is no need to be critical, you know. If someone says something opposite to your understanding, it is-it will be the confirmation of your understanding. "Oh that is-that is your understanding. I can understand why you understand the reality in that way." In this way, the life of confrontation will become life of conformation and you will have absolute composure in your life. In difficulty, in problems, in various vein and [laughs] ivy [?] of thought. The more the thought is complicated the more you are composed-you will acquire the [1 word] conformation-composure of your mind. This is the secret of Buddhism. This is not just understanding. If you hear me, I think you will understand why we have man and woman, and why we have past and

future, why we have freedom-we should have freedom and we should have a tradition, and many framework of society.

It is rather early but I want to-I think I have finished what I wanted to talk about for this morning-this evening.

Thank you very much.

Do you have something to announce? Tomorrow Bishop Sumi[1] is coming, so I want all of you to attend his lecture and sesshin.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (5/9/01).

[1] Bishop Togen Sumi.

## **1967 (21)**

### **1967 april (2)**

#### **1 - Sesshin Lecture A**

Saturday, April 22, 1967

Sesshin Lecture A  
San Francisco

[1] ... -students. I want to give some important points. First of all, when you want to study Buddhism or Zen, you must give up worldly desires or you must realize that it is useless to seek for worldly desires. But it may be rather difficult to realize that it is foolish to seek for worldly desires.

Sometime, people mix up religious way-seeking mind and worldly desires. They think they are-there is-are seeking for a truth or a religious truth, but actually they are seeking for the worldly desires by name of religion. The religious sentiment is quite different from worldly desires. By "worldly desires" I mean to seek for-to seek for fame or profit. To seek for fame or profit, this kind of desire is very much like, in some point, religious desires.

If you understand something about Buddhist philosophy or deep teaching of Buddhism, you may be very much proud of it. To have some profound unusual understanding of life or view of life, while others



foolishly study something which is not so deep or profound, you may say: "You are wrong. My understanding is right. Look here, Buddha says so-and-so. This is true understanding of life." But reflect on your mind when you say it-say so. In your mind there is just pride, and no mercy, or no kindness in your mind. You are just proud of something, that's all. Whatever you say, that is out of question. You should reflect on your mind. So in this case you mix up, you know, study of Buddhism and worldly attainment.

If you study Buddhism people naturally respect you. And if you say something unusual, people may say, "He is very great." And if you practice Zen quite well, people will respect you. But in this case, in this situation, what kind of feeling you have is the point, you know. If you are very much proud of yourself, that is wrong. You are not studying Buddhism. And even though you have sometime-if you are too much proud of your understanding or your practice, eventually people will get tired of seeing you [laughs, laughter]. Then you will be very much discouraged. "But I am studying [laughs] Zen [laughs]." That's very, you know, foolish.

So without knowing how to study Buddhism you cannot prac- [partial word]-study Buddhism. This is why we practice zazen with group in this way. If you practice-you can practice zazen alone pretty well, but there are many danger, and there are many pit [pot?] hole in your practice. And you will be-you will easily fall into the pit hole of the practice. But if you practice in this way, it is very difficult to be lost. Everyone watching you beside yourself. Of course in our practice we are very careful with ourselves. And so, this is pretty good. But even though you are-you think you are very careful, but actually people knows you more than yourself. If you want to know about yourself ask people what they will say. You will find out quite easily what kind of person you are.

You may say people has misunderstanding [laughs], you may say, but that is just excuse. You think people misunderstand you, but we are-we exist in the world of interdependency. So we cannot separate it from the meaning of our existence-cannot be found out-cannot be understood [as] something separated from others. So we have to study ourselves by the mirror of the people. And if your understanding of yourself and others' understanding of yourself does not accord with-you have to think.

In short, it is more safe to have very little desires in your study. Don't try to achieve something great. Don't try to study something profound. Just study about yourself in your everyday life. Then you will not make not much mistake in your study. When you intend something great, you will be-your practice will be-will not be so good. In your desperate-desparatory condition, you have to study. You have to accept the situation you are [in], and you should think this is the best occasion to practice-to study yourself or to study Buddhism.

So when you practice zazen with people-I mean by "practice" not only zazen practice but also cleaning or work-we call it samu.[2] In samu, or in your zazen practice, or observation of rituals you should try to work on something difficult and something hard, or something which people do not like to do it. Usually, you know, if you are in the position of teacher, you will be very happy. But to study Buddhism as a disciple always will [laughs] not be so good. But you should think which is better: to be a teacher or to be a disciple? When you feel something good, you know, there is some danger. Or you will be lost in your practice. So if you want to practice, or if you realize how difficult it is to practice Zen in its true sense, you should rather prefer something-try to work [on] something which people will ignore or will not like it.

Dogen-zenji established Kosho temple near Kyoto when he was thirty-thirty-four. He says:

Only the people who already gave up fame and profit can enter this monastery. The people-students who has no sincere way-seeking mind cannot enter this monastery. If you enter this monastery with the idea of name and profit by mistake, [you] should go out. If you have true way-seeking mind, you will not have any idea of name and profit.

In the world-in the various world, there is not many true teachers. In this country from ancient time-this is-this temple may be the source of the true Buddhism. Because of-because I am pitiful for my descendent so I will practice-I will emphasize this point especially. The student in this monastery should be like milk and water-should be harmonious, should be friendly like milk and water. And you should practice our way. For a while we are master and disciple. But we are friends forever. And we are-you are Buddha and patriarchs. We are all Buddha and patriarchs. And we are practicing their way of Buddhism, and we are meeting with the true dharma.

You should not forget true way-seeking mind. True [way]-seeking mind is Buddha's mind and body. And with it you will be Buddha. You renounced your home and your village, and you are with cloud and water. Who is help-who helps you? Usually your parents is the most great helper, but the more helpful one is Buddha. More help is-more helpful one is your friend and friend of Buddhism.

Don't like to-to [go] wandering about or to sightseeing. If it is necessary, once a month will be allowed. Ancient people lived in the mountain or remoted wood and practiced our way, giving up all the worldly affairs and giving up his learning and his virtues. And now-and they are sincerely strive for the extinguish-extinguishing the fire on his-in their head. Recollecting those things, we should not be involved in worldly affairs. If we-if we are involved in it, we should be very ashamed of it. The evanescence of life-in this evanescence of life, we don't know when our life drops on the roadside of-like a dew on the roadside.

This three points are the most important points. He wrote some more points, but those points are very important. But we-I don't say we should observe those words of Dogen literally right now, but why we study Buddhism will be understood by those instructions.

This-those points are the most difficult points for you American people. You know, you are very ambitious, and you are trying to do something good always, and try to be successful [laughs] always, you know, without knowing the true meaning of it. So even though you come here and study Buddhism, you know, to me, you know, you are going the other direction [laughs]. It looks like so. I hope this is my misunderstanding, but I am very sorry, more and more [laughs] I found you going [in] the other direction.

For an American it is, you know-maybe it is not bad, but for a Buddhist it is not so good. So that is why I say you should know what you are doing. You know, you are trying, you know-your idea of Buddhism is something in the cloud, you know [laughs], where you cannot reach. And still you [are] ambitious people with big stick [laughs, laughter], and reach for that. But that is not our way.

Our way is just to stand on the ground [laughs] and step by step to go forward is our way. Sometime we may go sideways [laughs], but as long as your, you know, feet are on the ground it may be pretty good.

So we, you know, admire a cow, you know, which cannot even run. They are very slow [laughs]. Cow is our good example. Do you know the picture of-instruction of ten cows, you know, cow? Because it goes very slow on the ground. You shouldn't try to be a dragon [that] flies in the sky. If you want to be a hero [laughs], you know, hero of the most-hero of the commonest people, not to be, you know, not to try to control people or to give some big influence to others.

Here in this country some other kinds of hero is necessary. We are, you know, going-we have too much heroes-same kinds, same kinds of-too much heroes, so we don't-I don't think you want heroes like Napoleon or like some statesman. You should be a pioneer, you know, in-to the other direction. You should be a pioneer of true, you know-in its true sense. If you have some cheer [?], you know, the cheer [?] should be directed toward right direction.

Before many ambitious people took a world trip, but now who is taking world trip, spending much money? [Laughs.] This is ridiculous, you know. In this-under this situation, to stay [in] one place always is same thing to make world trip. Not much difference. If you stay one place always, you will meet, you know, if you stay [in] San Francisco you will meet various people without going anywhere because they will come, they will pass San Francisco. Whenever they come to San Francisco airport, they may come and visit you [laughs, laughter]. There is no

need for you to going around, you know. We are-all of us is going, you know, another direction.

My father's-my father was a priest. And his friend-my father passed away long, long time ago. But his friend who was a priest stayed only [at] one temple, but he had many good friends. But he is a kind of exception, but there is some truth in his way. So try not [to] study Buddhism in your pleasure. And choose something-choose your way in some common and plain world. There there is true pleasures of life, and eternal truth is there.

In your sitting, if you have this kind of confidence you will understand many things which is quite different from the understanding you will have by some other way of study. You can do many things, but without realizing this point, to do it means nothing. That is why we practice zazen. What I mean is to change your direction of study. I do not say, "Don't do this," or "Don't do that." But we have to study Buddhism for [?] a different way from your ordinal [ordinary] way of studying, or else Buddhism is-will be just a interesting philosophy.

[SR appears to be responding to question not heard on the recording, which had been stopped for an indeterminate period.]

Hmm? Oh. Love of another person? Worldly desires? Yeah, sometime. Or most of time it may be so [laughs]. But true love is not, you know. But true love is, you know, it is same thing with Buddha's teaching, you know. Something which is very exciting is not, you know-there is-many things will be involved in it, so you have to know which is the most important element, you know-basic element of the love. It is like love may be a-like a beautiful building, you know, very beautiful. But if the foundation is not good it will not last long. So we sh- [partial word]-you should find out what kind of foundation is necessary for the building of love.

Did you-you know, you have to study, you know, about love, you know, just, you know-usually, you know, your way of-you study love in comparing [comparison to] something, some other thing-or hatred, you know. And to-to be-to feel resistance is, you know, to build resistance to war or something, you know, is love. You may understand this way. This is very realistic understanding, and it will not reach to the bottom of the meaning. So forget all about it, and intuitively, you know, study it.

So to attain liberation from-even from yourself is important. This is why we sit, you know, with firm conviction. Some of, you know-whatever people may say, you know, don't be bothered by it. And watch yourself, whether you have true love or not. That is, you know, how to study what is love. So if-usually if someone say "white," you know, you may say "black" [laughs]. This is quite usual thing. If someone say, "white" you may say "black," you know. We have this kind of tendency. And we have this kind of understanding always. It is-it means you will have no

freedom from it. To imitate or to follow others is-may be foolish. But to feel resistance is also foolish. So don't be caught by words. And rely on your intuitive direct experience. That is the important thing.

Worldly desires-all the desires is not worldly desires if you have this point. But if you do not have the foundation, you know, the-even the beautiful building is not true love. Don't be caught by fancy-fanciness of the world or technique of the world. We have various, you know, nature, so psychologist or religious leaders studying our nature and organizing big [laughs] organization-and you will be captivated by it if you are not wise enough to know yourselves.

The hero in the Meiji Period, Saigo Nanshu,[3] said: "It is difficult to manage someone who do not want fame or profit." [Laughs.] It is very difficult to manage people like that. But, "The most trustworthy person is the person who has nothing to do with name or profit." He is the most trustworthy person, he said. That is very true. All right? [Laughs.]

Zen master may say: "What you said is right, but what you mean is not right" [laughs]. What you say is right, but what you mean is not right [laughs]. So, you know, "Under-under many scolding slap, you should study." [Laughs.] What, you know, do they meant-did-do they mean [laughs]?

As we are pretty-we are big group now, so [laughs] it is-we must, you know, be very strict with ourselves. Okay? We have not much candy [laughs]. You are too many, so [laughs] instead of candy we have to give you some salt so that [laughs, laughter] we have not much, you know, problem-difficulties. If we serving just salt, not much people will come [laughs, laughter]. We have no-no more candy. Now let's sit without candy [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Transcribed by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (3/26/01).

[1] The opening words were not recorded on tape.

[2] samu (Jap.): Physical labor around a temple: sweeping the grounds, gathering firewood, etc.

[3] Saigo Takamori (literary name Nanshu): 1827-1877. A popular leader in the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate and in the restoration of the Emperor Meiji. He was trained in both Zen Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism.

## **2 - Sesshin Lecture B**

Saturday, April 22, 1967

Sesshin Lecture B  
San Francisco[1]

[2] ... you have many things to do for yourself and for Zen Center. You-this sesshin was wonderfully done. This is, I think, very unusual. By usual mind this kind of thing cannot be fulfilled. I think this is because-it is because of your bodhisattva-mind, which is to do things for others or for your future descendant rather than for yourself. What you have in your mind is what should be done for your-for others or for your descendant. Although you are quite young, but still you have this mind.

I think that is why everything is going so well. But as I said in previous lecture, the most important thing to do for others is not to-is not to build something beautiful for others or to help them in some materialistic way or formal way, but to help others by giving true spirit of how to live in this world and true understanding of our life.

If we have true spirit of-true spirit to live in this world, there is no problem. But because of our superficial understanding of life, we have many problems and suffering. Of course, as long as we live or as long as we have this body, it is not possible to get out of suffering. So the point is how to change our suffering into joy of life-true joy of life. This is how to help others. Without this point we cannot help others in its true sense. If you have this understanding, whatever you do- alms giving, or kind words, or loving words-will work. And this is why we practice zazen too. So zazen is not some particular practice to attain something for ourselves, but [it is] to have true understanding of life and true spirit of- to acquire true spirit of life.

So we have to practice zazen just to practice zazen, as we live in this world without any particular reason why we live in this world. But if we understand that each one of us is a tentative form of the absolute being, and whatever we do is the activity of the absolute being which is not possible to be known by us completely, but something which we cannot doubt its existence. It exist but we do not know what it is completely. And this is the origin of our life or source of life. And it is also the life to which we resume after cessation of our activity. If there is something which we should believe in, this kind of absolute unknown being is the only one. There are many names-we call it by many names, but the "unknown absolute being" is one.

So purpose of our practice is to get accustomed to live without being attached to many things but this unknown being. When we find our meaning in this way-meaning of life in this way, naturally we can help with each other. We will love with each other without forcing anything to others, keeping a harmonious way between us, and between other

beings-animate and inanimate beings. We are all friends.

So true love should be based on this understanding, or else your love will become-will be selfish love. True love should not be selfish. Actually there is no selfish love. It looks like selfish, but it is not-there is no such love as selfish love. Even though love is not selfish, but when you have the idea of selfish-self which is not real, the love will become blind love without any understanding. So before we talk about love, or before we love others, we should make this point clear, and we should have the direct experience of zazen which is beyond thinking. When you can sit, when you can just sit, you have [are] in the position to love others in its true sense.

But on the other hand, idea of self-we cannot feel anything without idea-without feeling of self. When we feel something, there that feeling is the feeling of self. But true [1 word] having feeling of self or feeling of love, you will feel at the same time the absolute unknown being which is the other side of the feeling of self. So it looks like same, but actually it is not the same. The one selfish feeling is just selfish feeling without any possibility of being free from it. The other is although we have same feeling we have freedom from it at the same time. This is the difference, and this is actually how we live in this world.

Children does not know anything about Buddhism, but the way they live is exactly the same as Buddhist live in this world. They may be crying at some moment, next moment they are laughing [laughing]. We cannot do that. It is rather difficult for us, but for children it is not difficult at all-quite natural for them. But as a-we find it pretty difficult, but if you have, you know, some training like this, that is possible [laughs, laughter]. People may call you [1-2 words] [laughs, laughter], but actually he is not. That is his, you know, the-attainment. There is big difference. In-between master and disciple we have this kind of training all the time.

My teacher-Kishizawa Ian's[3] teacher, Nishiari Bokusan[4]-oh, before I tell you this story, I must [laughs] say something about his life when he was quite young or before he become a priest. [He was] my teacher's teacher's teacher [laughs]-teacher's teacher's teacher. Grand, no-no-grandteacher. Grandteacher. He was a, you know, a kind of rascal [laughter] when he was young. He left Tokyo for Kyoto because he had nothing to eat, or nowhere to stay. So he stayed [at] Kaizo-ji[5] in Odarawa near Hakone Mountain. There, there was famous Geitan-zenji, and he invited the rascal to [go] upstairs. "Come and sleep here," he said. So, you know, he [was] rather surprised-unusual treatment or entertainment. For-so he thought it may be good idea to stay one or two days.

[Aside in Japanese, but not by Suzuki-roshi:] Oh. Ireshitan.[6] Oh.

So he stayed, but even when he wanted to go out, he didn't allow him

to go out. "You should stay here." [Laughs.] So he-at last he became a priest [laughs, laughter]. The rascal change into a priest.

That priest was my master's-my teacher's teacher. When-before he [Nishiari Bokusan] passed away-five years before he passed away, when he wanted to make-give his disciples some lecture, he couldn't find out some paper [with a] commentary on it. So he called my teacher, "Where did you put my paper?" So he tried to find out and seek for it, but he couldn't find out. So my teacher's teacher was very angry with him. "You must have lost it! You must have thought that is just paper. Learned one as you, that commentary may be no good, just a paper-maybe just paper. But for me, that paper is very important. How I want it you may not understand it because you have too much [laughs, laughter] knowledge here. You may not understand it, but I want it badly." [Laughs, laughter.]

So, you know, not only my teacher, many disciples tried to find out, but no one could find out. But someone who were working in the kitchen said it was in box [laughs]. So my teacher took it and-took it to the teacher. And the teacher became more angry, you know. "You must have-where was it?" he asked. "It was in the box" [laughing, laughter ongoing]. "Who-who allowed you," you know, "to open that box?!" So, he-my teacher said, "I am sorry." "You always say, 'I am sorry.' Even though you say 'I am sorry,' you don't mean it."

And several months later, my teacher's teacher was, you know, crying. And so my teacher asked, "Why are you so sad?" You know, he said, "I am so short-tempered! [Laughs, laughter.] I am very sorry for myself and for you too." So since then, you know, my teacher almost, you know, forgot about his, you know, ego-centered attitude. So you may say this is just anger, but it is not so. They are very-their practice is always concentrated on selfish idea, ego. Until we can get rid of ego, we will have pretty difficult time. But after that, how you feel is-maybe you cannot imagine.

Today Arch-Bishop Sumi-roshi[7]-Bishop Sumi-roshi already arrived, and he may be waiting there. But he will not meet you today. But as it is impossible to enter Tassajara tomorrow, he will give us lecture in Sunday service from nine o'clock. So if you have time, please attend his lecture.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Transcribed by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (3/27/01).

[1] The date is approximate. This lecture appears to be the last or one of the last of the sesshin, and it followed SR-67-04-22A on the original



reel tape.

[2] The opening words were not recorded on tape.

[3] Kishizawa Minpo Ian-zenji (1865-1955): Soto Zen master, leading interpreter of Dogen's Shobogenzo, and third abbot of Antai-ji. He received dharma transmission from Nishiari Bokusan and succeeded Oka Sotan and Genpo Kitano as official lecturer on the Shobogenzo at Eihei-ji. Suzuki-roshi attended him at Eihei-ji monastery and later studied with him for many years.

[4] Nishiari Bokusan (1821-1910): the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo. He was a teacher of both Oka Sotan and Kishizawa Ian, eventually becoming abbot of Soji-ji and head of the Soto-shu.

[5] Possibly also known as Saijo-ji temple (Doryosan) in Odawara, one of the largest Soto temples in Japan.

[6] Phonetic guess only.

[7] Sumi Togen: formerly an instructor of monks at Soji-ji, he succeeded Yamada Reirin in 1965 as head of the Soto Zen School in America.

## 1967 juni (2)

### 1 - Sesshin Lecture: Three Treasures

Sunday, June 11, 1967

Sesshin Lecture: Three Treasures

[Roshi seems to be commenting on Shi Sho Ku of Dogen.

When this is evident, Dogen's words are in quotation marks.]

Today I will explain Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Originally, Buddha is, of course, the one who attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and became a teacher of all the teachers. Dharma is the teaching which was told by Buddha, and Sangha is the group who studied under Buddha. This way of understanding Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is called the "manifested three treasures," or as we say in Japanese, Genzen Sambo. Genzen is to appear. Of course, whether Buddha appeared or not, there is truth. But if there is no one who realizes the truth, the truth means nothing to us. So In this sense we say the manifest a tion of truth: the manifestation of truth is Sangha.

People who join the practice with harmony and unity are called Sangha. So Sangha means not only his group, but also the state of harmony or unity. Also truth itself is Dharma, and the truth which is not divided into various forms is called Buddha, which is another interpretation of the

three treasures. That kind of understanding is called "one body/three treasures." Although there are three treasures, it is an interpretation of the one reality. So we call this kind of interpretation, "one body/three treasures," ittai sambo. Ittai: ichi is "one"; itai is "body"; sambo is "three treasures." Ittai sambo.

But within the social framework of culture we have Buddhist culture. That culture consists of Buddha and his teaching, and the priests or followers of Buddhism. So, this understanding of three treasures in Japanese is called juji sambo. Juji actually means cultural sambo. Existing sambo is what exists in society or within cultural framework. So, beautiful buildings and Buddhist art or Buddha's image are, perhaps, Buddha. Scriptures in beautiful design and literature are Dharma.

And priests in robes are maybe sangha. Juji sambo, or cultural sambo, is closely related to society. The Buddhist organization is also Sangha. So there are three ways of understanding the three treasures, but actually the three are not different. It is one and it is three. This is a very old way of oriental thinking, even before Buddha. Buddha applied this interpretation to our framework of teaching. I think Christianity has the idea of trinity. This is the universal framework of religion. But in Buddhism there are many sects, so Buddhism does not combine many ways of understanding in one school.

Each school is based on some particular understanding or some standpoint. We do not take many standpoints in one school. In Japan, especially, we emphasize this point. This is not sectarianism. Once we take a stand point, we should develop that standpoint through and through until we can understand various standpoints. At first, each way of understanding has its own insight. But if your understanding becomes higher and higher, you can see other standpoints with understanding at the same time.

This is how we establish various schools in Buddhism. The Nichiren school takes the standpoint of Dharma. Dharma includes the other two, Buddha and Sangha. So their object of worship is the Lotus Sutra, and they repeat nam myo ho renge kyo. Myo ho ren ge kyo is the Lotus Sutra. Nam is scripture. Nam myo ho ren ge kyo is the title of the Lotus Scripture. The Shin School repeats Amida Buddha's name: namu Amida Butsu, namu Amida Butsu, namu Amida Butsu. The Zen school repeats Buddha's name, but the emphasis is on Sangha, and they are not so concerned about the intellectual viewpoint or understanding. So we just repeat the founder's name and say namu Shakyamuni Butsu. When we say namu shakyamuni Butsu, his scripture is included and his Sangha is also included; and we are a part of the Sangha. And even though we members of the Sangha are not direct disciples of Buddha, we are the descendants of Buddha.

We are successors of Buddha. So, because we emphasize the practice of attaining enlightenment as Buddha did, we naturally put emphasis also

on Sangha. By practice we will build our character as Buddha did. So that is why we call Shakyamuni Buddha's name. For us it is natural to repeat Shakyamuni Buddha's name rather than Amida Buddha's name or the name of a scripture. If you repeat the name of some scripture, you are liable to be bound by some teaching which was told by Buddha. But actually, it is impossible to authorize some teaching as the absolute teaching because something which is told by some particular person could not be absolute, even though it was told by Buddha. It may be impossible to authorize the teaching for human beings.

You may say that, if it is impossible to authorize even the teaching told by Buddha, then how is it possible to authorize some person as a Buddha [laughs]. This is the point we are studying. This is why we emphasize our practice. And we have a particular understanding of practice. The practice of other schools, for instance the Nichiren School or the Shin School, is quite different from how we need to understand our practice.

This practice is called practice based on original enlightenment. It may look quite unusual to authorize Buddha's Sangha, but this is more adequate and understandable. I'm not trying to explain this point today because I repeat it over and over. So Soto Zen emphasizes transmission from Buddha to us, and we emphasize Sangha, those who have transmission and who are disciples of Buddha.

What I have talked about up to now is, in short, about the three ways of understanding the three treasures. The first is the manifested three treasures. The next is one body/three treasures, or philosophical understanding of the oneness of the three treasures. It is necessary to be concentrated on one thing. If we have three objects of worship, it is difficult to be concentrated; so we have to have some philosophical or intellectual understanding. But, in fact, what exists here is the actual activity of Buddha. Therefore we emphasize the Sangha. So the third one is the understanding of our daily activity. That is the traditional three treasures or cultural three treasures. But the cultural three treasures are supported by philosophy and Buddha's teaching and Buddha's character. So the cultural three treasures cannot be separated from the other two. When understanding those three treasures, each one will complement the other two and make our understanding complete. This is the Soto way of understanding the three treasures. We have the three treasures and what we do is practice zazen; that is our way. So, our understanding of practice is very different from that of other schools.

Each school has its own particular understanding of the three treasures. If you study each school's understanding of the three treasures, you will have perfect understanding. And you will find out that even though there are many schools, actually what each one means is the same. It must be so because religious life is the expression of our inmost nature which is universal to everybody. So, as Buddha attained enlightenment,

we will attain enlightenment. What Buddha was striving for is the same thing we are striving for because we have the same inmost nature as a human being.

When we project our inmost nature into the objective world as Buddha, Dharma, or Sangha, it is nothing but our inmost desire to want to be someone whom you can accept. You strive for something acceptable in its true sense. So it is the same thing. You create God, and you strive for God. It means you are striving for yourself. And as we have the same human nature, your understanding of it must be the same. But if the standpoint is different, the way of explanation should be different, that's all.

Tentatively, I am giving you some explanation of the three treasures. It may be necessary to explain it more, but as we have no time, I will explain the next paragraph.

We should revere the three treasures and make offerings to them. Veneration of the Buddha, the law and the priesthood is in accordance with a precept handed down from the Lord Buddha in India to the patriarchs of China. These are the most important precepts handed down from Buddha to us. We should not worship a Genie of the mountains, or call upon the spirit of death for any reason whatsoever, nor should we pay homage to any heretical religion or religious edifice. Such worship does not lead to emancipation. The Three Treasures are not just an idea invented by someone. They are the universal framework of all the advanced religions, not just the framework of the Buddhist religion. But some hasty person, who usually does not pay any attention to religion, finding himself in some difficulty, may worship something like the god of fire, or god of water or some powerful natural spirit without any idea of what the teaching is, what god is, or true practice.

It is quite easy to know our inmost nature if it is related to the right way. And if we express that inmost nature in an appropriate way, it will develop. But if our inmost nature is misled by a hasty idea, a person may go astray and even destroy himself. That is why he says you should not worship the Genie of the mountains or call upon the spirit of death for any reason whatsoever. This is too simple.

Nor should we pay homage to any heretical...here it says heretical, but heretical is not an adequate translation. I don't know if you have an appropriate word for this. We say gedo. Gedo is "outer way." "Outer way" is just a classification. We call Buddhist scripture "inner scripture," and other, non-Buddhist literature is called "outer." Whether inner or outer, it is the same thing; inside and outside. Outside does not mean bad, and inside is not always good; inside, outside. Gedo means outer religion while Buddhists call our way or our scriptures nai ten.

So, as Buddhists, we should not take absolute refuge in outer religious scriptures or organizations. It is not because they are bad, but because

we should not mix up our viewpoint. If you try to discover something good, like a monkey in a cage, you will not find out anything. All you will find is radishes. And your stomach will be hurt [laugh]. That is not our way. We should make some human effort always. That is why he says we should not pay homage to outer religious edifices. Such worship does not lead to emancipation. If we have only an idea of the Three Treasures, the Three Treasures will be the goal. If you just have an idea of God without a teaching of the way to God, you will be lost. You will be discouraged. If there is a God, there should be a way to God. But God is the absolute one. So it is a perpetual idea we have which cannot be attained. This point should be understood by people.

It is necessary to have some way to enjoy Buddhahood. Someone who enjoys or rejoices in Buddha nature is the perfect one, or Buddha. This kind of frame work is very important. And there must be some practice. There must be some understanding of life. For us, our everyday life is practice itself. So in our everyday life we have religion, if you understand Buddhism. Of course, you will reach Buddhahood through your activity in everyday life. But if you worship some god just because of fear, in what way can you appeal to your inmost request? You will be lost. You will not be lead to emancipation.

Before Buddhism became popular in Japan, Prince Shotaku set up our Constitution for the Japanese people. In the second chapter he said, "Respect the Three Treasures." He said that to follow the Three Treasures is the supreme way of attaining liberation for everyone. Because we use the terminology of Buddhism, it looks like what we are talking about is just Buddhism, but it is not actually so. That is why he says that if you worship some immature religion you will not attain enlightenment. To take refuge in the Triple Treasure it is necessary to have a pure faith. Whether it be at the time of the Tathagata or after his disappearance from the world, we should repeat his formula with clasped hands and bowed head: I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the Dharma. I take refuge in the Sangha.

Pure faith includes our mental, physical and verbal effort. It is not enough to just think something or say something superficial. So pure faith means, not just faith in something, but real action, reality, realized action. It is necessary to have real practice.

You should take refuge in the Triple Treasure with real effort, not false effort. And it doesn't matter whether it is in the time of the Buddha Tathagata or not. In Dogen's time, almost everyone believed in the Three Periods of Buddhism. They said that in the last period the people will not believe in him and Buddhism will fade away into some other religion. But Dogen did not believe in it. So there is no difference in our practice, whether Buddha is here or not. This was his belief.

We take refuge in the Buddha because he is the great teacher. We take refuge in the Law because it is our medicine and points the way. We

take refuge in the Sangha because the members are our wise friends. Although the Three Treasures are one, the understanding, or the way they help us is different. It is through this triple adoration that we become the disciples of Buddha. Without the Triple Treasure, or if one of them is missing, we cannot be a disciple of the Buddha. It is on the basis of this adoration that all the moral precepts of Buddhism rest.

We say "adoration", but just to adore Buddha is like a dream. It means nothing. So adoration should follow some actual practice or guidance. Without guidance, God means nothing. Even though you believe in a God, it will not help you, actually, if your everyday life is cut off from God. In that way God means nothing. So all the great religions have their teachings and followers. And where there are followers, there should be a way to attain enlightenment. Not in the next life, but in this moment. This is Buddhism.

To take refuge in the Triple Treasure it is necessary to have pure faith, whether it be in the time of the Tathagata or after his disappearance from the world. We should repeat this formula with clasped hands and bowed head. D. T. Suzuki's translation is: "I take refuge in the Buddha, the incomparable honored one. I take refuge in the Dharma, honorable for its purity. I take refuge in the Sangha, honorable for its harmonious life. I have finished taking refuge in the Buddha. I have finished taking refuge in the Dharma. I have finished taking refuge in the Sangha."

In Japanese it is simpler:

Namu kie Butsu,

namu kie Ho,

namu kie So.

Kie Butsu myo sam,

kie Ho rijin sam,

kie So wago som.

Kie Bu kyo,

kie Ho kyo,

kie So kyo.

But if we translate it into English, we cannot arrange the words in this way. Anyway, whether in English or Japanese, we have to repeat those precepts.

Buddha is said to be the supreme world honored one. There are many

names for him. We have ten names for Buddha. By Buddha we do not mean just Shakyamuni Buddha. At the same time we mean various Buddhas. So sometimes we say the Buddhas in the three periods of time: past, future and present. Namu sanze sho Butsu, we say: I take refuge in all Buddhas in the three worlds, Namu is to take refuge. Sanze means the three worlds. Shobutsu means all the Buddhas, or we say, Ji ho san shi i shi hu. Ji ho means ten directions. San shi means three worlds. I shi means all. Hu means Buddha. Ji ho san shi i shi hu, shi son bu sa mo ko sa means: Shi san is the supreme one, bu sa is Bosatsu, that's bodhisattva. Mo ko sa is great Bodhisattvas. That is actually Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Dharma is mo ko ho ja ho ro mi. Moko is maha or moka: great. Ho ja ho ro mi is Prajna Paramita. That is the teaching. So when we say ji ho san shi i shi hu, shi son bu sa mo ko sa, mo ko ho ja ho ro mi, that means that we are taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. That is why we say: Ji ho san shi i shi hu. That is the old Chinese pronunciation, but the meaning is the same.

The Buddha is supposed to be the supreme one. The Dharma is called Dharma because it is truth itself. It is impersonal so it is pure. There is no dust on it [laughing]. If there is any dust on the law, you will be put in jail, rules or Dharma should always be clean. So Dharma is something which is honored for its purity. I take refuge in the Sangha which is honored for its harmonious life.

You know, we human beings should be always harmonious and we should work in unity. So we call a Buddhist group "harmonious Sangha." Sangha means Sang or so gya in Japanese. So means priest and ga is plural; so sangha means priest group, or group of followers.

Here he says, "We take refuge in the Buddha because he is the great teacher. We take refuge in the Law because it is our medicine and points the way. It is law or rule. We take refuge in the priesthood because its members are our wise friends. It is through this triple adoration that we become disciples of Buddha. We should respect the Three Treasures before we receive any further precepts. This is the fundamental precept, since it is on the basis of this adoration that all the moral precepts of Buddhism rest, from beginning to end. Buddhism starts from these three refuges and ends with these three refuges.

"A responsive communication between the refugee and the preceptor makes the maturity of the merit of the triple refuges." "Responsive communication" is the translation of kan no do ko. This is a very difficult work to translate. Kanno means to respond to each other. And Do ko means true relationship. Do is dao. Ko is inter-relationship. Here we say Kan no Do ko. In terms of consciousness it happens in this way to us: we feel some coherence, or interrelationship, or correspondence between Buddha and us. But, originally, there is no difference between Buddha nature and human nature. So this is more than responsive communication or relationship. But it happens in this way, so "a responsive communion between the refugee and the preceptor," or

"protector" (not "protector," ok, maybe "Buddha") "marks the maturity of the merit of the triple treasure."

When we become one with Buddha, it means the Triple Treasure, or refuge, is completed. So, to take refuge in Buddha means to become one with Buddha or to find our true nature which is not different from Buddha. "Be he a devil or man, dwell in the lower regions, demon or animal; whoever experiences the responsive communion is sure to take refuge in the Triple Treasure." By nature, everything has Buddha nature. So when beings have this experience, they can attain the perfection and they can take the Triple Treasure. "The merit of having taken the three refuges continually increases through the various stages of existence and ultimately calls forth the highest right universal enlightenment." "Highest right universal enlightenment" is Buddhahood. If you repeat this experience, you will attain the highest Buddhahood. "This excellent and inconceivably deep merit has been proved by the Tathagata himself; therefore, all living beings should take this refuge."

Buddha himself experienced it and Buddha has the same nature that we have. This means it is possible to have the same experience.

This is not some particular experience when we realize our true nature or some occasion. So here we emphasize the universality of the three refuges. Here he just emphasizes the precepts, but precepts and Zen are not different. Both Zen and precepts are the expression of our true nature; the experience of finding or realizing our true nature. In this sense there is no difference. So the way to practice Zen is the way we take refuge in the precepts.

So, by mutual communion, or *kan no do ko*, we mean the true experience of Zen. It is not some ecstasy or some mysterious state of mind, but it is a deep joy that is even more than joy. You may have this true experience through some change in your mental state. But a change of mental state is not, strictly speaking, enlightenment. Enlightenment is more than that. That comes with it, but it is more than that. What we experience is joy or mysterious experience, but something follows. That something which follows, besides this experience, is true enlightenment. So we should not suppose that enlightenment will always be experienced in terms of consciousness. Even though you don't know, you know, that enlightenment is there. And by repeating various activities with this subtle caution, the experience becomes deeper and your consciousness will become more and more mature and smooth. So you may say that enlightenment is the maturity of your experience of everyday life. When enlightenment does not follow, your experience is black and white. But when true experience follows your conscious activity or conscious experience, the way you accept it is more natural, smooth, and deep.

It is not just joy. It is something more than joy. It may not be possible to experience enlightenment just in terms of consciousness. But what



you do experience is much deeper. This point should always be remembered. If you remember this point, all the precepts are there. You will not be attached to some particular experience; you will not be caught by the dualistic experience of good or bad, or myself or others. When we violate the precepts, we attach to some particular experience.

When you have something, you will have some joy of possession. To do that is, you know, to break the precept of not stealing, (laughs) or not being greedy about giving either spiritual or material help to others. So when those three precepts are kept in the right way, all the precepts will be kept. In short, when you do everything as you do zazen, then all the precepts will be there. We say that we have to just sit. Our mind is clear. You have no experience whatsoever. Maybe the only experience you will have is sleepiness or pain in your legs [laughs]. No particular experience.

But when you attain enlightenment, when some sudden change of mental state comes to you-happens to you-even that experience is not true enlightenment. You will see something, or realize something, in terms of consciousness, but that means you saw something, that's all. It may not be yours. You saw something there, something beautiful. That is the experience, that's all. It is a true experience, but that is not enough. We should obtain the truth. We should become one with the truth. That is taking refuge in Buddha or Truth. When we become one with it, there is no communion or interrelationship because it is just one. That is completely taking refuge in its true sense. That is the experience we have in our practice.

Namu in Japanese means "to plunge into something." We say, "you cannot skim over the water in a basket." But if you dip the basket in it, the basket will be full of water. That is the way. As long as you are making (laugh ter) a dualistic effort, you cannot do anything because you are a basket. You are full of holes. Holes are you. We say, muro-chi. Muro-chi means "no-hole wisdom." [Laughter.] Our wisdom is hole wisdom. Wisdom with holes. Muro-chi means "no-holes wisdom." But for us, no holes wisdom is just dipping a basket in the water. Then there is no hole [laughter]. That is taking refuge, and that is how we practice zazen. This is the interpretation of precepts and the understanding of our zazen.

Thank you very much.

-----

[This section was transferred from the start of SR-67-06-12. It appears to have been the source for the edited conclusion of lecture SR-67-06-11 above.]

... [Laughter] ... So he said, \_\_\_\_\_ said, quickly or immediately, immediately is not ... [Laughter.] When we say

immediately, we are not good enough. [Laughter]. I will go immediately. [Laughter.] I will come over immediately. [Laughter.] But but he-he, you know, repeat immediately or deeply. But by deeply or immediately he means, always means oneness.

Namu, in Japanese means, you know, to plunge into something. We say if you-if-if you-cannot scoop water by basket. But if you dip the basket in it, the basket will be full of water. That is the way. As long as you are making [laughter] dualistic effort you cannot do anything because you [laughter] are basket. You have-you are full of holes. Hole-hole is you. We say muro-chi.[1] Muro-chi means "no-hole wisdom" [laughter]. Our wisdom is hole wisdom. Wisdom with holes. Muro-chi means "no holes wisdom" but for us no hole wisdom is to-just to dip it in the water. Then there is no hole. [Laughter.] That is to take refuge and that is how we practice zazen. Pause. This is the-relationship-this is the interpretation of precepts and inter- [partial word]-understanding of our zazen.

Thank you very much.

---

End of lecture was transferred from SR-67-06-12 to this lecture on 11/1/00 by Bill Redican. No tape is available.

[1] muro-chi (Jap.): muro ("non-delusion") + chi ("wisdom of enlightenment"); wisdom of non-delusion; great wisdom of prajña; opposite of uro-chi ("wisdom covered with illusion").

## **2 - Sunday Lecture**

Monday, June 12, 1967

Sunday Lecture

Transcript Not Verbatim

From now on, on each Sunday service I want to continue the lecture about-Shi-sho-ku [?]. This is our text [by Dogen-zenji].

We explained-we studied about already the three-the three refuges which is fundamental precepts for Buddhist and we have sixteen precepts, three refuges, triple treasures and ten commandments or ten prohibitive-prohibitive precepts. And the three refuges and the three, the triple treasures are basic precepts. And before we take triple treasures, we take repentance.

So repentance and triple treasures and the three corrective precepts and ten commandments. This is our rules to take refuge or in Buddha or Dharma or Sangha. As we briefly studied the three triple treasures, so, today we will study about the three corrective precepts. Next-next we

should accept the three corrective pure precepts: that embracing good behavior, that embracing good deeds and that embracing all being and saving them. We should then ... we should then accept the 10 grave prohibitions.

So before we take 10 prohibitive precepts we take three corrective pure precepts. The precepts embracing good behavior, the precepts embracing good deeds and that embracing all beings and saving them. Those are the three corrective pure precepts. Our life is based on, of course, based on our instincts, instincts and desires and usually religious life is based on some pure mind which is completely different from those worldly desires, that is usual understanding.

That is why before Buddha they practiced-practiced asceticism. To limit physical needs and to attain liberation of our pure mind, or pure spirit. That is their idea of religion. But Buddhism is completely different from that. And Buddha's time at the same time there were various thought like hedonism or materialism, there were many thoughts. Of course, leading religious thought supposed to be Hinduism. But at his time people started to think by themselves and that is why there were so many thought.

Briefly, major thought was supposed to be six, including materials and hedonism and-or accidentalism-accidentalism. There is no cause and effect, there is no maternal love or parents, parent is just-parents are-there is no relationship, spiritual relationship between parents and his children. And there is no instinct like maternal love. Recently, you know, people started to think in the same way, you know.

Some social-under some structure, you know-we have been-we have had the feeling of or-not something like instinct in some similar maternal love as an instinct but strictly speaking it is not our original instinct, that is the habit created by so-under some social structure. Some scholars emphasize this point. So if the social structure changes we will have no maternal life, love anymore [laugh]. That is a kind of, you know, something like someone's thought in Buddha's time. Sange Beritputra [?] thought in this way. But it-he does-he-he himself was very sincere and he was so sincere that he couldn't be-he couldn't support some dignified or some hypocritic thought so he thought, he thought he is very, you know, straightforward, [Laughter]. He was very honest to himself. That is why he supported this kind of thought. So it is not just we cannot say he was not sincere. He must be pretty sincere person but he was-he was not-his self is not deep enough, that's all. Buddhism-Buddhist-our way is not those two extremes. We-another extreme for maybe for asceticism is asceticism. To limit our physical needs to the extreme and attain freedom of our pure mind or spiritual power.

But in Buddhism we accept our instincts or our desires we have actually, we cannot deny that we have various desires. Whether it is good or bad,

anyway we have it [Laughter]. We cannot say we don't have it. And as long as we have actually, you know, this we have to accept it. And it is a part of true which-truth which we should accept. And we think that to say that is bad is a self-centered idea. If we-if we are-our thought is pure enough to see things as it is we have to accept it. That is our way. But, even though we have various desires, whether it is good or bad, we cannot leave it as it goes. So, it is necessary to work on it so that we can appreciate our original nature.

If we do not take care of those desires we will be-eventually we will be disgusted with our true nature, with our instincts and with our desires. As-as-ascetic religion say sooner or later, if we do not take care of those desires we will be left in depravity or we will left [?] some destruction or fight. Nothing good will result from it.

But it does not-even so-so, it does not mean our original nature is bad. It is good, but that-but that we don't take care of it, that is our fault and that is our lack of consideration. This is why we have this three precepts. So with our original desires or instincts we have, we should have desires to take care of it and to take care of myself-ourselves and we have to take care of others. That is our vow as a Buddhist. To take care of myself, to take care of our desires and instincts and to take care of other's life. This fundamental meaning of the three corrective pure precepts. That embracing good behavior. That embracing good deeds. That embracing all beings and saving them.

We have four vows of Mahayana Buddhism. Even though our-even though sentient being is innumerable, we vow to save them. That is one. Even though our desires is-evil desires is innumerable, we should take care of them. Even though teaching-to-teaching is innumerable, we should study. Even-even though Buddhism is study of Buddhism is limitless study we should accomplish to study Buddhism. That is our four vow.

So, as our-if desires or people are innumerable and their desires is limitless, we should keep our effort to save them and to take care of them. So, as long as this human life goes our effort should go with it. Buddhism is not some teaching which should be accomplished by someone. Buddhism-it is necessary to study Buddhism forever. There is no complete Buddhism. So, Buddhism is some teaching which needs limitless study. That is nature of Buddhism.

If our desires are innumerable, the teaching for it-for it-for them should be innumerable. If the people are bad in Buddhism, as long as, you know, we are not so good we should strive for it. So, anyway, out-this world is world of \_\_\_\_\_, world of suffering, we say. World of suffering means world of pleasure or world of happiness or joy. World of pure joy-so-called-it pure joy beyond our world is delusion. There is no such rejoice, actually there is no such grace for us. But usually we adore for it; that is kind of adoration but not our adoration. So that is why the

Buddhism is called middle way.

Buddhism is always in this world and it wants to-we want some balance always. In this sense we respect Sangha which keeps harmony in their society. And the balance should be in person should not be like this or like that, it should be always level. It is-it should be always pure, pure truth. So, that is why we take refuge in Truth or Dharma. And the truth should be manifested in this actual world, that is why we take refuge in Buddha who manifested the truth who-in this world who realized the truth as a human being. Pause. Next we should accept the three corrective pure precepts that embracing good behavior, that embracing good deeds, that embracing all being and saving them. This is not, you know, prohibitive precepts. This is vow rather than precept.

And we should-and then we should accept the ten great prohibits. And more in detail, more accurately speaking, this is-those three corrective pure precepts will be briefly set up in ten commandments. One, do not kill. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery. Those are the precepts about our body, body activity. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery. Do not lie. Do not sell liquor. Do not bring up the faults of others. Do not boast and blame others. Do not boast yourself and blame others. Those are about our word or mouth. Do not withhold material and spiritual possessions. Do not become angry. Do not debase the triple treasures. Those are about our minds-mind.

"Do not kill" means, in another word-do not kill means do-do realize our true nature. It doesn't mean just to kill some insects or it does not mean just to have mercy. It is deeper than that. Of course, do not kill is, we should not kill even an insect pr any. But that is not the real meaning of do not kill. Do not steal.

Steal-when we do not realize we possess everything we want to steal, but everything in the world is-belongs to us anyway. So, there is no need to steal. Someone should take care of it [Laughter]. So, there is no need to steal it, that is do not steal.

Do not commit adultery [laughs]. Do not commit adultery. It-it means attachment, you know, some extreme-this precept emphasize especially our attachment to some particular thing. But it does not mean to-not to attach to other sex [laughs]. But we attach to things-to some particular thing as we attach to the other sex. As you attach to girlfriend or boyfriend. That is very true. So, if you, you know, if you keep yourself from being attached to-if you are able to do it when it is necessary it means you are able to refrain from various attachment. Do not commit adultery.

I was scolded by my master many times: "You are committing adultery!"[2] [Laughter.] In my temple, Zoun-in, there was no female. But still he said, "Don't commit adultery!" [Laughter.] He was right, I think [laughter]. Do not lie. This precept belongs to, you know, world,

but, he said, even though I don't say anything, don't lie [Laughter].  
Your eyes telling lie, your countenance telling lie. It is true, very true.

Do not sell liquor. Do not-this is very important precept [Laughter]. Do not sell liquor. Nowadays you should add one more here, something, do not sell liquor-"do not sell" means, you know, to boast or, you know, to take some advantage of liquor, you know. This is medicine. If you take it in the right way it will be benefit. This is kind of, you know, breaking precept because we have nature, you know. Our nature is very weak to the temptation. We should, you know, count this point when we take liquor.

So "do not sell" means, very-meaning is very deep, sell. Do not sell liquor. If you boast about the profundity of Buddhist teaching you are selling a kind of liquor to the people. If some religion, if you say this-the religion is wonderful you are selling some liquor. So, not only, intoxicating liquor but also all the, you know, teaching-spiritual teaching or material by which we will be intoxicated is liquor. So, if you take those precepts literally, you know, it is a kind of selling liquor.

We should have always freedom to the teaching and precept. We should take them in consideration always. We should not forget it. But we should not, you know, be bound by the teaching or precepts. That is how we keep our precepts. That is why we have the fifth. The fifth one means absolutely-absolute freedom from all the teaching. Do not sell liquor, this is very deep. Do not bring up the fault of others. When we talk about someone's faults, it means you are talking about your own fault. Almost all the time it is so. A mother who have-in Japan, this is in Japan, not in America-I don't know in America-but in Japan if he, if a mother has-when a mother has his own son who has-who start to have some concubine, you know, some secret relationship with some, you know, girlfriend having his wife, the mother talks about concubine-talk-talks about someone who has a concubine. So, what-when some old lady start to talk about concubine, I thought something must have happened to her baby. [Laughter.] That is very true.

When you talk about someone's faults, it means you have same faults, and you are aware of it. So it is good thing to talk about it [laughter]. But if there is no need to talk about it, it is much better. Do not bring up the faults of others. Do not boast and blame others. Do not boast yourself and blame others. When you boast yourself and blame others it means you are very, you have very small self.

Do not withhold-withhold material and spiritual possessions. People talks about material or spiritual possessions especially but to talk about it-If you want to keep this precepts in its true sense, it is necessary for you to talk about possession. Whose possession? It doesn't matter for you who has how much money, doesn't matter. So we should not be concerned about others' property or money. We should not count others'. It is busy enough to count your money [laughs]. So, we should

not concerned about others' possessions. This is actually what we mean, do not withhold material and spiritual possessions-possession-possession-possession.

Do not become angry. This is very difficult. Nearly all the Zen masters-Zen masters are very short-tempered but we-we couldn't say do not become angry to our masters. [Laughter.] So it may be better to recite this part-"do not become angry"-before our master. If he-if he say do not become angry we should say DO NOT BECOME ANGRY.

Do not debase the triple treasures. I thought this is very, you know, funny precept for Buddhist to set up this precept. They are protecting-it looks like Buddhist, Buddhist protecting themselves by setting up this precept. And this one supposed to be the most fatal, important precept. If you break it [laugh] you will be expelled. I thought so this is rather, you know, unfair to set up this kind of precept. "Don't kill" is good, "don't be angry is very good" [laughter], but don't be blasphemous with triple treasures is very selfish precept.

Moreover, if you commit this precept, you know, you are supposed to go down to the bottom of the hell [laughter]. If you kill someone ... [laughter] you will ... you will \_\_\_\_\_ you will \_\_\_\_\_ even you kill someone. This is very funny. This is our system [laughter]. Very good system. Very good system to me but not to you [laughter]. But those who commit those-ten-the last commandment or precept is supposed to be-supposed to be very intelligent one, he is very hopeful. That is why we put very strict and heavy duty to them. The system of hell is not punishment, you know, it is training [Laughter].

So if he is strong, that is quite understandable, you know. If he is good we should, he should have, anyway, those who kill people or those who steal something is not so, you know, intelligent. Usually they are not so good. Anyway, if they are not so good it is no use to put strict-strict teaching, it might be better to treat them just in appropriate way, in tentative way. That is why we do not put so heavy duty to them.

But the people who are angry supposed to be very honest and very good and who have very strong will and sincere person. So, we should put heavy burden to them. That is why we put them heavy duty. So, if you see the order this is most, this is most intelligent, good one.

The ninth is next good. Do not withdraw material and spiritual possessions, you know, the scholars and good teachers maybe classified in this group. Material or spiritual possessions. "I invented this," or "I know this." This is, you know, awareness-strong awareness of spiritual possession. I don't boast-do not boast and blame others. They are pretty good, you know. To boast, who can boast, they say. Not so bad.

Do not bring up the fault of others-faults of others. Do not sell liquor. Do

not lie. Do not commit adultery-adultery. Do not steal. Do not kill. Those are the ten commandments.

Thank you very much.

[Laughter] means students and Roshi both laughing.

[Laughs] means mainly or only Roshi is laughing.

Transcribed 8/28/69-Steve Weintraub.

---

Source: Original transcript by Steve Weintraub. City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Slight copy-editing by Bill Redican (11/1/00). The audio tape is thought no longer to be available.

[1] Sunday was derived from the original transcript and is mentioned by Suzuki-roshi in the lecture. But the transcript had a date of June 12, 1967, which was a Monday.

[2] From D. Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber*, p. 28: "Don't commit adultery, Crooked Cucumber!" Shunryu had been admiring an old tea bowl, and that is how So-on told him not to be so attached to fine things. He used that metaphor a lot with the boy, who had good taste in antiques and craftsmanship. Shunryu found it funny, because there were no women living in the temple, but that wasn't the point. It was not that Shunryu shouldn't appreciate beauty, just that he shouldn't be caught by it."

## **1967 augustus (5)**

### **1 - The mind itself is Buddha**

Monday, August 14, 1967

"The mind itself is Buddha"  
San Francisco [?]

Transcript Not Verbatim

Our study will be concentrated for a while on the statement: "The mind itself is Buddha." [1] It is pretty difficult to study, to listen to our lectures or our teachings. Usually when you study something, and even when you are listening to our lecture, I think that what you understand will be an echo of yourself. You think you are listening to me, but actually you are listening to yourself, so no progress will result. You always understand our lecture in your own way. Your understanding is always based on your way of thinking. So I think that you hear my voice and



see my face, but actually you see yourself, and what you hear is nothing but an echo of yourself.

My study was like that for a long time. I think this is often the case when we study Buddhism. If you want to study Buddhism, you have to clear your mind. You should not have any prejudice. You should forget all you have learned before.

You say, "Speak up." "Speak up" is to speak up to here. We say, "Talk out." We do not talk in the realm of reasoning or thinking. We talk out, we get out of our talk. When you hear our lecture, you should not hear my voice or what I say. You should understand what I "talk out." Do you understand? It is rather difficult to express. Not up to here. You should understand something more than what I say in terms of reasoning or logic. That is how you study Buddhism and how to talk about Buddhism.

As you know, the teaching is, as we say, a finger pointing at the moon. You should not see the finger, you should see the moon. But usually your understanding of what I say and your questions are always in the realm of your thinking or conscious understanding. That is not the purpose of the study of Buddhism.

In "Sokushin-zebutsu," one of the important fascicles of the Shobogenzo, Dogen-zenji emphasizes this point. Although this is a very brief fascicle, what he talks about in this small fascicle is very deep and very wide. So I want to talk about it now. For a while my talk will be concentrated on verbal understanding. So now you have to listen very little, but later you should know what you have studied.

When we talk about Buddhism, it is liable to be a strained application of our teaching. You know we have certain faults of teaching and logic, so our talk is liable to be a strained application of Buddhist logic. This means a little, but it doesn't help so much. So we have to destroy the logic, and we should feel what we say, or we should have some intuition to grasp the teaching.

I think most of you have studied the five sense organs and mind. We call them the six sense organs, including the mind. Mostly our study will be limited to the six consciousnesses: eyes, nose, tongue, body, ears, and mind. The mind controls various senses, produces some ideas, and thinks. So our understanding will be limited to those six consciousnesses. But you have one more, in actuality. The reason you make so many mistakes--the reason your understanding of life does not accord with the truth--is because you have one more faculty, the egoistic faculty.

According to Buddhism, you do not make mistakes without any reason. You know, there is a reason why you make mistakes--there is a big reason. You cannot see things as they are, although you have a mind

and your five sense organs are perfect. Your eye is good, your taste and tongue are complete, but nevertheless you always make a big mistake. Why is this? There is a good reason. Do you know what it is? It is because of your ego-centered faculty, something which should not be mind. I don't know where this faculty is, whether it is in the faculty of your brain or not. I'm sure our brain does not make any mistakes, but something makes a mistake. What is it?

According to Buddhism, that is the ego-centered or seventh faculty, *mana-shiki*, in Japanese.[2] This one always makes our judgement wrong. When your understanding is ego-centered, that is not right understanding. Your understanding is not universal. Your understanding is always ego-centered and partial. This is quite true with human beings. Without knowing that you are always making a mistake, you insist on yourself, your feeling, and you project your ego-centered ideas. That is why you make so many mistakes and we get into confusion.

But that is not all. According to Buddhism, there is an eighth consciousness that will correct the mistakes of the seventh consciousness. "You are mistaken," you may say. "You always make a mistake. Why is it?" it says. That is the eighth one.

So if we want to study Buddhism, we should not study it in the realm of the five sense organs or the mind. When you realize that we are always making a mistake, we say you have entered one step into the teaching of Buddhism. And when you understand what the eighth consciousness is, that is enlightenment-enlightened mind.

But usually almost all the teaching is limited to the realm of the first five or six faculties. This is what Dogen-zenji talks about in this fascicle. He says the mere stage of a little bit more than good and bad, right or wrong, agreeable or disagreeable to your six senses may be mysticism. A little bit more than the six senses is mysticism, but not much more than that. What he says is very brief, but I have to explain it in this way: I want to explain what holy mind or divine nature is.

Dogen-zenji referred to that heretical understanding, which I read to you in the last lecture. They understand that holy mind is always clear, independent of our surroundings, and eternal. The things the mind sees or understands are not eternal, but mind itself is eternal and has limitless faculties. It reaches as far as it thinks, and there is no limit to the faculty of mind. It will reach to the moon or to various stars in space, and it reaches them immediately. It doesn't take much time, or any time. So in this way the mind has a great faculty, and mind itself has a divine nature. The mind sometimes is called *atman* or "big mind" or "great mind," in comparison to our small mind. This mind is limitless; that is why it is called divine mind. This kind of understanding is called the understanding of immortality. We have a similar word, but we do not mean by immortality something that is immortal. Our understanding of immortality cannot be understood by your thinking.

You may ask, then, how should I understand what immortality is? That is wrong too. "How" also belongs to your mind faculty. You wonder how, your eyes wonder, your ears wonder. "Why is it?" you think. That is not the way to understand what it is. By the time we finish this series of lectures, you will understand what I mean, but I don't think I should strive to make you understand right now.

He also talks about Buddhist philosophy in this fascicle. According to Buddhism, the origin of suffering is very deep. Originally, we understand that there is some unconditioned being. But when unconditioned being is conditioned, something happens. I don't know what it is, but some thing happens. When this unconditioned being makes some movement, it is the beginning of ignorance. When an unconditioned being remains unconditioned, that is wisdom. But when that unconditioned being takes some form or color or movement, that is the beginning of ignorance. Accordingly, that movement will result in suffering or problems. This is quite understandable, I think.

This stage is called the stage of ignorance, or as we say in Japanese,

mumyo.[3] Mumyo means "not clear." Anyway, this word is not appropriate, and "ignorance" is not appropriate, but conditionality is what we mean by "ignorance." By "movement," we mean that unconditioned being is conditioned in terms of color or form. As soon as it takes color or form, it will create some problem. This is the subtle beginning of the problem.

As soon as this conditionality takes place, we have subjectivity of mind, and, at the same time, we have objectivity. Subjective and objective: something that sees and something that is seen. Here we have three stages already. In the first stage, conditionality takes place. The second stage is subjectivity. And the third is objectivity. This kind of functioning of our mind is very subtle. You do not usually realize it.

But the faculties of your mind become more and more clear as they become rough instead of subtle. When the activity of your mind is more vivid, "This is desirable, and that is not desirable," or "I like this one, but I don't like that one." The faculty of your mind is more vivid. And as soon as this kind of dualistic functioning takes place, we will have the idea of the continuity of our mind. That is the first stage of attachment. Actually, your mind is not continuous, but you want what you see to be continuous if it is pretty, if it is good. But if it is bad, you don't want it to be continuous. If you think what you see is not continuous, that is right. But usually we think our mind is working very well when we have some attachment to something. Actually you are already making a big mistake because you misunderstand your mind as something which is continuous. Our mind is not continuous at all-or it is more than continuous or discontinuous.

As soon as you have the idea of continuity of your mind, you will have some attachment to what you observe, and then you will have terminology-terminological conception. You will start to think in terms of concepts. You put labels on the many conceptions you create, but those conceptions are involved in attachment.

When you study logic, you think you have no attachment. But it is like mathematics. When you actually apply the mathematics in your everyday life, attachment is always involved. Big or small, good or bad, heavy or light-this is not pure mathematics. Pure mathematics is very abstract and doesn't actually exist. But this is a shadow of your attachment, a shadow of your mistake. This is actually true. But you are quite sure about the logical conceptions you have, so your study will create a bigger and bigger ego. Now our ego is pretty big. And as soon as you have some terminological conception, you will put it into action. Now you have to fight with each other. We call this karmic action. "Oh my! What I think should be right. But see what has happened to me. This is awful," you may say. You are creating suffering in this process, according to Buddhism.

This is the third subject Dogen-zenji talks about in this fascicle. First of all, he talks about our eight consciousness, and next about the usual understanding of holy mind or our divine nature, and then he talks about how we make mistakes in our everyday life, starting from ignorance or the subtle movement of our mind.

We say there are three subtle functions and six rough faculties of our mind. The delicate movement of our mind (ignorance), [4] subjectivity, and objectivity are the subtle functions. The rougher functions are dualistic feeling (desirable or undesirable), continuity of our mind, attachment, terminological conception, karmic action, and suffering.

When we suffer, our mind becomes very rough. All the subtle functions of our mind will be lost. This is the last suffering, you know. Next will be peace. We will not survive the next one, so we have no taste of this as the last suffering, the last one. You should not be lost in suffering. That is why we study Buddhism.

So anyway, we have to know that we are turning our face to our own call. You should understand it is all right to listen to me, but you should not turn your ear to your own talk. [You should not be hearing an echo of yourself when you listen to me.][5] Okay?

---

---

Source: City Center transcript edited by Brian Fikes. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Slight copy-editing by Bill Redican (11/1/00). The audio tape is thought no longer to be available. Another earlier and

more verbatim transcript is available.

[1] From the first sentence of Shobogenzo "Sokushin-zebutsu."

[2] Sanskrit mano-vijñana. Fikes transcript had manas.

[3] mumyo: mu (Jap. "no"); myo (Jap. "to be clear"); ignorance in a deep sense; ignorance of the true nature of existence (cf. SR-70-07-10).

[4] Words in parentheses are from Fikes version. Some of the parenthetical terms were said by Suzuki-roshi; others were added by Brian Fikes.

[5] Sentence in brackets was added by Brian Fikes. It is similar to a sentence by Suzuki-roshi in Paragraph 1.

## **2 - Genjo Koan 15-18**

Sunday, August 20, 1967

Genjo Koan

This lecture is not verbatim. The tape is no longer available. Suzuki-roshi is commenting on ¶¶ 15-18 of Genjo Koan.

Morning Sesshin

Zen Mountain Center, Tassajara

Edited by Brian Fikes

(Note from Brian Fikes: The first portion of this lecture was not recorded. This is the first [sic][1] in a series of [three] lectures on the Genjokoan given during the sesshin ending the first training period at Tassajara.)

There are four ways of understanding the relationship of form and emptiness: form is emptiness, emptiness is form, form is form, and emptiness is emptiness. "Form is emptiness" may not be so difficult to understand, but it will be misunderstood by some advanced, hasty people. "Yes, form is emptiness. There is no need for us to attach to some particular thing. Form is emptiness." This looks very clear, and this view of life is better than attaching to some particular form or color, because in it there are actually many, many views of life. And this view of non-existence is deeper than the view of seeing many things which actually look permanent and which look like they have some self-nature. But as we explained already, and as you have already understood, there is no special self-nature for anything, and everything is changing. As long as everything is changing, nothing is permanent. So this [form is emptiness] may be a more advanced view of life.

But "emptiness is form" is rather difficult to understand. The emptiness which is the absolute goal we will attain, which is enlightenment itself, is form. So whatever you do is enlightenment itself. This is rather difficult to understand, or to accept, because you think emptiness is some unusual thing. Something unusual is something very common. This is rather difficult to understand, especially when you practice zazen. Even though your practice is not perfect, that is enlightenment. This statement is very difficult to accept. "No, my practice is not perfect." But when we understand form is emptiness, and emptiness is form, back and forth in this way, and form is form, and emptiness is emptiness, when emptiness comes, everything is emptiness, and when form comes, form is form, and we accept things as it is.

So when we come to the understanding of "Form is form and emptiness is emptiness," there is no problem. This stage, or this understanding, is what Dogen Zenji means by, "When the moon is in the water, the water will not be broken, nor will the moon be wet." Moon is moon, and water is water. This is "form is form, emptiness is emptiness." But here there is the possibility of the misunderstanding that there is no need to practice Zen. "Form is form, and emptiness is emptiness. If this is true, why do we practice zazen?" You will have this kind of misunderstanding. But each of the four statements also includes the other three, so there are four ways of understanding each statement. If it is not so, it is not true understanding. So all four statements are actually the same. Whether you say form is form or emptiness is emptiness, or form is emptiness, or emptiness is form, one statement is enough for you. This is true understanding of prajna paramita.

Here Dogen Zenji referred to the koan of Zen Master Hotetsu (Pao-ch'e) of Mount Myoho (Mayu) [sic: Mayoku] fanning himself. He was a disciple of the famous Hyakujo Zenji, and he was a very good Zen master. "Hotetsu Zenji of Mt. Myoho was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, 'Sir, the nature of wind is permanent, and there is no place it does not reach. Why then must you fan yourself?'" If the wind is everywhere, why do you fan yourself? Do you understand? If everyone has Buddha nature, and form is emptiness and emptiness is form, why then must you fan yourself?" Although you understand that the nature of wind is permanent,' the master replied, 'you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere.'" Even though you understand form is emptiness, you do not understand that emptiness is form, in other words. "'What is the meaning?' asked the monk. The master just fanned himself." He did not answer, but just fanned himself. There is a very great difference between a man who fans himself and one who does not fan himself. One will be very hot, one will be very cool, even though wind is everywhere. "The master just fanned himself. The monk bowed with great respect."

This is an experience of the correct transmission of Buddhism. Dogen Zenji said, "Those who say we should not use a fan because there is

wind know neither permanency nor the nature of wind. The nature of wind is permanent. The wind of Buddhism actualizes the gold of the earth and ripens the cheese of the Long River." "...ripens the cheese of the Long River"-this is a quotation from the Gandavyuha [sic: Bandavyuha] Sutra. The water of the Long River is supposed to be pure milk. But even though the water of the Long River is pure milk, if it doesn't go through the right process, it cannot be cheese, you know. Milk is milk, and cheese is cheese. So if you want to ripen cheese, you should work on it. Even though there is wind, if you do not use your fan, it will not make you cool. Even though there is a lot of gold on the earth, if you do not pick it up, you cannot get gold. This is a very important point.

People may think Zen is a wonderful teaching. "If you study Zen, you will acquire complete freedom. Whatever you do, if you are in a Zen Buddhist robe, it is alright. If you wear a black robe like this, whatever you do is alright. We have that much freedom in our teaching." This kind of understanding looks like observing the teaching that form is emptiness, but what I mean by "form is emptiness" is quite different. Back and forth we practice, we train our mind and our emotions and our body. And after that process, you will acquire the perfect freedom.

And perfect freedom will only be acquired under some limitation. When you are in one position, realization of the truth will be there, will happen to you. But if you do not work on any position, wandering about from one place to another without knowing where you are, without knowing the place on which you work, then there will be no chance for you to realize your true nature. Even though you use something to make yourself cool, even though you have a Japanese round fan and a Chinese fan and a big electric fan, if you are always changing from one to the other as you wish, then you will spend your time just changing your equipment to make yourself cool. And you will have no time to appreciate the cool wind. That is what most people are doing. If you are not in some condition, you cannot experience reality. Reality will be experienced only when you are in some particular condition. [A line is missing here, so I'm not sure if this is right-B.F.] That is why we say emptiness is form. Emptiness will be very good, but it can only be appreciated in some form or color or under some limitation.

But we cannot be attached to it. Even though it is very wonderful to use a big fan in Tassajara, if you use it in San Francisco, what will happen to you? You cannot use such a big electric fan in San Francisco. So you cannot be attached to anything.

But you should appreciate, moment after moment, what you are doing right now under some condition. First of all, you must know under which condition you actually are. This is very important. If you are a teacher, you should behave like a teacher; when you are a student, you should behave like a student. So first of all you should know what your position is, or else realization of the truth will not happen to you. This is how we

should understand our way. To realize our position and find ourselves is the way.

In this koan, he says, "'Even though you know the nature of wind is permanent and reaches everywhere,'" but strictly speaking, this is a kind of rhetoric or a compliment. Actually, the monk doesn't even know the nature of wind nor what is meant by permanence. This is just complete ignorance. "'Although you understand that the nature of wind is permanent,' the master replied, 'you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere.'" How the wind reaches everywhere, and what is everywhere, and what reaching is, he has no idea. He doesn't know at all, about anything! When the nature of wind is permanent, and how it is permanent, is that when the wind works in some certain direction, in some spirit, under some condition, then the nature of wind will appear. You see?

"Reaching everywhere" means that the activity of the cool wind, which is blowing in some certain direction, in some spirit, covers everything. At that moment, the movement of the wind is the whole world, and the independent activity of the wind. Nothing can be compared with the wind under this condition. Ash is ash, having its own past and future, and firewood is firewood, having its own past and future. Firewood and ash are thoroughly independent. So is the wind. This is how wind reaches everywhere, and this activity is beyond the idea of time.

When we attain enlightenment, all the patriarchs attain enlightenment at the same time. You cannot say Buddha is before and we are after. When you understand enlightenment, you are independent from everything; you have your own past and future, as Buddha had his own past and future. And his position is independent, as your position is independent. If so, this realization is beyond time and space. In this way, the wind reaches everywhere. Do you understand? You cannot say Buddha is before and we are after, like ashes are after and firewood is before. In this way, you should understand that the wind reaches everywhere. In this way, you should realize the nature of wind, which is permanent. The monk did not have any understanding of this kind. For Hotetsu Zenji, it was impossible to explain this direct experience of reality, so he just fanned himself, appreciating the cool wind.

This is a very famous statement: "The wind of Buddhism actualizes the gold of the earth and ripens the cheese of the Long River." Only by your practice, when you practice zazen in this way, aiming at this kind of goal, will you have a chance to attain true enlightenment.

Thank you very much.

-----

Transcribed by Brian Fikes. Text reformatted and notes amended by Bill Redican 4/30/01.



[1] According to Wind Bell (1968, No. 1-2, p. 16), this is the last lecture of a series of three on the Genjo Koan given by Suzuki-roshi at Tassajara. The fact that Suzuki-roshi is discussing the last paragraphs of the fascicle also supports the conclusion that this is last in the series rather than first. Suzuki-roshi gave an earlier series of lectures on the Genjo Koan at Soko-ji in 1966 (see SR-66-03-13A, SR-66-05-25, etc.). -WKR, April 30, 2001.

### **3 - Genjo Koan 6 and 9-11**

Monday, August 21, 1967

Genjo Koan

This lecture is not verbatim. The tape is no longer available. Suzuki-roshi is commenting on ¶¶ 6 and 9-11 of Genjo Koan.

Zen Mountain Center, Tassajara

Edited by Brian Fikes

There is a slight difference between your usual activity and the activity in our monastery. Of course, we do our best in our everyday work in order to support our activity. The work you do should be done with your very best effort and to the best of your ability. But you should not be too attached or take pride in your ability. Forgetting all about your ability and the result of your effort, you should still do your best in your work. This is how you work in a monastery as a part of practice.

And everyone has their own responsibility. We should work within our responsibilities; we should not invade someone else's responsibility. This is also the teaching of "form is emptiness and emptiness is form." We are working on something right now, and we do not know what we will work on tomorrow. But right now, what you are working on is your practice, and when you work, just work in your position. In your position and in your work there is meaning. So each one's responsibility or position is very important for us. If this is the case, we should not invade someone else's work. Each of us should work on our position. When you do so, there is our practice. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. When you work on the form which is your responsibility, which is your work, there is emptiness. But the form, or the position, you have right now is not a permanent one. Right now you are working on it, and right now you should work on it. Through your position, you can attain your own enlightenment. We should work in this way.

When Dogen Zenji arrived in China, his boat could not land because of the inspection, so he had to stay on the boat. At that time, an old priest visited his ship. He was very interested in that old priest, and they talked about Buddhism. He found out that the old priest was taking care of the kitchen of Ekoso (?), a monastery. He thought there must be

many young priests because it was a noted big monastery. So he said, "Why don't you stay? Even if you stay for the night in this ship, some one will work in the kitchen." But the old priest said, "You don't know what our practice is," and, "Others are not you." Others are not you; others cannot take my position, my practice. It is my practice. Each one should work on his practice. There there is enlightenment.

So today we have today's work, tomorrow we have tomorrow's work, and each of us has his own work, which should be perfect. As Dogen Zenji said, firewood does not become ash. Firewood has its own past and present. Ash has its own perfect position, it has its own past and future and its own perfection. So firewood never turns to ash. Ash is ash; firewood is firewood. And firewood includes everything past and future, and ash includes past and future, and everything which exists in this moment. So when you do your own job, your own job includes every thing and has its own past and future and perfection.

If you are wandering about, forgetting all about your place, it means you are deluded. You have no idea of practice, and you are losing your own practice. That is not our way. We should not put emphasis on our skill or the result of our work, but on knowing the meaning of the work more deeply. Then most of the difficulties in our monastic life will be solved.

Usually what we do is not so difficult. The problems which follow because of your imperfect understanding of work are more difficult. You will suffer from the useless problems, and you will lose the whole monastery. If the point of your work is lost, it is not a monastery any more. If you visit a monastery and everything is in order, the plants and vegetables are healthy, every place is clean, and the tools are well polished and sharp, that is sure to be a good monastery. But polishing your tools or raising your vegetables is not the main point of your practice. The main point is whether or not your effort is real practice. When there is good teaching and good practice, there is good feeling, and everything will grow. But the purpose is not just to get larger crops or to have a great amount of work. So even though you have some special ability, you will work on something you are not familiar with. But as long as you have something to work on, you should do your best in your position.

This is also what prajna paramita is. Although it may look like we are doing ordinary work, if you have right understanding of our work, the meaning is quite different.

The next paragraph of Shobogenzo Genjokoan says, "We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Although its light is wide and great, the moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a drop of dew in the grass."

"We gain enlightenment like the moon reflecting in the water." Here the use of the parable of the moon and its reflection is different. Earlier he said our way is not like the moon reflecting on the water. At that time he meant to symbolize a dualistic idea of our practice and enlightenment. But here he means that even though you attain enlightenment, there is no difference in what you do.

"The moon does not get wet ...." Even though the moon is in the water, it does not get wet. "... nor does the water get broken." There is no trace in it. You may think there exists, or you may always seek for, an enlightenment which is some special experience, where you have no problems, where you will get rid of all vicious habits. Once you have attained enlightenment, you will not drink any more sake. That may be the kind of enlightenment you are seeking. But actually, if you like sake, even though you gain enlightenment, you will have a hard time getting past the store where sake is sold. Things will still happen to you even though you attain enlightenment. So he says the water is not broken, nor does the moon get wet. The same water and the same moon will be there.

"Although its light is wide and great ...." You may say the moonlight is bright and great, while the moon in the dew is so small. But the moon in the sky is also in the drop of dew. Even though it is in the drop of dew, it is the moon. Even though you may say your attainment is so small, enlightenment is enlightenment. There is no difference.

"The moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a drop of dew in the grass." Enlightenment does not destroy the mind or help the mind. He did not say that, but "Enlightenment does not destroy the mind, just as the moon does not break the water. Mind does not hinder enlightenment just as a drop of dew does not hinder the moon in the sky. The depth of the drop is the height of the moon." Because you compare something to some other things, you have this kind of misunderstanding or confusion. But firewood is firewood, ash is ash. And ash and firewood are perfect, because they are whole, independent, being, or independent reality. This kind of understanding is beyond our thinking. You can explain it with logic, but the explanation will not be perfect.

"The depth of the drop is the height of the moon. The period of reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dewdrop and the vastness of the moonlit sky."

Now the next paragraph: "When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough. When the truth fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing." This "something is missing" has a different meaning. We know that that is not enough; at least we know that we should continue. It is not the end of it all. Moment after moment we should work on it. We feel this way. There is no time for us to lie down and sleep. We must go on and on and on.

And we have our ideal ahead of us. Usually, without knowing this part, when you are caught by your ideal, which is not possible to attain, you will just suffer until you commit suicide. Isn't that so? Enlightenment might be just an ideal for you, but even enlightenment is not always the same. It will make some progress -- I cannot explain it just now because you will be mixed up. There may be big enlightenments and small enlightenments, as the biographies of the great masters say, countless small enlightenments and several big enlightenments. This kind of description means that enlightenment is not always the same. Enlightenment after enlightenment we should practice our way. So you feel that something is not enough. Even though you feel good, even though you feel that you had enlightenment, that is not enough. When you feel this way, that is true enlightenment. But when you think you have had enough, that is not true enlightenment.

"For example, when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks circular, and nothing else." "It looks circular. ..." It looks like he discovered our earth is round at that time. He said it looks circular and nothing else. It is just a round globe. He must have seen it when he was crossing the China Sea. "But the ocean is neither round nor square, and its features are infinite in variety. It is like a palace. It is like a jewel. It seems circular as far as your eyes can reach at the time. All things are so. Though there are many features in the dusty life and the pure life. ..."

"It is like a palace." For the fish it is like a palace. "It is like a jewel." For the dragon, it may be a jewel. "It seems circular as far as your eyes can reach at the time." When you see it, it looks circular, but water is not always a palace for everyone, or a jewel. It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time, but it may not be circular. "All things are so, though there are many features in the dusty life and the pure life. We only understand what our study can reach." Whatever you may say, no matter how beautifully you describe this world, that is not all. That is the description as far as you can describe it.

"In our study of all things we must appreciate that although they may look round or square, the other features of the ocean or mountains are infinite in variety, and there are universes in all quarters. It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here, even in a drop of water." Just now we are talking about our teaching, but it is not only our Buddhist teaching. Even near at hand, events will tell you this truth. When your understanding reaches as far as this, you may say you are studying Buddhism, and you work on your everyday life accordingly. Whatever you do, that is the practice. Whenever you do not feel good in your work, you must think this truth. At the time, you may not feel so good, but that is not all.

A monastery is not some particular place. Whether you can make Tassajara a monastery or not is up to you. It may be even worse than

city life even though you are in Tassajara. But when you have the wisdom of the Prajna Paramita Sutra, even though you are in San Francisco, that is the perfect monastery. This point should be fully understood.

-----

Transcribed by Brian Fikes. Text reformatted and notes amended by Bill Redican 4/30/01.

#### **4 - Genjo Koan 12-14**

Wednesday, August 23, 1967

Sesshin Lecture

This lecture is not verbatim. The tape is no longer available. Suzuki-roshi is commenting on ¶¶ 12-14 of Genjo Koan.

Zen Mountain Center, Tassajara

Edited by Brian Fikes

Buddhism is not any special teaching, and enlightenment is not any particular stage that you attain. When you understand your life completely, that is enlightenment. So though the approach to it is not the same, as long as you study sincerely, you will reach the same goal. You may think you have discovered a new teaching, but almost all the teachings we discover have already been discovered by Buddhist teachers. You may say Buddhism is the accumulation of our human experience. So whatever you make effort on, there is the way.

Some people are always trying to discover some particular way for themselves. That is not the true way to study; this kind of idea is utterly wrong. So we say, "Don't seek for any particular enlightenment." Enlightenment is not something particular. When you start to study Buddhism, thinking that it is good to expect that Buddhism will give you some particular teaching, if you cannot satisfy your expectations, you will give up. This is not how we study.

So here (in the Shobogenzo Genjokoan) Dogen Zenji says, "When a fish swims in the ocean, there is no end to the water, no matter how far it swims. When a bird flies, there is no end to the air, no matter how far it flies." When you think the sky or the water is something special and try to discover its end, you cannot. You have no chance to study, because you cannot reach the end of the water or the limit of the air. So he says no matter how far it flies, there is no end to the air.

"However, the fish and bird do not leave their elements." A fish or bird does not go out of the water or air. The water or air we want to study is for everyone, they are not particular things. You cannot live without water or without air.

"When the use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in the small way." Anyway, whether you are aware of it or not, you are in the air and you are in the water, and according to the way you live, there may be more or less water. The water under this limitation is not the whole water you want to study. But even though it is a small amount of water, it is water, and it is the sky.

"Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once." Our way which we study is like air or water. So before you try to figure out what it is, you should practice it, you should live in the water or the sky. That is how you study Buddhism. Not by trying to figure out what it is intellectually, but with all of your mind and body, you should practice our way.

"The bird makes life and the fish makes life. Life makes the bird and life makes the fish. There are further analogies possible to illustrate (this)." The bird and life, which is water or sky, are the same thing. So the bird makes life and the fish makes life. Fish is fish made of water; bird made of water, and life made of bird, and life made of fish. Life and bird or fish, or water and sky and fish and bird, is not different. "There are further analogies possible to illustrate." There may be many ways of analyzing this truth.

"In this way, practice, enlightenment, mortality and eternity." So mortality and eternity are one, and enlightenment is one. Bird and sky is one. We should understand it in this way. So where you practice it, there is the way, there is enlightenment.

"However, if a bird or fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird, or this fish, will not find its way or its place. When we find our place at this moment, when we find our way at this moment, then practice follows, and this is realization of the truth. For the place and the way are neither large nor small." Our way cannot be compared with some other practice. Each practice is perfect, including everything, and independent.

So, neither subject nor object: "There is no subject who practices it and no object which is practiced. They have not existed from the beginning." When you practice it, reality appears. Reality did not exist before you practiced it. "They have not existed from the beginning, and they are not in the process of realization." Each moment is realization and is not in the process of realization. Do you understand? It is not process, you know. At the same time, it is in the process of changing into some other practice. But although your practice is a continuous one, at the same time it is discontinuous. Today you have done something, and what you have done will be continued tomorrow. But even though we do not know anything about tomorrow, tomorrow is included in the present. Your work has its own tomorrow and past. Tomorrow what you have done will have its own past and future. What you have done today will

belong to the past tomorrow. So it is not the same. Do you understand? Not the same at all. Tomorrow is independent, and today is independent.

There must be some relationship, but although there is a relationship, you cannot compare what you have done today to the things you will do tomorrow. So you must be satisfied with what you did today. Tomorrow you should be satisfied with what you will do tomorrow. So when you compare what you have done today [line missing here, perhaps saying something like, "with what you will do tomorrow, it is like trying to mix oil with"-B.F.] water. You cannot compare them. Oil is oil and water is water. You cannot say which is better. We cannot ignore the relationship between two things, or between many things, but each one is independent. So each one includes everything. You may say what you have done is small, but that's because you compare it. Actually, you should not compare.

"They have not existed from the beginning, and they are not in the process of realization." They are not in the process of realization. Do you understand? Your practice is not in the process of realization. So will you give up? "Your practice is not in the process of realization-it's better to give up if there is no hope." This kind of practice is not our practice. Even though you practice our way for a whole lifetime, some of you may attain enlightenment and some may not. You see? If so, do you give up your practice?

When I say some may and some may not, it means I am comparing someone's practice to someone else's practice. But your own practice itself is originally independent and perfect. So what is wrong is the comparison. You are limiting the actual value of your practice. Your small mind is a big limitation to your true practice, that is all. So it is not the practice that is good or bad, but your understanding makes practice seem good or bad. This is why we say do not seek for some particular enlightenment. You should be satisfied with your practice and practice hard moment after moment. Then there is enlightenment.

"Thus, in our practice of Buddhism, when we gain one truth, we must have mastered that one truth. And if we encounter one activity, we complete the activity. Here is the place, and here leads the way." When there is place, there is way. That is complete practice without calling it good or bad practice. When you encounter one activity, you should do it with your best effort. That is the way.

Therefore, he says, "Understanding is not always possible, because it is simultaneous with the complete attainment of the Buddha's teaching." The complete attainment is simultaneous with when you practice. So it is not possible to understand what it is. If they come one by one at different times, you will have a chance to see what Buddha's teachings and actual practices are. But when they come at the same time that you are practicing them, there is already attainment. So there is no way for

us to know the other side, which is attainment.

When you are busy working on something, it is not possible to see what you have done. If you want to see, you have to stop doing it. Then you will know what you have done. Even though it is not possible to see what you have done, when you have done something, there is attainment. There is no doubt in it, but usually we are very curious about what we have done. That is alright; but when you see it, you have already put your practice in a limitation, and you are comparing it to some attainment. When your attainment is better than what you did before, or better than what someone else did, you will be pleased with it; if it is not, you will be discouraged. But that is not because your attainment is not good enough or is not perfect.

"Understanding is not possible because it is simultaneous with the complete attainment of the Buddha's teaching. Do not suppose that what we realize is knowledge in terms of concepts." So your knowledge about what you have done is not the same as what you realized. "Though we have already attained supreme enlightenment, we may not necessarily see." Some may, and some may not. This is a very important point and is the secret of the teaching. "Don't suppose that what we realize is knowledge in terms of concepts." Though we have already attained supreme enlightenment, that secret attainment, attainment which is more than you understand, cannot be seen by you. The way it appears to you is not necessarily the same.

As you know, we live in a world which is mostly perceptions. It is difficult for us to be satisfied with everything when our understanding accords with what we see or think. But we have to know that everything we see or think is under some limitation. You are not seeing or thinking about the thing itself. This point should be remembered. What you see, what you understand in terms of concepts is not always true. This is the secret of Buddhism. This point should be remembered completely.

So don't be disturbed by the ideas you have in your mind. This does not mean that you can ignore your thinking. Thinking should be systematic and should be right. But even though it is right, that is not complete. And what you think is right is not always actually right. Most people attach to the truth which they understand. The confusion arises from this hasty understanding. This is a very, very important point.

I will continue with one more lecture about this fascicle, and afterwards, Reverend Maezumi will give us some lectures. And it may be a good idea to have a discussion with you sometime, so that you may discuss many things with us. We have Dr. Stunkard and many other good teachers here, so a discussion will be very good, I think, I hope.

-----

Transcribed by Brian Fikes. Text reformatted and notes amended by Bill



Redican 4/30/01.

## **5 - Sesshin Lecture**

Thursday, August 24, 1967

Sesshin Lecture  
Zen Mountain Center, Tassajara[1]

Edited by Brian Fikes

(Again, the opening sentences were missed. According to Dick [Baker], they were something like: "This is the last lecture of sesshin. We have talked of form and emptiness, but have not understood it well."-B.F.)

... She was a part of the world, and whatever she said from the top of the mountain was in her mind. She felt an unusual warm feeling even for mountain range after mountain range, but at the same time, she felt very lonely. Something is missing in that understanding. What is it? What is it? Today, for my last lecture, I want to qualify this point.

Do you know the famous story of Gutei's one-finger Zen? I think every one knows it. Gutei Osho lived in a small hut deep in the mountains. One day a nun called [Jissai] came to the hut. As soon as she arrived, she went around and around the altar with her hat on her head. Gutei Osho said, "Why don't you take off your hat?" She said, "If you can say something good to me, I will take off my hat." But he couldn't say anything, so he was very ashamed of himself. He left his hut, his small temple, and started visiting famous Zen masters. First of all, he thought he must see Tenryu Osho. And before he said anything, Tenryu Osho held up one finger, like this, and Gutei was enlightened. You understand?

Form is emptiness, you know. When you see one leaf falling down from the tree, you will see autumn there. "Oh, autumn is here already!" you may say. So one leaf is not just one leaf; it means the whole autumn. So even one thing will cover everything, and here there is your world. Here you already understand the all-pervading power of your practice. Your practice covers everything.

Unfortunately, our understanding is so intellectual. When we say "covers everything", our understanding of this remains bound in terms of space, so the other side, time, is discontinuous. The idea of time which is discontinuous, or the momentary idea of time, is the same as the space-bound idea. "One point in wide space includes everything." Your understanding is liable to be like this. But actually, when we say "includes everything," it means the past and future too. So it includes everything which exists in this moment, and which exists in this moment, and which will exist in the next moment, and which has existed in the past. Your understanding should reach this point. The all-

pervading power and the incessant continuity of the power are both important. Training period now is over, it is true. But this is not the end of our practice. Incessantly, one after another, our practice will continue.

So, now we will go back to the story of Gutei. After that, whenever someone came, he held up one finger. That is all right, because he understood it, so they must have understood it -- I don't know. But one day when Master Gutei was not at the temple, someone came, so his disciple got up on the platform and received the question. "What is Buddhism?" the visiting monk asked. The disciple held up one finger. Unfortunately, his master heard about it, and he asked him, "What is Buddhism?" The disciple held up one finger. But the master cut off his finger! There is no more finger! The disciple cried out and almost went out, but the teacher called him back and held up one finger again. The boy was enlightened. Do you understand?

This may be the training period (holding up one finger); this may be sesshin right now, you see. After sesshin is cut off, what will come as the next training for us? You see? Cut off-but another one appears! Do you understand? One after another, this will appear.

So there is the continuity as well as the universality or all-pervading power of practice. We should have continuous practice, or else your practice is not perfect. Even if you attain enlightenment by one finger-form is emptiness-if that enlightenment is a momentary experience or enlightenment, it doesn't mean much. Something is still missing in your feeling. But when you realize that your practice will continue incessantly without any gap between one practice and the next, there there is true practice. If your enlightenment reaches this point, your understanding is perfect, and you don't have anything missing. Your mind will be full of joy in its true sense.

So even though you think you attain enlightenment, usually our enlightenment remains in some intellectual understanding of time or space and based on some self-centered idea. It is pretty hard to get beyond the limited intellectual understanding. This is why it is necessary to cut off the finger and to point out another finger. This fellow will go out once he's seen the one finger held up, as Tokusan did when Yutan blew out the light. I must tell you this story.

Tokusan visited Yutan and thought he had attained enlightenment under Yutan's instruction, so he wanted to go out. It was dark, so Yutan said, "It is too late for you to go. Why don't you stay?" But, you know, he was so grateful and so glad that he understood the teaching because of his attaining enlightenment, so the master gave him a light. "Then take this with you." And Yutan blew out the light. Then Tokusan really truly understood, and he left. No one knows, as Dogen Zenji said, if this enlightenment was perfect or not. If we see him, we will understand whether he attained enlightenment really and truly. But as far as the

story goes, we are not so sure.

From Buddha's time to our age, human nature has been nearly the same. We live in the world of time and space, and our life does not go beyond this limit. To live in the world of time and space is like pushing a big snake into a small can. The snake will suffer in the small can. It does not know what is going on outside of the can. Because it is in the can, it is so dark he cannot see anything, but he will struggle in the small can. That is what we are doing. The more we struggle, the greater the suffering will be. That kind of practice will not work. Putting yourself in a small can and sitting day after day in a cross-legged position is worse than a waste of time. Do you understand? Sometimes our practice is something like this. We don't know how much our understanding is limited. That is why you have to study koans. Koans will open up your mind. If you understand your way of life more objectively, you will understand what you are doing.

I think right now you must have understood what "form is emptiness and emptiness is form" means in its true sense. Here you will understand Dogen Zenji's difficult statement: "Time passes from past to present, from present to future, and from future to present, and from present to past." If you really understand "form is emptiness" in its true sense, then in the time-bound world, you have this much freedom. Time goes from future to past, from present to past. This is an extraordinary statement. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. In this present moment there is past and future. That future exists in the present moment means that future passes to the present. Right now your future is right here. This kind of experience continues forever from Buddha to us, from us to our descendants, from you to your friend. And we will have the perfect relationship between us, something more than relationship. This is how you develop your character in the whole world, past and future.

The founder of my temple was always studying Zuigan's koan. Zuigan always addressed himself, "Zuigan?" And he answered, "Yes!" "Zuigan?" "Hai!" The neighbors wondered what he was doing! "Zuigan!" At first they thought, "Zuigan isn't well." But he was always addressing himself, "Zui gan," and answering, "Hai!" Do you understand? Our practice should be like this, you know.

Of course, all of us have some small or big enlightenment, and in your zazen you may think about it again. But if you try to think about it, you will be lost, you will be lost. I know. I myself was lost, so I think you will be lost too, because you are involved in an intellectual, cerebral way of thinking. And once you lose yourself, you start to torture yourself, you don't feel so good. That anxiety, that impatient, angry feeling will continue, and your practice will become worse and worse. That is what will happen to you.

But if someone calls your name, "Where is Kanzen?" all of a sudden,

your practice will come back to you. You see? Emptiness is here, right here. Do you understand? So Zuigan had to call himself, because he would be lost if he didn't. Incessantly you should call your name. When you come back to yourself, there you include everything as a sole being in the time-bound and space-bound. And you will feel very good, you know.

This kind of practice, addressing someone in this way, is the kindest instruction to give. No one can be more kind to someone than this. Don't you think so? I do not write letters; that is very bad habit of mine. And I think sometime I really must write. Just to receive a letter from someone is enough to bring a person back to himself, directly to his home. This is true love. Incessantly we are changing, so it is necessary to call ourselves back incessantly. If you don't take care of yourself in this way, you will be lost.

After zazen we take a meal and recite the names of Buddha. That is calling ourselves back to home. Here there is the practice of continuity. The other kind of practice I have been talking about is the practice of discontinuity. Even if the practice is a momentary one, it has the great virtue of including everything. But if you practice our way incessantly, that will have the power to bring Shakyamuni Buddha right here. This is true, very true. It is more true than the time which passes from past to present. Here your practice is not spacebound or timebound. You are beyond the idea of time and space, and you are independent in this world.

And yet everyone is your teacher. Shakyamuni Buddha or your friend or your family is within your enlightenment. You may say, "If I have a family, I cannot practice our way." That is because you are bound by the idea of annihilation. To cut off your consciousness does not mean to not think anything. Dogen says, "To cut off various ideas is to have various ideas." How about it? To cut off various ideas is to have various ideas within your practice. If you have a family, it may be more difficult to practice our way; that is true. But that does not mean it is impossible to practice our way. If you have enough conviction and effort, you can do it.

In this way we should make our effort. Today I act incessantly, incessantly. One enlightenment is not enough. One after another, incessant enlightenments are necessary. Moment after moment, you must call Buddha's name or your name directly. There you have yourself.

I am so grateful for your joining our practice and listening to our lecture. Maezumi Sensei is leaving early tomorrow morning, so I hope he will speak on this occasion.

-----

Transcribed by Brian Fikes. Text reformatted and notes amended by Bill

Redican 4/30/01.

[1] This lecture does not appear to be on the Genjo Koan. Suzuki-roshi gave a series of three lectures on the Genjo Koan at Tassajara in 1967. See SR-67-08-20-A et seq.

## **1967 september (2)**

### **1 - The Threefold Body of Buddha**

Friday, September 01, 1967

The Threefold Body of Buddha  
Tassajara

Student: Please come up front if you'd like.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, please come nearer.

Student: Those in the back come up to the front, please.

Suzuki-roshi: Tonight my talk will be quite informal. You are, of course, interested in Zen. But Zen is also Buddhism, you know. So it is necessary for you to understand Buddhism in general. Although it will not help you-my talk will not help you immediately, but it is necessary for you to have some understanding of original teaching of Buddha, and, at the same time, various understanding of original teaching of Buddha or else, I am afraid, you will miss the point.

Tonight I want to talk about the three-fold body of Buddha. The other day, Bishop Sumi[1] explained about what is the various understanding of Buddha, like historical Buddha, buddha as a-as the truth, and buddha as a teaching or dharma. This concept originated from, of course, historical Buddha, who is so great. And he was so great that Hinayana Buddhism-Buddhist or [are?] direct disciple of Buddha, had a kind of supernatural nature of form-some-some supernatural being-idea of supernatural being like Buddha who had the 32 marks[2] or eighty holy figures. Those concept already-already formed some Buddha as a embodiment of the truth-of Buddha who attained buddhahood after unusual practice. So in Mahayana school-Hinayana Buddhist had no such elaborate aspects of Buddha, but Mahayana Buddhist started-had the three aspects of Buddha. And this three aspect forms a trinity, like three [pre-?] Buddhistic religion.

The three form is Buddha as a historical being who has his own body. But Buddha, who-the teaching which was told by historical Buddha was the truth itself. So here we have the idea of truth and idea of teaching. The idea of teaching and idea of truth forms-form idea of Dharmakaya Buddha. And the Buddha who had an image of character forms the idea of Sambhogakaya Buddha. Here-so we have Buddha as a embodiment

of the truth, and Buddha as a truth, and-and Buddha who attained buddhahood after his long practice. Here we have the three aspects of Buddha.

And this three aspects of Buddha was necessary for Mahayana Buddhist to become buddha or possibility of attaining buddhahood. For Hinayana Buddhists, it was not possible to attain buddhahood because Buddha was so great that they didn't think-they did not imagine-even imagine the possibility of being Buddha.

But Mahayana Buddhists put emphasis on the buddhahood which is possible for them to attain. Here Buddhism-Buddha became more religious. The Buddha for Hinayana Buddhist is some unusual person, something quite different from human being. But Buddha for Mahayana Buddhist is someone who is like every one of us. So they put emphasis on buddha-nature. So Dharmakaya Buddha actually-the express the essential nature of every one of us. That is Dharmakaya Buddha. Because we have potentiality, after long practice it is possible for us to attain buddhahood. And every one of us is nothing but the embodiment of the Buddha. Here Buddhism becomes more popular or more reli- [partial word]-took a form of religion rather than some special teaching.

This was-this development was very important for Buddhism-or for the development [?] of Buddhism because Hinayana Buddhism become-became more and more formal, and their teaching became more and more philosophical or verbal. They had a strict distinction between laymen and priesthood. But in Mahayana Buddhism, there was not much difference between Buddhism in-for laymen and Buddhism for priests or monks because the potentiality for-to be buddha for everyone was emphasized. So whether they are man or woman, whether they are priest or layman, they get together in Buddha's pagoda, and recite sutras, and practiced various formal practice.

As you know, Buddha-although Buddha's body or ash was divided in six [eight?] and enshrined [in] various place-places, but they did not worship Buddha's ash. It was a time when Mahayana Buddhism became more and more powerful. But we started to enshrine Buddha's relics, building pagoda, and various religious activity were observed by people. So they have to have this kind of definition or aspects or understanding of Buddha: buddha as a truth, buddha as a-our true nature or buddha as in every one of us, or buddha as a historical Buddha. So they had already clear distinction between buddha as a-our own nature and historical Buddha. And yet, those understand- [partial word]-those three bodies of Buddha is one. One include the other.

Although Buddhism became very common, but philosophically Buddhism became more and more deeper. In this way, Buddhism was developed as a religion and as a philosophy too. This is how Buddhism developed, and why we have the three aspects of Buddha.

And in Hinayana Buddhism, their-the sutra was-were not so philosophical-the teaching was not so diffic- [partial word]-philosophical. But in Mahayana Buddhism we have three-we call it "three baskets"[3] of [laughs]-not "baskets," but-three kinds of scriptures: philosophical one,[4] and something told by Buddha as a teaching,[5] and scriptures about precepts-observations.[6] And philosophy-philosophical aspects of understanding of teaching developed in Mahayana school or Mahayana Buddhism.

There are many "three," you know, number in our teaching: three kinds of scriptures, three-fold body, or three fields [?] of the teaching. Those are-as a Buddhist, we should know those-we must have this kind of knowledge, just as a knowledge. Those teaching or those understand-[partial word]-aspects of our teaching were the background of Zen. So it is necessary for us to have those understanding or background of Zen, as well as our practice.

If you have some question, please ask. As we have not much dokusan, so if you have some question, please-any question, you are welcome. Please ask question.

Student A: Is Mahayana Buddhism also known as the second way?

Suzuki-roshi: Mahayana Buddhism?

Student A: Is it known as the second way?

Suzuki-roshi: Second way?

Student A: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Second way. Oh, excuse me. What do you mean-the sec-[partial word]?

Student A: I was reading someplace about the second way as being the way of total annihilation [?] of life as a goal, rather than going into life.

Suzuki-roshi: Mahayana Buddhism? No. We say "Mahayana Buddhism," but there are many, you know, teachings in Mahayana Buddhism. And the Kegon school, you know, classifies our teaching in three, you know. Or we-Kegon school-not class-[partial word]-yes, classified-has three aspects in understanding of teaching. So if the understanding is poor, that is, you know, the second way-not perfect understanding. And if the understanding is good, that is perfect understanding. And that perfect understanding cannot be attained by just intellectual understanding. That is the Tendai's canon. You see? And this is the, you know-of course this is true with Zen too. This is another-maybe I will-I must explain some other time, you know, the three aspects of-understanding from three aspects.

If you-if you study the various canon of various school, you will understand why it is necessary to practice zazen, you know [laughs]. The various schools suggest us to practice zazen. That is why we practice zazen [laughs]. Do you understand? So our practice is based on the canon of various school, you know. So Zen include, or Zen is based on all the Buddhism, all the schools of-all the teaching of many schools. Or Zen is the result of many-result of effort of many scholars of many schools. Do you understand? Zen is not something special. In other word, Zen is not one of thirteen schools, you know. Zen include the thirteen schools of Buddhism. If you understand Zen, you will understand other schools. The gist of the teaching is Zen, but not teaching-but, you know, you can say "teaching" in its wide sense. Hai.

Student B: Now that the weather is cold, how can we concentrate when we're, like, chilled in the morning?

Suzuki-roshi: Chilled? Oh-

Student B: Like, when we're really cold, like, not from the outside but we're cold-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -and it's sort of inside our clothes.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: How can we get our meditation back and our concentration through the tenseness of being cold?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] I understand how you feel [laughter], but nevertheless, you know, you shouldn't-we say, "Sick or cold will not kill you, but wrong practice will kill you." [Laughter.] Even though it is cold, you know, you should do that. You see, it will be the chance or occasion to realize the truth. The cold weather or some difficulty in your practice will give you some chance to attain enlightenment or to practice real practice. When it is cold, it-you should practice it because it is a good chance to practice. Then-this is rather, I think, traditional way of realizing our true nature.

We have various desires, you know. But by stopping it, by taking negative attitude towards your desire, you will realize your true nature, more than-rather than to have positive, you know, attitude towards your desires. It does not mean to annihilate your desires, but by stopping it-to take negative attitude towards your desire.

That negative attitude result [in] the true understanding of the desire itself, or human nature itself, or buddha-nature itself. So if it is cold, you shouldn't wear too much [laughs]. I think you wear too-when you sit you [wear] too warm clothing. It is not-not that cold, so it's much better



not to wear too many, you know, clothing.

Some other question?

Student C: Around here it's very easy not to get too attached to food and sit around thinking about well, when's it time to eat and all this sort of thing, because your mind just isn't going in that direction. But say, like, at home, if you are in the kitchen a lot and the kitchen is a combination kitchen and family room, and all the life centers around the kitchen, and you're in kitchen all day, now what do you do if you have this problem: Like, since I've been sitting, all my senses have gotten sharp, and food tastes better now. So what do I do, you know, like, if I- if I just have something to eat that ordinarily I wouldn't even care about-it tastes-that simple thing tastes so marvelous now, that I'm looking for some more where that came from [laughter], you know. Well then-you know what I mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah [laughter].

Student C: Pretty soon I'm sitting in the kitchen, and eating and eating and eating, you know? Well what do you do?

Suzuki-roshi: Ohhh. [Laughter.] You soon will realize your nature by negative practice. For all religion, negative, you know, practice is necessary. We sh- [partial word]-you know, we should not always pick positive attitude only. Positive and negative-both attitude is necessary, but negative one is the most important practice. This is very true.

Student D: I'm a little confused. What is a negative attitude?

Suzuki-roshi: Negative attitude? Negative attitude is to-to eat [?] your-our food and to practice in-under some difficult circumstances, and to refrain from some various, you know, activity-various, you know, like sexual activity, or negative attitude towards various desires [laughs] [1 word unclear] [laughs] which something aroused, you know. We have to think more on this point, at least. Hai.

Student E: You don't mean "suppress" desires, do you, by "thinking negative" about them.

Suzuki-roshi: Hm?

Student E: You don't mean "suppressed," do you?

Suzuki-roshi: Suppress?

Student E: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Suppress.

Student: [Aside.] Confine.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: You don't mean "feel guilty about it," do you, Sensei, or-? [Laughs, laughter.] Or say that it's bad, or something like that, or do you mean just not to do it?

Suzuki-roshi: If you feel guilty about it, it will help you [laughs, laughter]. "Don't feel guilty." If I say, "Don't feel guilty," it looks like I'm [laughs], you know-I'm making some excuse for something. That is not-that is not matter of discussion, you know. It is rather-it is matter of practice or experience. You should not be blind, you know, in what you do, even though it is fundamental instinct. You sh- [partial word]-you must have-you must open your eyes to those activities. You should not ignore it, you know. At least you should have positive and negative [attitude?]. And it is-as it is difficult to have negative attitude, we should try to be negative.

Student F: The word "negative" has a very-it leaves a very bad taste in my mouth. It has very bad associations with me, and I think it does with a lot of people.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: I don't really quite understand what you mean when you say "negative."

Suzuki-roshi: If it is-if the word "negative" create bad feeling, it's all the better [laughs, laughter]. It is, you know, [not?] the matter of you like it or not, you know-like the teaching or not. But what I mean is actual experience, you know. It is not matter of you like our teaching or not. So it is necessary for you to, you know, to open your mind to your true nature. You see, as long as you are, you know, trying to ignore one side, I don't think you can understand our true nature. What will happen if you die? That is the most negative experience [laughs]. But whether you like it or not, you will die someday [laughs]. Remember-just remember what I said, you know, and open your eyes, [be] more and more careful or more alert. And more careful with ... [Sentence not finished. Gap in tape of unknown interval.]

... feel your desire more, and you will attain the freedom from various desires, and you can change one desire to the other. It is like a blind man can hear better than, you know-better than usual person.

Student F: What you're saying is that you should put the snake in the small can.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Put the snake in straight [laughter]-Nagarjuna said, you know, "How will you put a snake straight in?" He asked, you

know, someone, "How can you make a snake straight?" [Laughs.] As no one, you know, couldn't answer, he said, "Put it in straight bamboo or a pipe" [laughs]. That is a way to make a snake straight, and snake will know what is his nature. If he is like this [presumably making a waving gesture], you know, he doesn't know his own nature.

Negative and positive is very important, like a rope, you know. If you twist two, you know, rope in two, like this [gestures], that is negative and positive. One rope cannot make-by one-just one rope-just one material we cannot make a rope, we say.

Student G: Sensei, didn't Buddha do that? Didn't he get down to one grain of rice a day? Didn't he deny himself a whole bunch of things when he talked about the middle way?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. That is not too [to?], you know-his practice-difference between asceticism and Buddha's way was, his way-asceticism, you know, practiced that way-in that way, limiting their food or sleep to attain something, or to be born in some heaven, or something like that. He had-they had some-some purpose-they practiced it for some purpose. But Buddha found the truth in that practice. The practice itself is the goal. This is very, I think-

Student H: Do you think fasting is good practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Fasting?

Student H: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Good practice for what [laughs]? That is, you know-

Student H: For mastering desire or thinking negatively about desire, whatever is troubling the spirit.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. If so, you know, there will be no need to fast, you know, for many days, for an instance. That is a kind of practice, but that is not our practice. Even though you do not fast, you can practice it, you know, in the most usual way.

This is very important point. We have to think more about this point. I think you already have some, you know, some doubt or-not "doubt," but you are wondering-you may wonder why I say this kind of-why I talk about negative or positive attitude towards our desires. But I myself have no answer to it.

Student I: Is there a difference between negative desires and positive desires?

Suzuki-roshi: No, that is one.

Student I: It's the same thing to kill someone and to love someone?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Two aspects or two kinds of attitude we take.

Student I: Does that mean that we should suppress both?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me-two?

Student I: Does that mean that we should-that we should-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: -suppress these desires, to love and to hate?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, sometimes it is necessary. And it is necessary, and you are doing it [laughs].

Student J: Well, what about sincerity, okay?

Suzuki-roshi: Sincerity?

Student J: That's a very positive thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Sincerity-

Student J: If you suppress it, what do you have?

Suzuki-roshi: Not-that is not sincerity, do you think?

Student J: I don't know. I get confused on things like sincerity and, you know, compassion.

Suzuki-roshi: Sincerity or compassion-if I say "sincerity" or "compassion," you-you may think that is very positive statement, but it is not actually so. Sincerity-just positive sincerity or, you know, positive compassion is not true compassion. You know, when you want to say to someone-sometime you will hate it if you are sincere. If you know what will it mean-what does it mean by some statement, you will be very careful. That is already negative. Even though you want-you want to eat more, sometime you-you will hesitate to eat, you know, as much as you want. Without this kind of attitude, you cannot live.

Positive one is not always positive in its true sense, you know. Which is stronger-stronger person: a man who beat you or a man who is beating-no-who is beat-beat-beat [laughs, laughter] [having trouble finding the correct word]-

Students: Beaten.

Suzuki-roshi: -beaten. Or beat.

Students: Being beaten.

Suzuki-roshi: Being beaten, yeah. Which is stronger? You should be-it is easy to beat someone, but it is not so easy to be beaten without any, you know-not much difficulty, or to bear from being-to be patient in being beaten [by] someone. Hai.

Student K: Is it ever all right to be positive? I mean, is it ever all right to say yes to your desires?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes? To say yes or-

Student K: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student K: Is it all the same-no one is supposed to have for, you know-supposed to [1 word unclear], or-I don't know.

Suzuki-roshi: No, I don't think so [laughs, laughter]. Those are, you know-actual experience will tell you, you know. But if we say "religion," you know, we-you think-will think religion will give you some, you know, advantage in taking some pleasure, or in having some excuse in doing some positive things always, that is not true.

Student K: It seems to me, though, that it is nothing wrong with enjoying eating or sex or sleeping-just in being attached-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Student K: -and-and in wanting [it] when it's not there. So-so-I don't, you know-like-like if there's some way so that you can, you know, just really enjoy eating as long as the food is in front of you, and then-and then it's gone-not think about it?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student K: And then is it all right to say yes and eat?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yes, if it is so, it is all right. Nothing wrong with it. But it is not always so [laughs, laughter].

Student L: This teaching sounds as if we're supposed to fight with ourselves, from the time we're born to the time we die. I would like to get to the point where I wouldn't be continually fighting with myself.

Suzuki-roshi: Fighting. [Laughs.] That is your understanding-

Student L: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: -of your life, you know. That act- [partial word]-that is not actually fighting, you know-[rather, it is] developing your desires-how to develop your desires, you know. The understanding-different understanding of one practice. If you say you are fighting with your desires, it may be so [laughs]. I cannot deny the statement, "I am fighting with myself." But that is not, you know, perfect expression of our way.

Oh [probably sees the time]. [Laughs.] Let's, you know [laughs], study more about this. I-I am so glad if you are that you [are] concerned [about] my talk [laughs, laughter] so much. That is not my problem [laughs]-your problems are to be study more-not to, you know-problem of Buddhism or [laughs] buddhas or Zen.

Actually there is no rule, you know. There is rules, but the rules is not always observed in the same way [laughs]. Your practice mostly will be right when the practice is forced on you-mostly it is pure. But if you practice by your own choice, there are many danger of having some wrong element in it-in your motivation-motives. "I have to do it," you know, "because someone told me. As long as I am here in this monastery, I have to observe in this way. So I do it." This kind of practice will result in more-more, rather than you practice it by your own choice. This is very true. If you become more sincere about your practice, and if you become more conscientious about your practice, you will find it very true.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript originally transcribed by Brian Fikes and checked by Mel Weitsman. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/6/01).

[1] Sumi Togen, who succeeded Yamada Reirin as head (bishop) of the Soto Zen School in America in 1965. He was formerly an instructor of monks at Soji-ji.

[2] The Lotus Sutra, for example, refers to the "thirty-two marks and eighty subsidiary characteristics" by which a buddha is traditionally recognized.

[3] The Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon. In present usage, "baskets" is quite common.

[4] The Abhidharma-pitaka: Buddhist psychology and philosophy.

[5] The Sutra-pitaka: The discourses of Shakyamuni Buddha.

[6] The Vinaya-pitaka: Monastic regulations as well as a history of the Buddhist sangha.

## **2 - Things-As-It-Is**

Friday, September 08, 1967

Things-As-It-Is

Tassajara

Tonight I want to give you a correct idea of Buddhism or Zen. In a word, Zen is the teaching or practice of seeing "things as it is" or accepting "things as it is" and of raising things as they go. This is the fundamental purpose of our practice and the meaning of Zen. But it is, actually, rather difficult to see "things as it is." You may say you are seeing "things as it is," but actually, you do not see "things as it is." I don't mean that it is a distortion of sight, such as when something of one shape looks shorter than something of another shape. I mean that, as soon as you see something, you already start to intellectualize it. As soon as you intellectualize something, it is already it is not just what you saw.

When I was young, I wanted to practice true practice, and I wanted to know what the way-seeking mind is in its true sense.[1] I thought that to do something good might be the way-seeking mind. So I got up very early, and washed the toilet and sink before the other students got up. I thought that would be a very good thing to do. But while I was doing this, I was afraid someone would see me. I wanted to do it just by myself without being noticed by anyone else. "If someone sees me, that will not be pure practice," I thought. But, before they saw me, I was already going wrong in my mind. I asked myself whether I liked doing it without being noticed by anyone, or whether I wanted it to be known by someone else. Why am I doing something like this? So, in a way, I couldn't accept my way-seeking mind. I was not so sure of the purity of my way-seeking mind.

When I saw a lamp lit in one room, of course, I hid myself. I thought that someone had gotten up already and might come down. It seemed as though I was at least trying to do something good with a pure mind, but that my mind was not so pure. My mind was wandering about. I couldn't make my mind sure, and I was at a loss for what to do. I suffered a little bit. And I thought, and thought, and thought about what I should do.

One day, when I was listening to a psychology lecture, the teacher said, "It is impossible to catch our mind exactly. It is especially impossible to

know what we have done. The mind which acted some time ago, the mind which belongs to the past, is impossible to catch. And even the mind which is acting right now is impossible to catch, actually." So I thought, "no wonder it is so difficult for me to understand my mind." And I gave up trying to be sure of my way-seeking mind. Since then I have done things, without thinking, just because they were good. And, at the same time, whether or not people saw me was not my problem anymore.

So when you want to see, or be sure of, your mind, you cannot catch it. But when you just do something, and when your mind is just acting as it is, that is how you catch your mind in the true sense. Anyway, it is rather difficult to see "things as it is," because seeing "things as it is" is not just the activity of our sight or eyes. This is why we put emphasis on practice. To do something without thinking is the most important point in understanding ourselves. Since it is difficult to see "things as it is," we should practice our way.

People may say if the purpose of Zen is to see "things as it is," then there is no need to practice. That is the big problem. I think in your every day life, the root practice may be to raise flowers or to grow your garden. That is, I think, the best practice. You know, when you sow a seed, you have to wait for the seed to come up. And if it comes up, you have to take care of it. That is our practice. Just to sow a seed is not enough. To take care of it day after day is very important for the good gardener. When you build a house, your work is finished. If someone has written a book, that is enough. But for a gardener, it is necessary to take care of the garden every day. Even though you have finished making that garden, it is necessary to take care of it. So I think our way is nearly the same as making your own garden, or raising some vegetables or flowers.

Each seed, or each plant, has its own character and its own color. If it is a stone garden, each stone has its own character. A long stone has a solemn, profound feeling; a round one expresses perfection; a square one expresses some rigidness or feeling of austerity. If it has moss on it, it has some deep, profound, mystical spirit to it. Those are the characters of each material you use in your garden.

People may say, "Whatever we do, that is Zen," or, "I am seeing 'things as it is.'" They usually see things one by one, but that is not enough. You may say you see "things as it is," but you are just seeing each material and each material's character.

It is necessary for a gardener to make his garden beautiful. If possible, the gardener should express some meaning, or some particular beauty, according to what has been ordered. If someone wants him to build a calm garden, he must make the garden accordingly. If he wants a solemn or austere feeling, he makes the garden austere. He has to choose the material and make it more austere by contrast, or by



association, or by harmony.

There should be some rules. The way to create harmony is have a rule. We have many colors, and two colors may clash, or may be in harmony, or may be in contrast. If you arrange the six colors in order, starting from red, and going to orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet, that is the color order. But if you use red and yellow together, that is harmony. And if you use red and green, that is contrast. By using those rules, you will accomplish your purpose, and you will have a beautiful garden.

So just living however you like is not the way to live. If you want to live, you should follow some rules. If there is a sharp, straight, narrow stone, it expresses some mystical feeling. If the stone is this way [presumably making a shape with his hands], it expresses calmness or peacefulness. And these two shapes are in contrast. But a round stone will be harmonious with every stone. It goes perfectly with any kind of form. A stone which has a wide base expresses a stable feeling. This stone is in contrast with a massive stone, and a long, upright stone and a massive stone are in order. You cannot make a beautiful garden if you just arrange the stones in order. So you should also use some stones which are in contrast with the other stones you're using. There must be some rules.

So, if you want to live, in the true sense of the word, in relationship with others, and in relationship with the "you" which has been living in the past, and which will live tomorrow, there must be some rules. Although it looks like there are no rules, actually there are strict rules. To live day by day, in the true sense, means to live by some perfect rules. This point is also emphasized in Zen. Zen is not just personal practice, and our enlightenment is not just personal attainment. When we attain enlightenment, everything should be enlightened. That is the rule of enlightenment. When we find our position in this moment, we say we attain enlightenment. And when we live with other beings, we say we attain enlightenment.

So if you think enlightenment is just a personal experience, this idea of enlightenment is like collecting only square stones or only round stones. If someone likes beautiful stones, in which you can see something blue and something white, if that is his enlightenment, he will keep collecting the same stones. But with so many of the same stones, you cannot build an interesting garden. You should use various stones. Enlightenment is the same. If you attach to some particular enlightenment, that is not true enlightenment. You should have various enlightenments. And you should experience various experiences, and you should put more emphasis on relationships between one person and another. In this way, we should practice back and forth, according to the position in which we find ourselves.

This is the outline of our practice and how you attain it. If enlightenment is just collecting, or just being proud of a kind of experience, that kind

of experience will not help you at all. And if that were enlightenment, there would have been no need for Buddha to strive hard to save people after he attained enlightenment. What is the purpose of wandering about the dusty road of illusion? If attaining enlightenment is the purpose of zazen, why did Bodhidharma come to China from India and sit for nine years on Shaolin Mountain? The point is to find our position moment after moment, and to live with people moment after moment according to the place. That is the purpose of our practice.

I wonder if I was able to express myself, and if you understood what I said. But I think we have some more time. Will you ask me questions?

Student A: Can you put too many stones in your garden?

Suzuki-roshi: We should forget them, one after another. At the same time, it may be better to give them away after we enjoy them.

Q: Could you please try to summarize, again, the idea of the true teaching?

Suzuki-roshi: Samurai?

Q: No, summarize.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, summarize. Zen?

Q: No, just the point you were making tonight. About the true teaching.

Suzuki-roshi: The true teaching is to accept "things as it is" and to raise it, or to let it grow, as it goes. I understand the purpose of our practice in this way. We do it by living on each moment in the right position, by giving things some nourishment, day by day, when they want it. And to understand what they want, you should be able to talk with them. That is Zen. Did you understand?

Q: Thank you, I think I understand now.

Suzuki-roshi: I should not talk too much. I should summarize. All right?

Q: Thank you.

Suzuki-roshi: And at the same time, I wanted to correct the misunderstanding of Zen. Just doing whatever you like is not Zen, and is not Buddhism. We call it jinen ken gedo.[2] Jinen ken gedo means the view of life of naturalism, such as Rousseau had.

Q: You said that after you plant the seed, then you have to wait for the seed to come up. Does the gardener do anything while the seed is coming up but before it sprouts?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, the gardener gives it some water and works it every day. He or she is very busy, day by day.

Q: Should the gardener build his garden the way he wants it, or the way other people would like it to be built?

Suzuki-roshi: Some gardeners should build according to what has been ordered. But he may build a garden just for himself.

Q: Why did you choose a garden as an example?

Suzuki-roshi: Because I like them; I understand them.

Q: What happens if you don't follow the rules of order?

Suzuki-roshi: Actually, it is not possible to not follow order or rules. But if you do not know how to follow the order, you will not be successful in your work--you cannot do anything, actually. It will be a waste of labor and time. The more you work on it, the more you will have intuition to help you follow the rules. Actually, it is not possible for us not to follow any rules. Even though you may look like you're not following any rules, in fact, you are following rules.

Q: You said that even though it doesn't look like it, we're always following rules whether we know it or not. Through practice, do we get to a point where we can pick which rules we are following more than we can now?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. That is practice, you know. So that is why we should practice our way back and forth. My practice should not be just giving lectures to you. I should sometimes listen to you. We have to change our position in our practice. That is very important.

Q: If a lot of insects come in and start eating up the garden, or if there's a hailstorm or a frost, what do you do then?

Suzuki-roshi: There it is necessary for you to follow some rules. And you should have some purpose. We say gan [pranidhana, vows to some particular end]. Gan means to have some purpose. For Buddhists, to save all sentient beings, even though it is not possible to save them all, is our final desire. Our effort should be pointed in that direction. So if the purpose of growing your garden is to help hungry people, you should protect the plants from hail and insects.

There should be some purpose, or else we cannot live. To live means to have some purpose. And that purpose sometimes is not complete, or not wide enough. Everyone works for someone. Even a thief will be kind to his wife, or at least to himself. But he is not kind enough to his neighbors. That is why he steals things from them. So we should have some ultimate desire for which we strive.

We say, "Even though the truth is incomprehensible, we have to study it completely." That is not possible, you know. One after another, we'll find some new theories, or new truths, even in science or physics. So it is not possible to reach the final, ultimate truth. Even so, we continue our effort. Even though being friendly with each other will not be possible, we should strive to be friendly with each other. Even though our evil desires are limit less, even though, one after another, we have evil desires, we should strive for realization from them.

Those are a Buddhist's ultimate desires. Before you practice our way, knowing this truth, knowing reality, whatever you see looks absurd. But once you start something with those four noble desires, you will understand that everyth ing is practicing our way. Even insects, and animals, and gophers are one, are striving to attain our way.

-----

[Transcribed by Brian Fikes and Katherine Thanas, edited by Brian Fikes.]

Formatted 8/28/00. Revised slightly 11/14/00.

[1] Suzuki-roshi also tells this story in SR-69-09-00.B.

[2] jinen = spontaneity; ken = darsana, drsti, view; gedo = non-Buddhist religion or philosophy.

## **1967 december (10)**

### **1 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture**

Friday, December 01, 1967

Afternoon Sesshin Lecture  
Zen Mountain Center

In this sesshin, as I said this morning, our practice will be concentrated on putting power in your hara[1]or tanden.[2] This is not just a technique of practice, but the underlying idea is very deep. Our practice-zazen practice should not be compared with any other practice or training. It does not mean, even [if] I say so, Zen is something special or Zen is superior to any other teaching. But there is a reason why we should not compare our practice to other-many kinds of practice.

As Dogen-zenji said, in his Fukan Zazen-gi-Recommending Zen Practice to Every One of Us-Fukan Zazen-gi-he recommends this practice [to] every one of us. And he said, first of all, whatever you do, that is zazen. There is not something-some special training or some special way of practice.

Whatever you do, it is Zen, actually. At least when you are doing, that is Zen. But your understanding of your everyday activity is not right because of misunderstanding your practice or misunderstanding or discrimination of the practice or attachment to your activity. Your activity is not Zen any more to you [laughs]-only to you [laughs]. But actually it is Zen. Whatever you do, that is Zen.

But for you, only for you who do something for others or for yourself, is not Zen because of your-because you spoil your practice with your attachment, with your dualistic idea, with your discrimination, by comparing your practice to some other practice which you do or which someone else will do.

But when you practice, when you do something, at least at that time that is Zen practice. So actually, as he [Dogen] said, there is no particular enlightenment you will attain by means of some practice, because whatever you do, that is zazen. If so, you know, the mean[s] to attain enlightenment is also true practice.

So we should know why we spoil our practice, and we should know how we-how we are able to practice our way without spoiling it. So, as he says, verbal interpretation of zazen or any kind of teaching-written teaching by means of those literature or talk or instruction-only by means of those instructions you cannot attain enlightenment. Only way is to practice your way without spoiling it.

You may think my talk-if I talk in this way, there is no connection between the instruction I gave you this morning, but actually how we-you practice this kind of practice is quite simple: to put your strength or power in your tummy, because actually if you have enough strength in your tanden, you will have big broad mind in which you can accept things. Whatever it is, you can accept things. And your mind is so broad and so big-great that nothing can increase it, or nothing can disturb it.

If it is, you know, small-if it is the water in the cup [?], you can disturb it. But if it is ocean you cannot disturb it, even though you throw stone in it. It doesn't make any sound. When you see the-even the Pacific Ocean above the sky on the airplane, it is just, you know, calm water. You cannot do anything with it. This kind of mind you will have if you put strength in your tummy. That [laughs] is why I advise you to, you know, put strength in your tummy or tanden.

When you have some pain in your legs, you will wonder what will happen to you if you sit more-ten minutes more, or twenty minutes more. You will wonder what will happen to you. Nothing will happen [laughs]. Because you limit your mind, you know, the pain will do something with your practice. But if you have big, great power in your tummy, nothing can do with it [laughs]. And nothing will happen to you.

Some people who sit for the first time in the calm place, I think you will- he will be afraid of the calmness of the sitting [laughs]. Your mind is so calm and surrounding is so calm. The experience you have is quite unusual experience you have-you have had, so someone will become afraid of it. But nothing will happen.

Originally, even [though] we die in our practice [laughs], we are going [to] our original home [laughs]. After death, where you will go? You will return to your home from where you come out [laughing]. That's all. Nothing will happen to you. That's all right. Quite all right.

But why you become afraid of it is because you do not possess the big mind. Even though you become afraid of it, nothing will happen to you [laughing]. You will become afraid of it just for [?]- You know, everything will laugh at you [it?]. "Why you are afraid of it? Why you- why you think you have gone? You are there, right here." Everyone may say, you know, at-for a time [laughs]-they will say, "Oh, I am sorry. [Laughs.]" But that's all [?].

Nothing will happen. Even though-even if you are a great hero, after you pass away, nothing will happen. You may think, "After my death, what will happen to this world?" [Laughing.] But nothing will happen to this world. The sun rise from the east and set in east-west. Nothing will happen. Even though, you know, our earth is gone by atomic bomb, nothing will happen [laughs]. Nothing whatsoever happen to this cosmic scale.

If I say so, my talk is nothing to do with our practice, or with our life, you may say. But it is not so. Because you do not possess this kind of big mind, whatever you do, the activity do not make any sense. If you want to do something-something pure and great, you should fix your mind-unperturbable mind which does not move back and forth, or right or left, or successful or unsuccessful. Only with this conviction you can do something in its true sense.

So we say we practice our way not for ourselves or not for others. Our [we] practice our way for sake of the way. There is no other reason why we practice our way. We just want to go back to our home like a dragon will resume in its activity in water, like a tiger who came back and lie down in his own den.[3] With this idea we practice our way. And as we do something, we do it just for sake of the activity, without any gaining idea, or without limiting the meaning of the activity. This is why we practice zazen. To think about what is zazen is already blasphemous. If you j- [partial word]-the only way is just to sit. So if it is so, there is no other way to understand what is zazen than just to sit.

When you read something, you read something. But that is-that kind of activity which you do with some plan or idea cannot be compared with the true practice of zazen. The true meaning or reason why you practice was lost because, you know, zazen practice give you various advantage

or power to you. If you practice our way, you will become more and more-you will-your mind will become calm, and you will become healthy. So for that reason, they practiced-many people are practicing zazen. But that is not [laughs], you know, true zazen. The form they take is zazen, but the way they practice or reason why they practice is not right. But if you know this point, you can practice our way with various idea too. But this point should not be forgotten, because it means you started to wandering about, you know-going round and round [laughs], seeking for something. Because you do not know the meaning of everyday activity, so you start to seeking for something better. And you are going round and round, same place, seeking for something special.

Here is the translation of Fukuan Zazen-gi.[4] Dogen-zenji worked on [it] for twenty years after-right after he came back from China. He wrote this Fukuan Zazen-gi: Recommending the Rules for Sitting.

The true way is universal, so why are training and enlightenment different? The supreme teaching is everywhere, so why study the means to get it? Even truth as a whole is clearly apart from the dust. Why adhere to the means of wiping away? The truth is not apart from here, so the means of training are useless.

But if there is even a slightest gap between, separation is as heaven and earth. (The separation is as far as heaven and earth, it means.) If the opposite arise-(dualistic idea arise)-if the opposites arise, you lose the buddha-mind. Even though you are proud of your understanding and have enough enlightenment, even though you gain some wisdom and supernatural power, and find the way, and illuminate your mind, even though you have power to touch heavens, even though you enter into the area of enlightenment, you have almost lost the living way to salvation-living way to enlightenment.

Look at the Buddha. Though born with great wisdom, he had to sit for six years. Look at Buddha-Bodhidharma, who transmitted the buddha-mind. We can still hear the echo of his nine-year wall-gazing. We can still hear the echo of his nine-years' wall-gazing sitting. (Wall-gazing means "sitting," so it may be easier to understand to say "sitting.") We can still hear echoes of his nine-years' wall-gazing sitting. The old sages were very diligent. There is no reason why modern man cannot understand.

You should quite-you should quit follow words and letters. You should withdraw and reflect on yourself. If you can cast off body and mind naturally the buddha-mind emerges. If you wish to gain quickly, you must start quickly.

This is the translation of the-his work who-he polished up, spending for it twenty years. And we can see his handwriting of this Fukuan Zazen-gi-the one who [he] wrote when he was twenty-eight. To-to us it looks like

almost same, but he changed, you know, many times. Although there were not-not much to change, but he was trying to improve it, and he polished it.[5]

And this kind of-and his intention to write this Fukan Zazen-gi was to transmit true way of practice for his descendant. So he had big responsibility for his descendant and for his former patriarchs. So he studied and studied, even after he attained enlightenment. That is why the echo of this-his work is heard by everyone.

So you should not think you are sitting in the bottom of the valley of Tassajara [laughs] for seven days. How do you feel, you know, for an instance, if you came out-if you are told to quit your sitting and climb up to the top of the mountain to see something from there? What kind of feeling do you have [laughs]? And this morning Ed [Brown] made a very delicious cake [laughs]. When you eat it, what kind of feeling did you have [laughs]?

Some people, you know, may be envious of bird or cats or dogs who enjoy the warm winter sunshine [laughing] near hot spring. But "return to the nature" in its true sense does not mean to be like animal or bird. If you climb up on the top of the mountain, or, you know, if you come from Jamesburg,[6] perhaps the place you like best will be when you see some of Tassajara Mountain. If it is April it is-they are covered with white snow.

If you want to go back to the nature, you should go back to the rocks on the top of the mountain [laughs]. That is much better than to be a bird, or cat, or even a lion. Be a rock. And sit forever, without being moved by rain, or snow, or storm. But weathered by rain and snow, rocks will tell us many stories. You may say that is just a rock. But buddha-nature, in its truest sense, reveal itself on weathered ancient rocks on the top of the mountain.

The reason why we wanted to practice zazen, putting strength in our tanden, is to realize what is true practice and what is not.

[Suzuki-roshi resumes Dogen-zenji's Fukan Zazen-gi:]

And even though you enter into the area of enlightenment, you have almost lost the living way to salvation.

Look at the Buddha. Though born with great wisdom, he had to sit for six years. Look at Bodhidharma, who transmitted the buddha-mind. We can still hear the echo of his nine-year wall-gazing practice. The old sages are very diligent. There is no reason why modern man cannot understand it.

You should quit following words and letters. You should withdraw and reflect on yourself. ("Withdraw" means to change the direction of the



effort-not outward but inward.) You should with-withdraw and reflect on yourself. If you can cast off body and mind naturally the buddha-mind emerges-emerges. If you wish to gain quickly, you must start quickly.

And he explains carefully how to sit.

In meditation, you should have a quiet room. You should eat and drink in moderation. You should forsake myriad relation-abstain relations-abstain from everything. Do not think of good and evil. Do not think of right and wrong. Stop the function of mind, of will, of consciousness. Keep from meaning, memory, perception, insight. Do not strive to become the Buddha. Do not cling to sit or lying down.

In the sitting place, spread a thick square cushion, and on top of it put a round cushion. Some meditate in paryankam(sitting cross-leg), and others in half-paryankam(half-lotus).[7] You must prepare by wearing your robe and belt loosely-wearing-by wearing your robe and belt loosely.

Then rest your right hand on your left foot, your left hand in your right palm. Press your thumb together. Sit upright. Do not lean to the left or right, forward or backward. Place your ears in the same plane as your shoulders, your nose in line with your navel. Keep your tongue against the plate and close your lip and teeth firmly. Keep your eyes open. Inhale quietly.

Settle your body comfortably. Exhale sharply-exhale sharp-sharp-exhale-(mmm[8]-not "sharply," but-I don't know what to say). Exhale sharply. Move your body to the left and right. Then sit cross-legged, steady.

"Think the unthinkable."

"How do you think the unthinkable?"

"Think beyond thinking and unthinking."[9]

This is the important phase of cross-legs sitting.

"Think the unthinkable." Think unthinkable, you know-think unthinkable means think, you know-think not about something, you know. Usually when you think, you think about something. But thinking mind-if your thinking mind [is] directed [in the] opposite way, that is to think unthinkable. Your mind is still clear, but there is no object. The sun is not, you know, shining. Only the earth, you know. The earth-if the earth is happen to be here, the sun will [laughs] shine on-on our earth. Think unthinkable, you know, is-you mind is-must be like the sun. It is shining, but it is not shining [on] some particular thing. It is more than think about it [?]-something. In this way, your mind-your function of mind picked in your practice.

So he says: "Think unthinkable." "How do you think the unthinkable?" "How do you think the unthinkable?" This is very interesting word. "How do you think the unthinkable?" The sun is not shining [on] some particular thing. So the sun is just the sun. It is not trying to shine [on] anything. It is right there, just there. But [if] someone happen to appear near the sun, it will shine [on] some object [laughs]. That is, you know, how the sun shines [on] everything.

So how-how do you think the unthinkable? [Laughs.] There is no way how-how-is no way, because we don't know how [laughs]. You know, how. So there you can put anything, you know. How. "This way is how." "That way is how." "The all the way is how." "This is how." "This is how." [Laughs.] It is like a "what." Cat is what? Dog is what? What is there?"-you-you ask people. But what, you know? What may be a mouse, a cat, a dog. So how or what means-what it means is very deep.

"How do you think the unthinkable?"

This is not just, you know, question. It is [laughs] a strong statement. How do you think the unthinkable? This is not an interrogative. It is strong affirmative sentence. How do you think the unthinkable? Unthinkable thinking is how.

In what way you think? That is how. That is the unthinkable. But you have no notion of thinking about anything. That is our practice: How do you think the unthinkable? Think beyond thinking and unthinking. Think beyond thinking and unthinking. Your thinking should be beyond "I think" or "I don't think." It must be right there always.

This is the important phase of cross-leg sitting.

We sit in this way. This is how different it is-our practice. That is why we should practice zazen, and you should not neglect our zazen because you think something else is more important. Why something is important for you is because of this practice. So if you forget all about the practice, you lose your life. Whatever you do, it doesn't work. If you insist it works, you lose yourself. You are no more. You vanish [laughs] from this world.

If the earth say, "I don't want the sun," [laughs] what will happen to it? There is no other way to vanish from the cosmic world. Because- because of this unthinkable thinking, we exist. We can think. We can live. Without this unthinkable, we cannot think. It change into delusion. If you insist on it, you-it means you are involved in dark, big, delusion.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript originally recorded by Brian Fikes. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. The segment beginning with the latter part of Fukan Zazen-gi (p. 5 onward) to the end of the lecture was transferred from SR-67-12-02, where it had been incorrectly entered. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (3/28/01).

[1] hara: region of the body below the navel, regarded as the physical core or center of one's being. It is equivalent to tanden.

[2] tanden: abdomen or hara.

[3] An allusion to a line from Fukan Zazen-gi: "To grasp this meaning is to be like a dragon that has found water, or like a tiger in its mountain stronghold."

[4] This translation of Fukan Zazen-gi is based on Reiho Masunaga's (The Soto Approach to Zen, 1958, pp. 101-102). Suzuki-roshi modified certain phrases as he read it aloud. Comments in parentheses are by Suzuki-roshi.

[5] At least two versions of Fukan Zazen-gi are known: (1) the original edition written by Dogen-zenji's own hand in 1227, shortly after returning from China, and (2) the revised popular edition completed years later. Suzuki-roshi was translating the revised popular edition.

[6] The small town nearest to Tassajara.

[7] From paryankam(Sanskrit): seat.

[8] Suzuki-roshi was not satisfied with "sharply." "Completely" was used in another translation (Nishijima and Cross, "Fukan Zazengi," in Shobogenzo, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 281).

[9] These three sentences are in quotation marks here because Dogen-zenji is quoting from an exchange between Yakusan Igen and an unnamed monk (in, e.g., Shobogenzo "Zazenshin").

## **2 - Evening Sesshin Lecture**

Friday, December 01, 1967

Evening Sesshin Lecture  
Zen Mountain Center

This afternoon, in my lecture[1] I told you why we should practice zazen and what is our practice. After all, our practice is quite different from other activity we have in everyday life. Of course, according to some

schedule, we practice zazen at certain time every day. So you may think now it is time to have to have meal, and it is time to recite sutra, and it is time to sit. So you think there is not much difference between zazen practice and other activities we have.

Actually if you understand the true meaning of zazen, there is no difference. Whatever you do, that is zazen practice. As long as we have innate buddha-nature, what we do is expression of our true nature. And if it is so, whatever we do that is practice-true practice.

But usually, because we do something with some aim and we want to do something [in a] more perfect way, sometime you do not-you are not satisfied with what you do, and sometime you will be pleased with what you did. When this kind of discrimination happens, that activity is not anymore true activity-at least your understanding of the activity you have done is not true activity itself. It is already a dead idea within your mind. And actual limitless activity is no more. So if you think zazen practice will be the same as our usual practice, there there is big misunderstanding.

Zazen practice is fundamental practice which you should always-you should not always lose. We say, "Because of our practice the mountain is high. Because of our practice, the sea is deep. Because of practice, bird flies. Because of practice, fish swims." It is actually so, but fish do not know where he is. We do not know where we are. We are in the air, but we do not aware of where we are because we do not feel anything in the air. So you do not feel anything. But without air, we cannot live.

Whatever you do, that is actually our true practice. But you are pleased with the limited pleasure of the practice, and you do not know the boundless meaning of our everyday life. And we always complain with what you have to do, or with what you have done, or what you should do. So you are always forced [into] something in your every day life. You feel as if you are living in some certain framework. If you come to Tassajara, you should observe our way. But when you are-you do not realize the true meaning of your life, a rule is just a kind of framework in which you are put.

But-so you think zazen is the same-a kind of rules you have to do. But if you realize what is our true practice, you will have no more this kind of mixed-up idea. In its true sense, zazen should not be practiced because zazen gives you some advantage in your life, or zazen should not be dismissed because of its hardship of practice. Why we practice zazen is just because we always spoil our life and spoil our practice-true practice in our everyday life. So our effort is directed to the-to the opposite way. We do not practice our way to attain something, but we practice zazen to be free from a dualistic gaining idea.

So far is what I said this morning in my lecture, and I recited Fukun Zazen-gi. And it is too dark, or even [if] I have glasses I cannot read

this print. So I will not read it, but usually in evening zazen, we recite this Fukuan Zazen-gi every night. If you read it over and over, you will realize the true meaning of it.

And in last sesshin, do you remember, I talked about Zuigan's[2] calling his-name of his own master-his master, or-and I interpreted [that] Zuigan is calling his own name because it is the same.[3] This shift of understanding is possible because our everyday life-there is no difference between our everyday life and our true practice. When we [are] satisfied with our practice, with our everyday life, if we have always gratitude of carrying on our life, that is true practice. To have gratitude or to enjoy our life does not mean to have some special feeling in our life, or special enjoyment, or special gratitude. By "gratitude" or "enjoyment," we mean something deeper than that: gratitude before we have gratitude, enjoyment before we enjoy it.

Usually when-when you say, "I enjoyed very much," you say after you enjoyed it [laughs]. So it is too late to say that [laughs]. When you are actually, you know, enjoying it, you have no words. You have no feeling whatsoever. You don't know what you are [laughs] doing. Later, you may say, it was very good [laughs]. "This sesshin was very good" [laughs]. But when you are, you know, practicing [laughs] it-what you will say [laughs], you know? You didn't enjoy it all the time [laughs]. But later you say, "It was very good." [Laughs.] So someone may think it was not so good [laughs]. Which is good? Which is right? Maybe both is right, or both is wrong [laughs].

So if you want to know what is zazen, you must practice it. Even though you ask someone what is zazen, he will not give you right idea of right practice. Even though he say something about it-if he could say something about it, you wouldn't be able to understand it by words. To have direct experience of it is the only way to know what is zazen.

So to participate with practice, or with the great activity is the only way to be familiar with it. So in this sense, whatever you do, if you do not mixed up understanding in this area, that is true understanding. So in this sense-before, I say zazen is quite different practice from other activities. But now I can say zazen is not different from the other activities we have. Only because your understanding is mixed up, I should say zazen is quite different practice from other practice.

But for many hundreds of years before Dogen-zenji, this point was not so clear. In Buddhism or in Zen, there were many schools-five or seven. And each school, including Soto, [was] supposed to be the best, you know, school of all the schools of Zen. They say, you know, "Best school." But to say "best school" is to put limitation [laughs] to their own way [laughs]. If it is really best school, there is no need to say so. So in this sense, each school will be the best one for him. So it is silly to say, "This is best school," or "This tradition or lineage is the right one." This kind of silly understanding sneaked into our zazen practice. And

when we realize what is zazen, what we have been practice-we had been practice was not right-was not zazen anymore. We call it "fox zazen."

Do you know-in Japan, fox is something [laughing] to disguise or to change into or to fool people in disguise of a woman, you know. He will appear in beautiful dress with white-with white face and skin. For Japanese, white means something beautiful: white skin, white face. So that is why we use a powder on our face. And fox, you know, change into a beautiful lady, and he may-he fools us. And then become a fox that, you know-he thinks this is zazen, but the way he appears is not zazen anymore. A fox try too much. Fox change into something else. If you try too much, you know-if you try to understand what is zazen too much, your zazen will change into something else. So, you know-if-when you just practice it, that is true zazen.

In this way, if you observe your way-whatever it is, zazen practice, eating meals, or taking bath-whatever you do, that is true practice. Although it may be difficult to understand if I say, you do not take your bath because you are dirty. You do not wash your face because your face is dirty. We say, what it means is your practice of-your everyday activity should not be involved in too-too much in some restrictive idea. You should obtain freedom in your way. And you should realize limitless meaning of our activity. You should not be-you should not over-value-or what do you say?-or you should not evaluate too much or too less.

So to do something with-with right feeling is the purpose of practice. You will see someone who do things in quite appropriate way with, you know, with very harmonious feeling. Even though he is, you know, practicing something very rigidly, if someone else imitate his practice, it be-it will be extremely rigid way. But for him it is quite natural. I know some Zen master who had this kind of feeling. When we-when I would go with him to the bath, you know, he sit-he never sit [in] the middle of the bath-bathtub. He just sit in some corner-not corner, but some appropriate place. And after taking bath, he may arrange everything which other students misplaced, you know-the wooden-this is-I cannot pronounce this [laughs] word-wooden bar?

You know, wooden-

Student: Brush? Okay.

Suzuki-roshi: Okay [laughs]. Okay. He put-you know, arrange everything quite naturally, you know. So he do it so naturally that no one notice it, and it doesn't-he doesn't bother anyone. And way he talk, way he eat-this is very harmonious with other people, and yet very-very beautiful anyway. This kind of, you know, activity is, I think, well-trained Zen monk's activity. It may take pretty long time before one can act in that way.

So he himself does not know what he is doing. If he is aware of his practice, you know, naturally, we will be bothered by his being with us [laughs]. "Oh!" Here he came, and, you know, you may not like him at all. It is not just because of training, but because of his liberation from the idea of good or bad. I cannot express. This is so subtle activity that- and I cannot behave like that, you know. If I work, you know, I stay work so long [laughs], and I shall not be in time for service [laughs] [1-2 words] sometime. This is very bad. When we, you know, stop working, we should stop working. We should not be too enthusiastic, you know. Because I am caught by some-something in your work, I lose the complete freedom from the work. Without much zeal in your practice, to practice it quite naturally in appropriate way, without trying being- without trying to be appropriate, is the way it should be.

But if you do not know the point of the practice, even though you have good Zen master, you cannot study Zen because you cannot appreciate the true activity. If you know why you should practice zazen and what is zazen, you will find out the way we should be: how to achieve something without not much effort. So we say, "To go eastward one mile is to go to westward one mile." Even though you make great effort, you cannot go back to one mile. You cannot step forward-you cannot go forward one mile-always equal. The power to pull is the power to push. There is no power just to pull or just to push. So that you can go one mile means that you can go one mile backward. So in your everyday life, if you want to go one mile, you should practice zazen and go back to one mile. So without practicing zazen [laughs], just to make your effort means nothing. You think you did something, but actually you didn't [do] anything. It is nothing to do with the rest of the people. "He himself thinks I did, but [laughs] actually it is not so."

So we should make hidden effort-secret effort. Not secret, but effort which is not-which cannot be found by anyone. This kind of effort is true zazen.

I think you-I hope you [laughs] have understood what I said. But if you don't, you should think more.

---

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/31/01).

[1] SR-67-12-01-A.

[2] Juiyen Shihyen (Jap. Zuigan Shigen): n.d. Ninth-century Chan master who appears in Case 12 of the Mumonkon (Gateless Gate) koan collection, "Zuigan Calls His Master."

[3] Mumonkon, Case 12: "Zuigan Gen Osho called to himself every day, 'Master!' and answered, 'Yes, sir!' Then he would say, 'Be wide awake!' and answer, 'Yes, sir!' 'Henceforward, never be deceived by others!' 'No, I won't!'" (K. Sekida, Two Zen Classics, p. 53). (See also SR-67-12-02.)

### **3 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture**

Saturday, December 02, 1967

Afternoon Sesshin Lecture  
Tassajara

Our inner power of practice will appear according to the situation and accor- [partial word]-will respond to the situation you have like a bell. If you hit strong, the sound will be strong. If you hit it soft, the sound will be soft. But our true nature or-or true power does not make sound, but actually whatever you do, the power is there-should be there. In this way, we should understand our Zen practice power.

It is not something to acquire, or it is-but it is something to appreciate. When you sit so-just to sit [is] to be ready to [for] various activity or stimulation from-which will come from outside. But if your mind is caught by something you will lose your true mind. So without being caught by anything-just to sit without thinking-even thinking is our true practice.

In last lecture, I told you [about] this power from the opposite side. Zuigan called the names of his both: [1] "This is," you know. But if you call by your own name, that is opposite side. The power itself is-is not something you can catch or you can understand. If something happens, you will find out the power is there. But when you sit in this way, you have no idea of power. You are just sitting, that's all. But if you do something, the power is there. So in various activity, the power is there. So to call his [him?] both is to call his name as a power-a hidden power. And to call his own name means to realize his power when you do something. But actually this is two side of the one coin.

Here we understand how to apply our practice in our everyday life, how to understand your everyday life, and how to understand your true practice. So true practice is-should be everyday life. And everyday life should be the true practice. And when you practice true practice of-every-your everyday life should be there. This is how we understand our everyday life and how we understand our pure practice.

Last training period, when Bishop Sumi[2] came, he gave us-not koan but story: the question and answer between Baso and Hyakujo.[3] As you know, Baso, the Horsemaster [laughs]-Horsemaster, you know, he- we are told that when he speaks, his tongue reach through his nose [laughs], with big mouth and big-a man of big physique. So that is why we call him Horsemaster [laughs]: Baso, [who was] Nanagaku's[4]



disciple and the Sixth Patriarch's grandson. Hyakujo is the famous Zen master who set up all the monastic life, you know-monastic rules.[5] He is the first one who set up precepts-our Mahayana precepts in its true sense. Before Hyakujo, almost all the Zen masters lived in precepts temples and observed Chin- [partial word]-Indian precepts. But it is not appropriate to observe Chinese people-Chinese village [?] who live in China where the climate is different and way of life different from India. But even though teaching changed, you know, into Mahayana, but precepts did not-they didn't change precepts, which he-they should-they should do-they should change. But Hyakujo did it and organized a monastic life. Since then we observe our precepts. Of course after Hyakujo, we changed many times-we changed our precepts many times. Precepts is the way of life.

Hyakujo-between-question and answer between Hyakujo and Horsemaster:

Horsemaster and Hyakujo were making trip. Suddenly wild geese flew over, and Baso asked Hyakujo, "What is it? [Laughs.] What is it?"

Baso-no, Hyakujo said, "That is wild geese."

And Baso said, "Where are they going?"

"They flew away," Hyakujo said.

But Baso [was] irritated, you know, with his answer and twitched his nose [laughs, laughter].

And Hyakujo cried [out?], you know. [Laughs.]

That is the story [laughs, laughter].

Here is, you know, something which we should understand. At first what did he say-what did Horsemaster say? "What is it? What is it?" This is very tricky question. "What is it?" [Laughs.] It may be, you know, wild geese. And, at the same time, it is not just wild geese. When we see something, our power of practice should follow, or buddha-nature should follow. So [laughs] wild geese is not just wild geese. For the Zen student, wild geese is not wild geese. Hyakujo is not just Hyakujo, and Baso Horsemaster too. He is also, you know, buddha-nature itself.

So,"What is it?"

That "what" can be everything. "What is it?" It is not just wild geese. Everything can be wild geese. I don't know whether Hyakujo knew it when he said, "That is wild geese."

And Baso said: "Where are they going?"

[Laughs.] Where are they going? Where are they going? They are going somewhere, you know. Even though they are going somewhere, they are there. They cannot escape from the buddha-nature, from our power of practice. Wherever they go, they are right here, with us. [Laughs.]

Hyakujo said: "They fled-flew away!"

[Laughs.] This is rather-may be careless answer, maybe [laughs, laughter]. "Flew away." So he hit right here [demonstrates, laughs]-hit on that person-twitched his nose. Did it flew away? [Laughs, laughter.] Here there are many wild geese on your nose [laughs, laughter].

You know, if he is practicing always, if there is no gap, you know, in his practice, they-he wouldn't say, "They flew away." [Laughs.] But will you say it if you are, you know, Hyakujo? Even though you say, "They flew away," that's right answer, you know. "Flew a- [partial word]-flew away," actually it-they are not here anymore.

But if you are prepared for his-for his teacher's twitching his nose, it was all right. [Laughs.] But in his practice there were some gap. So he cried [out]. But the way he cried-I don't know how he cried [laughs]. The way he crowd-cried is good-it is all right, even though he cried.

So this kind of koan is very interesting. If you study this koan from various angle, you will appreciate the endless-limitless meaning in it. Our way of life should be like this. And even between great Zen master and great disciple, the way we talk will not be different from a usual person. But the difference is whether they are ready for various circumstances and condition.

Even a great Zen master, when he cries-when he should cry, he may cry. When he should laugh, he will laugh. When everyone is hungry, he will be hungry too. But there is-there should be-there is some difference [between] their hunger and hunger of usual person. If your practice is right, you will be ready for various activity. So what will-will you will gain by-what-the power we will gain by our practice is not common power. It is some special power. By "special" I mean-because it is special-it is special because it can be everything.

Usually a special power is something different from usual power, which cannot be usual. We are always up to, you know, trying to get something usual-unusual. You know, even though-even though they say "this is unusual," for us Zen student it is not unusual. Only unusual thing is the thing which can be every-everything, like, you know, money or gold. You know [laughs], you can buy everything with that. Maybe like salt, you know: Whatever you eat, there is some amount of salt [laughs], you know. In this way our power is something like this, figuratively speaking. But gold or salt is not actually the power of me-me. Something you cannot understand what is it-what it is. Something which is beyond our understanding. Something which you cannot put it

in words. So we say: "teaching out of letters"-teaching which will be understood if we have ear to listen to it, eyes to see it. But if we do not have eyes to see it, we cannot see it. That is the teaching out of letters.

If you try to-it is like, as Dogen-zenji said in his poem, it is like a letters. It can be a letter-letters written on high rock-high rugged rock on the seashore. Even the-even in stone, no waves can reach. Even though you try to see it, you cannot see it because it is too high. The only way-but the high rock on the rugged seashore is always there, giving various teaching to us. This kind of teaching is true teaching. And this kind of-our practice should be like this. We should, through our practice, always expressing the truth. This kind of tru- [partial word]-practice is our practice.

This introduction to this talk[6]-to this subject between Baso and Hyakujo:

#### [INTERPRETATION OF THE INTRODUCTION]

Engo[7] introduced the subject and said: "What is called the substance of the universe-substance of the universe, or the great dao, is not something which exists outside of the universe. It is omnipresent and not contained in one part only. Its total activity is entirely independent.

"An enlightened Zen scholar is one who understand this mystery, and under all ordinary circumstances knows how to deal with it. Such a man may be called one who has the right of the-rights of a graduate. With regard to his words and verse, if he omits all self-regarding ideas, he will attain to the mystery-mysterious power of controlling life and death-the power to bring enlightenment by the positive word-using positive (word-using) or negative (silent) method of instruction. Well now! In what way did he reach-the ancients attain to this ultimate serenity? Here is something for you to ponder."

Here, it-he says-translator's translation-"mysterious." Mysterious does not mean, you know, something [laughing]-something mysterious. Mysterious means, you know, it is mysterious-beyond word, it means, you know. You can-you know it, you know-you can understand it, but you cannot say-you cannot put it in word because word is just-it is not possible to say various understanding-various understanding from all angles. If you say, you know, from one-one side, you cannot say, at the same time, from the other side. So that is why we say "mysterious." So even enlightened master cannot say anything properly.

Wild geese is wild geese. If it is flew away, it is flew away. [Laughs.] You cannot say, "It is there," and "It flew away" [laughs]. Not make any sense, you know. Then, you know, master will ask you which is-which do you mean? Is it here or there? [Laughs, laughter.] You-you have no answer. No answer is right. [Laughs, laughter.] So it is impossible to say, you know, to put it-the reality into word. So that is why we say

"mysterious." But mysterious-it is not mysterious. It is too, you know, obvious. That we cannot say, you know. Word is not-word is mysterious [laughs, laughter] for us, you know.

It is mysterious that we cannot say anything [laughs]. Having, you know, big words, even a Zen master-even Baso, whose tongue reached to nose, cannot say anything [laughing, ongoing laughter]. If he say something, you should pull his tongue. You shouldn't fool us by your long tongue. Give me it! That is right, you know.

So if Hyakujo pull out his tongue, Horsemaster will be-would have been very pleased. Not "mysterious," you know. Too obvious. Too clear. So we sometime call it "reality," you know-"reality." It is too obvious.[8] So Zen is not mysterious at all. [Laughs, laughter.]

## THE APPRECIATORY WORDS

This[9] is also interesting. [Laughs, laughter.]

That wild-wild duck. Just what was it? Baso saw it and started a conversation. The object of his talk would have-would have been love of mountain, clouds, seas, the moon. And yet Hyakujo did not understand-understand. It is just-just flew away [laughs]. He himself wanted to fly away. Instead, he himself was silenced.

## [INTERPRETATION OF APPRECIATORY WORDS]

The wild duck! Just-just what was it-just what was it? Baso saw it and started conversation.

The old teachers in his practice-there was no cessation in their practice. They are always practicing their way. They are always ready to [engage in] various activity. That is how we should be concentrated on our activity.

The concentration-our concentration is not the usual concentration, you know. Concentration means usually to be-we say to be involved in something. But at the same time, we should have freedom. So this kind of concentration is more deeper and more natural, you know. If you-if you are trying to be concentrated on something, you know, your effort is directed to one way only. So it is difficult to change it, you know. If your concentration is quite natural, you know, you can change any time. And you will be ready to change your direction of effort.

So this kind of concentration cannot be studied by usual everyday practice-everyday activity. Just Zen can do it. Through Zen you can have this kind of training.

When you have some object, you know-some object-somehow your

effort is directed to that object. It means, you know, your effort is working on one way only. In that way, you cannot understand how to change the direction of effort. But in-just by practice of pure Zen, you can-you will practice how to shift-make shift in your effort.

In this sesshin, our practice is concentrated to put more power in your tummy, but that does not mean, you know, to-to put special power in it. It means to put-to put some power quite naturally without, you know, making-without trying too much to put strength in your tummy.

So this practice should be-should follow-or should be followed by various instruction of sitting: mudra, or breathing, or like keeping your back straight. And if you have some pain or some difficulty, it is good chance to, you know, to practice it because if your pain is this much, this much, you know, controlling power will appear. So, you know-but if you do not know this secret [laughs], you will be, you know, involved in just pain. But if you know the other side of the pain, you know, which is keeping balance in your practice, you will appreciate the feeling of the pain. Because pain is this much you have power of training this much [laughs]. If you have no pain, maybe it is rather difficult for beginner to appreciate the power of Zen.

So the ancient disciples and teachers were ready to study true way in our everyday life, but Hyakujo looks like he didn't understand this. He was not ready for question and answer with his teacher. But no one knows, you know, this is-he may be-he might have known it.

[Chant.]

---

---

Sources: City Center transcript and original tape. The last three paragraphs were transferred from SR-67-12-04, where they had been incorrectly entered. Blanche Hartman was kind enough to refer the transcriber to R.D.M. Shaw's version of The Blue Cliff Records, which is the version that Suzuki-roshi would have consulted. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (3/31/01).

[1] Juiyen Shihyen (Jap. Zuigan Shigen): n.d. Ninth-century Chan master who appears in Case 12 of the Mumonkon (Gateless Gate) koan collection, "Zuigan Calls His Master." That is, every day Zuigan both called to himself as well as answered himself.

[2] Sumi Togen: Head or bishop of the Soto Zen School in America, starting in 1965. Formerly an instructor of monks at Soji-ji monastery in Japan.

[3] Case 53 of The Blue Cliff Record, "Hyakujo and a Wild Duck." The

master in this koan was Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu): 709-788. His disciple was Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. See also SR-71-03-09.

[4] Nanyue Huairang (Nangaku Ejo): 677-744.

[5] Hyakujo wrote Hyakujo Shingi, a set of rules for Zen monastics.

[6] Suzuki-roshi is reading from Shaw's translation of Case 53 of BCR, modifying it slightly as he reads (R.D.M. Shaw, trans. and ed., *The Blue Cliff Records: The Hekigan Roku*. London: Michael Joseph, 1961, p. 177).

[7] Yuanwu Keqin (Jap. Engo Kokugon): 1063-1135. Provided commentaries, pointers, and notes for the koan collection *The Blue Cliff Record*, based upon Xuedou Zhongxian's (Setcho Juken's) compilation of cases and verses.

[8] The original transcript ended here, appending "(CONTINUED)."

[9] From Shaw, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

#### **4 - Evening Sesshin Lecture**

Monday, December 04, 1967

Evening Sesshin Lecture

Tassajara

Our study-the more you-we study our way, the more it is difficult to explain it. But Dogen-zenji thought there must be some way to make his descendent understand the true way. And he made a great effort to express this kind of subtle truth. In [Fukan] Zazen-gi-as in Zazen-gi, he says, "If there is slightest gap between the perfect enlightenment and practice, the difference will be heaven and earth." Because it should not be any gap between practice and enlightenment, or reality and seeming. We think whatever we see is-something we see is reality, but it is not so. And what we feel is reality, but it is not so. The reality and something which is observed by our six senses is one, you know. So what-what we see-just what we see is not true without background of the reality. I will stop [laughs] this kind of, you know, interpretation.

Dogen-zenji found out a very good Chinese word to express this kind of truth. In Chinese-Chinese word [is] inmo[1]-inmo-or I don't know-know this-how they pronounce it. But inmo-inmo has two meaning. One is positive meaning: "suchness," you know. The other is the interrogative meaning: "What is it?" [Laughs.] What-what is inmo? How is inmo? You know, what is it when geese [laughs] came? Horsemaster asked Hyakujo, "What is it?" That "what," you know, what is inmo. Inmo is interrogative, and it is affirmative too.

This is very convenient word to express the reality. Everything is one side-in one sense it is suchness. On the other hand, it is not-it is something in-it is something which we cannot grasp. For an instance, you know, here is beautiful flower, you know. You think here is beautiful flower, but that beautiful flower is always changing [laughs]. You cannot grasp it, even while you are watching the changes. So you think you see it, but actually you didn't see the flower itself which is changing.

So everything is in one side something which is-which cannot be grasped, so "What?" The-on the other hand, you know, even for a while it is there in that way. And so it is-everything is suchness, and everything is ingraspable-cannot be grasped. So it is "What?" So inmo-the word inmo has two meaning, and Dogen-zenji found out this is very convenient word to express the reality.

Hashimoto-roshi,[2] the authority of Shobogenzo who passed away two years ago, in his lecture he told me-he told us refer to the menu and dishes, you know. We you make, you know, a menu of the dishes, and we cook, you know, salad or eggs or meat-everything separately. That is, you know, suchness. Everything is arranged clearly, beautifully. But he says, "When you start to eat [laughs], everything will vanish in a moment." In ten minutes there is no more dish, no more food on the table, and everything is mixed up [laughs] in your tummy.

So this is, on one hand, very beautiful things. But on the other hand, if food-function of food is fulfilled when the-function of the food fulfilled, there is no more dishes [laughs]. So everything is-our practice is the same thing. You know, you-when you get up, you know, you brush your teeth and wash your face. That is practice. You do it one by one carefully. And when you practice zazen, you practice zazen. One by one.

But, you know, none of them cannot be perfect practice, even though to wash your face is very good habit [laughs]. But, you know, even though it is good, if you are always washing your face [laughs], you cannot attain enlightenment [laughs, laughter]. Same thing will-can be said with your zazen practice. Zazen is very good practice. But even though you just always practicing zazen, you know, it doesn't work [laughs].

Zazen practice is something express-or purpose of zazen practice [is] to catch something as it is in mixed-up state. When you-so that is why you don't think, you know. When you think it-it must be each, you know-it must be each salad or bean or meat or eggs, you can think about meat or, you know, salad, but if it is mixed up, you know, in your tummy [laughs], you cannot think about it. So if you wa- [partial word]-if you want to real- [partial word]-catch reality in its true sense, you cannot think about it. When your life energy is burning in perfect combustion, you cannot catch it. That is zazen. But even zazen cannot be always same. As something you eat in your tummy does not stay always in the same way, it will change into something else.

So even [if] you practice hard, your zazen sometime will be good, sometime will not be so good. It is-actually it is not always in the same-we cannot practice our way in the same way always. The purpose of zazen is not to think about it. To catch ourselves in its full function is zazen. If so, there is no need to think about it. If you think about it, you cannot-you will lose it. When you don't think and [are] involved in the practice fully, you have zazen.

Even it is so, we have to prepare everything one by one carefully. That is our everyday life. When you wash your face you should wash your face carefully. When you walk you should walk carefully. One by one you take care of your activity. But when you are taking care of your activity, you are involved in something which is-which cannot be grasped. You are not anymore you.

So each-in each activity there is two side: positive and negative. Something which can be, or suchness and-what should I say-mixed-up state or ingraspable or unintelligible. So, "What is it?" When Baso asked Hyakujo, "What is it?" Baso should understand what he meant. And, "Where has he gone-have they gone?" He should understand what he meant. He was talking about our practice, the relationship between everyday activity and our practice, and what is our practice, and what is our everyday life. And everyday life is zazen, and zazen is everyday life. In this way, back and forth, he should assert his practice-he should make his practice sure.

In the sky, sometime wild geese is flying. And after that some cloud will come. And after that the bright moon will come. But each of the wild geese and cloud and moon is not-are not always same. The bright moon is bright moon, and wild geese are wild geese, and cloud is cloud. But at the same time, the moon is not moon, cloud is not cloud, and wild geese are not wild geese. They exist in the same place in mixed-up stage-state. Even [though] it is mixed-up, you know, we should-our practice should be concentrated on each moment. When we see the moon, we should see the moon. When we see the cloud, we should see the cloud. And we should appreciate everything one by one.

If people, you know, mixed up everything-or if so-if everything is changing and if everything exist in mixed-up way, there will be no need to work hard, you know. If everything is mixed-up from the beg- [partial word]-every-always, what is the point of appreciating everything if everything is just phenomenon? Why do we appreciate such a tentative phenomenal world?

If you understand in that way, that is-we shall-that is like to serve food in mixed-up [laughs] way. Salad and rice, [laughs] brown rice and miso soup in one big pail [laughs], mixed-up in bucket or something. It will be served for you. How do you [laughing] feel to eat from bucket like a pig [laughter]? It doesn't make any sense, you know. Even though it will



be mixed-up in our tummy, we should serve one by one. Buying [?] each other [?]. That is our way, you know. But we do not keep it separately in our tummy.

But people, you know, some rigid people want to keep it one by one in their tummy, which is not possible. So that is why they suffer, you know. They don't feel so good. They cannot [be] satisfied with the way the food is served. Those people cannot be satisfied with human life, you know. Human being is so [laughs] indifferent. That is not right understanding of life.

Rikyu[3]-do you know Rikyu? Rikyu is-is supposed to be the founder of-founder of tea ceremony. He sweep-he would sweep the garden, and he appreciate the falling leaf-leaves on well-swept garden. If the purpose of sweeping the garden is to get rid of leaves, you know, why he can-he did appreciate-why he appreciated the leaves on the well-swept garden? Leaves on the, you know, well-cleaned garden and leaves on the-in the mountain is not same-are not same. The feeling is quite different. Some people may say it is useless, you know, to sweep garden every morning when so many leaves are cu- [partial word]-falling.

If you try to understand-if you understand the nature in its full sense, we are also a part of nature. We have something to do with nature, and we cannot satisfy without doing anything. We should participate [in] the nature. So even in Zen picture-Zen painting or drawing or what-picture maybe-sansui, we say. Sansui means "mountain and river." We paint one or two people-fisherman or woodcutter or farmer.

Nature-we are a part of nature. So the most natural way to observe nature for us is to do something-to participate [in] the great activity of nature. That is how we appreciate nature. And that is how we exist in this world. And that is how mountains and river exist. There is some rules in nature, and there is some rules in observing nature for human beings. And rules the nature has, and rules in observing things in human side is not different. We live in same time and same place. We live in same framework. So originally man and nature is not different. But when our civilization become so materialistic, and after violating nature, or after we tired out violating nature and material life, we are going to the other extreme, and just appreciate mountains and river, ignoring human life. That is one side of it-understanding or appreciation of nature.

We human being understand things from various angle-mainly from positive side and negative side. And when we observe things from both side-when we-when we are able to appreciate things from both side, one by one, there we have true way of life and true practice. We should not be involved in always just one-sided way of appreciating our life. Sometime positive, sometime negative. So in this sense we should practice our way in various way-observing ceremonies and not

observing ceremonies by just sit. This is our way should be.

---

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/30/01).

[1] See Lecture SR-69-00-B for another discussion of inmo. "Inmo" is also the title of a fascicle in Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[2] Hashimoto Eko-roshi (1890-1965): a scholar of Dogen's Shobogenzo and an authority on the origins of the traditional okesa. He was Dainin Katagiri-roshi's second master at Eihei-ji.

[3] Sen Soeki Rikyu (1522-1591) is credited with developing the Way of Tea. He served as tea master to the shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), who eventually ordered Rikyu to commit seppuku.

## **5 - Sesshin Lecture No. 5**

Monday, December 04, 1967

Sesshin Lecture No. 5

Saturday Afternoon, September 4, 1967

Tassajara

Our inner power of practice will appear according to the situation and accor- [partial word]-will respond to the situation you have like a bell. If you hit strong, the sound will be strong. If you hit it soft, the sound will be soft. But our true nature or-or true power does not make sound, but actually whatever you do, the power is there-should be there. In this way, we should understand our Zen practice power.

It is not something to acquire, or it is-but it is something to appreciate. When you sit so-just to sit [is] to be ready to [for] various activity or stimulation from-which will come from outside. But if your mind is caught by something you will lose your true mind. So without being caught by anything-just to sit without thinking-even thinking is our true practice.

In last lecture, I told you [about] this power from the opposite side. Zingan [?] called the names of his both: "This is," you know. But if you call by your own name, that is opposite side. The power itself is-is not something you can catch or you can understand. If something happens, you will find out the power is there. But when you sit in this way, you have no idea of power. You are just sitting, that's all. But if you do something, the power is there. So in various activity, the power is there.

So to call his [him?] both is to call his name as a power-a hidden power. And to call his own name means to realize his power when you do something. But actually this is two side of the one coin.

Here we understand how to apply our practice in our everyday life, how to understand your everyday life, and how to understand your true practice. So true practice is-should be everyday life. And everyday life should be the true practice. And when you practice true practice of-every-your everyday life should be there. This is how we understand our everyday life and how we understand our pure practice.

Last training period, when Bishop Sumi[1] came, he gave us-not koan but story: the question and answer between Baso and Hyakujo.[2] As you know, Baso, the Horsemaster [laughs]-Horsemaster, you know, he-we are told that when he speaks, his tongue reach through his nose [laughs], with big mouth and big-a man of big physique. So that is why we call him Horsemaster [laughs]: Baso, [who was] Nanagaku's[3] disciple and the Sixth Patriarch's grandson. Hyakujo is the famous Zen master who set up all the monastic life, you know-monastic rules.[4] He is the first one who set up precepts-our Mahayana precepts in its true sense. Before Hyakujo, almost all the Zen masters lived in precepts temples and observed Chin- [partial word]-Indian precepts. But it is not appropriate to observe Chinese people-Chinese village [?] who live in China where the climate is different and way of life different from India. But even though teaching changed, you know, into Mahayana, but precepts did not-they didn't change precepts, which he-they should-they should do-they should change. But Hyakujo did it and organized a monastic life. Since then we observe our precepts. Of course after Hyakujo, we changed many times-we changed our precepts many times. Precepts is the way of life.

Hyakujo-between-question and answer between Hyakujo and Horsemaster:

Horsemaster and Hyakujo were making trip. Suddenly wild geese flew over, and Baso asked Hyakujo, "What is it? [Laughs.] What is it?"

Baso-no, Hyakujo said, "That is wild geese."

And Baso said, "Where are they going?"

"They flew away," Hyakujo said.

But Baso [was] irritated, you know, with his answer and twitched his nose [laughs, laughter].

And Hyakujo cried [out?], you know. [Laughs.]

That is the story [laughs, laughter].

Here is, you know, something which we should understand. At first what did he say-what did Horsemaster say? "What is it? What is it?" This is very tricky question. "What is it?" [Laughs.]

It may be wild geese and at the same time it is not just wild geese. When we see something our power of practice should follow or Buddha nature should follow. So wild geese is not just wild geese. For the Zen student, wild geese is not wild geese. Hyakujo is not just Hyakujo. And Baso, Horsemaster too, he is also, you know, buddha-nature itself. So, "What is it?" That what can be everything. What is it? It is not just wild geese. Everything can be wild geese. I don't know whether Hyakujo knew it when he said that is wild geese. And Baso said, "Where are they going? [Laughs.] Where are they going?" Where are they going? They're going somewhere. Even though they are going somewhere, they are there. They cannot escape from the buddha-nature-the [1 word] of power of practice. Wherever they go they are right here with us. But Hyakujo says, "They flew away." [Laughs.] This is rather, maybe, careless answer, maybe [laughs, laughter]? "Flew away." So he-it right here. He [?] and this [?] [1 word]. Twitched his nose. Did [?] it flew away [laughs, laughter]. Here there are many wild geese on your nose [laughs, laughter]. You know, if he is practicing always-if there is no gap, you know, in his practice they-he wouldn't say they flew away [laughs]. What will you [laughs] say if you have to? Even though you say they flew away, that's right answer, you know-flew away-actually they are not here anymore. But if you are prepared for his-for his teacher's teaching knows it was alright [laughs]. But in his practice there were some gap. So he cried [?]. But the way he cried I don't know how he cried [laughs]. The way he cried is good. It is alright even though he cried.

So this kind of koan is very interesting. If you study this koan from various angle, you will appreciate the endless, limitless meaning in it. Our way of life should be like this. And even between great Zen master and great disciple, the way we talk will not be different from usual person. But the difference is whether they're ready for various circumstances and condition.

Even a great Zen master when he cries-when he should cry he may cry. When he should laugh, he will laugh. When everyone is hungry, he will be hungry too. But there is-there should be-there is some difference in their hunger and hunger of usual person. If your practice is right, you will be ready for various activity. So what will-we will gain by what-the power we will gain by our practice is not common power. It is some special power. By special I mean-because it is special-it is special because it can be everything.

Usually the special power is something different from usual power, which cannot be usual. We are always up to, you know, trying to get something usual-unusual. And even though-even though they say this is unusual, for us Zen students it is not unusual. Only unusual thing is the

thing which can be everything. Like, you know, money or gold. You can buy everything [laughs] with that. Maybe like syrup, whatever you eat there is some amount of syrup, you know. In this way our power is something like this figuratively speaking. But gold or syrup is not actually the power we use. Something you cannot understand what it is-what it is. Something which is beyond our understanding. Something which you cannot put it in words. So we say teaching out of letters. Teaching which will be understood if we have ear to listen to it, eyes to see it. But if we do not have eyes to see it, we cannot see it. That is the teaching out of letters.

If you try to-it is like as Dogen-zenji said in his poem, it is like letters. It can be a letter-letters written on high rock-high rugged [?] rock on the seashore. Even in storm, no waves can reach. Even though you try to see it, you cannot see it because it is too high. The only way-but the high rock on the rugged seashore is always there giving various teaching to us. This kind of teaching is true teaching. And this kind of-our practice should be like this. We should through our practice always expressing the truth. This kind of practice is our practice.

The introduction to this talk-to this subject between Baso and Hyakujo-

Enko introduced the subject and said, "What is called the substance of the universe-substance of the universe or the great Tao, is not something which exists outside of the universe. It is omnipresent and not contained in one part only. Its total activity is entirely independent.

An enlightened Zen scholar is one who understand this mystery and understand [end of tape side A] all ordinary circumstances-knows to deal with it. Such a man may be called one who has the light of the-lights of a graduate. With regard to his words and verse, if he meets all self-regarding ideas, he will attain to the mystery-mysterious power of controlling life and death. The power to bring enlightenment by the positive word using-positive word using or negative. Silent method of instruction [1 word] now. In what way did he-did the ancient attain to his ultimate [?] serenity? Here is something for you to ponder."

Here he says translators translation mysterious-mysterious does not mean, you know, something [laughs]-something mysterious [laughs]. Mysterious means, you know-it is mysterious, beyond words it means, you know. You can-you know it, you know-you can understand it but you cannot say-you cannot put it in word. Because word is just-it is not possible to say various understanding-various understanding from all around us [?]. If you say, you know, from one side, you cannot say at the same time from the other side. So that is why we say mysterious. So even enlightened master cannot say anything properly.

Wild geese is wild geese. If it is flew away, it flew away [laughs]. You cannot say it is there and it flew away [laughs]. Don't make any sense, you know. Then, you know, master will ask you which is-which do you

mean? Is it here or there [laughs]? You have no answer. No answer is right [laughs, laughter]. So it is impossible to say, you know, to put it the reality into word. So that is why we say mysterious. But mysterious- it is not mysterious, it is too, you know, obvious [?] that we cannot say, you know. Word is not-words is mysterious [laughs, laughter] for us, you know.

It is mysterious that we cannot say anything [laughs] having [?] in the big words [?] [laughs]. Even a Zen master, even Baso whose [?] tongue reach the nose cannot say anything [laughs]. If he say something, you should avoid [?] his tongue [laughs, laughter]. You shouldn't fool us by your long tongue [laughs, laughter]. That is right, you know [laughs].

So, if Hyakujo pull out his tongue [laughs, laughter], horse master will be [laughs]-would have been very pleased [laughs, laughter]. Not mysterious, you know [laughs]. Too obvious. Too clear. So we sometime call it reality, you know, reality it is too obvious. So Zen is not mysterious at all [laughter].

#### THE APPRECIATORY WORD

This is also interesting [laughter]. That wild [?]-wild [?] duck, just what was it? Baso saw it and started a conversation. The object of his talk would have-would have been love [?] of mountains, clouds, seas, the moon, and yet Hyakujo did not understand-understand it is just-just flew away [laughs]. He himself wanted to fly away. Instead, he himself was silenced.

The wild duck just-just what was it-just what was it? Baso saw it and started conversation.

The old teachers in his practice there was no cessation in their practice-they're always practicing their way. They're always ready to various activity. That is how we should be concentrated on our activity.

The concentration-our concentration is not usual concentration, you know. Concentration means usually to be-we say to be involved in something. But at the same time, we should have freedom. So this kind of concentration is more deeper and more natural, you know. If you-if you are trying to be concentrated on something, you know, your effort is directed to one way only. So it is difficult to change it, you know. If your concentration is quite natural, you know, you can change anytime. And you will be ready to change your direction of effort.

So this kind of concentration cannot be studied by usual, everyday practice-everyday activity. Just Zen can do it. Through Zen you can have this kind of training.

When you have some object, you know, some object-somehow your effort is directed to that object. It means, you know, your effort is

working on one way only. In that way you cannot understand how to change the direction of effort. But in-just by practice of pure Zen, you can-you will practice how to shift-make shift in your effort.

NEXT PART DIVERGES FROM SR-67-12-02. IT IS CORRECT. MOVE TO END OF -02:

In this sesshin, our practice is concentrated to put more power in your tummy, but that does not mean, you know, to-to put special power in it. It means to put-to put some power quite naturally without, you know, making-without trying too much to put strength in your tummy.

So this practice should be-should follow-or should be followed by various instruction of sitting: mudra, or breathing, or like keeping your back straight. And if you have some pain or some difficulty, it is good chance to, you know, to practice it because if your pain is this much, this much, you know, controlling power will appear. So, you know-but if you do not know this secret [laughs], you will be, you know, involved in just pain. But if you know the other side of the pain, you know, which is keeping balance in your practice, you will appreciate the feeling of the pain. Because pain is this much you have power of training this much [laughs]. If you have no pain, maybe it is rather difficult for beginner to appreciate the power of Zen.

So the ancient disciples and teachers were ready to study true way in our everyday life, but Hyakujo looks like he didn't understand this. He was not ready for question and answer with his teacher. But no one knows, you know, this is-he may be-he might have known it.

[Chant.]

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (02/23/01).

[1] Sumi Togen: Head or bishop of the Soto Zen School in America, starting in 1965. Formerly an instructor of monks at Soji-ji monastery in Japan.

[2] Case 53 of The Blue Cliff Record. The master in this koan was Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu): 709-788. His disciple was Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. See also SR-71-03-09.

[3] Nanyue Huairang (Nangaku Ejo): 677-744.

[4] Hyakujo wrote Hyakujo Shingi, a set of rules for Zen monastics.

## 6 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture

Tuesday, December 05, 1967

Afternoon Sesshin Lecture  
Tassajara

Lecture A

In previous lecture, I compared zazen practice and usual everyday activity. In usual activity, as you know, our effort is directed to outside, and our activity is concentrated on some particular things. This activity of particularize something create many things. But this kind of creativity is-at the same time creates some fear. This creativity will result some feeling-whether it is good or bad-a good and bad feeling we have-we will have.

Before-before you do-if before the concentration happens to you, your mind is just big and something-your mind is something which you don't know. You do not have any feeling about yourself. But once you have involved in something or you are concentrated on something, there your mind will crystallize, and you will have some clear idea of yourself-subjectively and objectively. That subjective crystallized self reflect-project itself to the objective world, and you have some clear objects within your mind. There you have various feeling about the object. But as that object is the projected of mind of yourself, that-that you do-if that feeling is good or object is good, you will naturally cling to it. That-when you cling to some object, it means you are clinging to yourself at the same time because that object is the projected self. And if it-that attachment will result you some fear, if it is good. Because you attach to it, you try not [to] lose it. But nothing is permanent. Everything is changing. So even though you cling to it, that object will change even though you know that you have fear of losing it.

In this way the more your mind is particularized or crystallized, you will have at the same time uneasiness. That is what will result by your effort in its ordinal [ordinary] sense, while zazen practice will not result this kind of fear or attachment. Our effort will be directed the opposite direction. So the more you practice our way, the more you-your mind resume your fundamental state-big, where there is no feeling and where you do not think anything; no discrimination, no attachment and no fear. This kind of-this is the difference between zazen practice-the effort in your zazen practice and the effort in your ordinal [ordinary] activity.

I said sometime-I remember I says something, you know, very extraordinary [extraordinary] [laughs], you know: Even though you die, nothing will happen [laughs]. Even [though] the earth is, you know, broken piece by piece, nothing will happen, I said. If you-if your-if you practice zazen, your mind will resume where nothing-before nothing happens. In our mind, there is no star, no earth, no sun-nothing whatsoever. But everything will come out from that nothingness where



there is nothing. So even though we pass away-we die, if we know that all of us came-arise from this nothingness, to die is to come back [laughs] to the source of life. So for everything to appear means the possibility of resuming original state from where we appear.

We live in the realm of time and space. Even though the earth disappear, space exist, time exist. As long as the space exist, time exist. Something will happen in time and space. So as long as time and space is here-is there, there is nothing to be afraid of, even though there is no form appears in this time and space. No one [laughs] can doubt that there is time and space. But according to Dogen-zenji, this kind of understanding is not deep enough, but tentatively we can acknowledge-we can['t] deny that the time and space is here.

So why do I-do we have fear of losing ourselves? Even though our form will disappear-disappear, as long as time and space exist, it is-it is all right. Nothing will happen. One after another something will appear. Actually some-that-which does not appear does not-which does not disappear does not exist [laughs]. Because we disappear we, you know, we are quite sure about our existence. If we do not disappear, we don't know what we are [laughs]. Maybe more than ghost [laughs]. If we, you know, exist forever, we should be afraid of ourselves [laughs]. You don't know where to go. But fortunately we disappears, we die. So as long as we die, it is obvious that we are-we exist in realm of time and space. So we are completely saved.

Even though you cannot deal with your fear, nothing happens to you, you know. Even though you go insane, that is all right [laughs, laughter]. Because we are normal, we have that kind of fear. That we have the possibility of going insane is [laughs]-should be lucky-we should be lucky, you know, to have possibility of going insane. But usually, you know, we are trying not to be insane [laughs]. That is opposite effort to our zazen effort. We rather [laughs] practice zazen to go to insane or enjoying [laughs] possibility of going insane [laughs, laughter]. It means, you know, we are alive-we are human being [laughs]. There is no possibility for dog and cats to be insane [laughs]. Because we are human being, we should dress up in some way. If we go insane, we will, you know, walk around without any dress, you know. If we do so you think-if we do so it may be terrible [laughs]. We don't want to do so [laughs]. That is, you know, human being. But for cats and dog there is no such fear.

Whatever happened to us, you know, after all-if we are-if we know what is our life completely and where we go completely, there is no fear whatsoever. But you-you will be-even-however, you will be very sorry for someone who lost his ordinal [ordinary] activity of their mind, because partly they are insane and partly they are not. They are still human being. And so he will make best effort to be human, but he cannot do that. Even though he want to be human, for him it is not possible because he lost his control. But even though you are in the

same condition, for you there is nothing to be afraid of. As old Zen master said, "If fire come, you should be burned. If the water come, you should be drowned." That is our way.

So whatever happens to you, as long as you know the bottom of the suffering, bottom of the fear, you are-you feel quite safe. When you do not know the bottom of it, there you have real fear. You don't know what to do with yourself. Even before you go-before you die, you don't know how to live in this moment when you think of it. But as long as you know what will happen to you after your death, there is nothing to be afraid of. Our practice is to resume our ordinal-original state of being which is universal. All the being in the world or in the cosmic scale in space-time and space.

Dogen-zenji said, "Think unthinkable." We think, but direction of our thinking is opposite. Instead of trying to attain something, we try to forget. Instead of keep thinking, we try to stop thinking. What you will acquire through this kind of-this practice will be tremendous, and every activity should be based on this kind of readiness of your mind.

So all the practice-Rinzai or Soto, or five schools of Zen, or seven schools of Zen, and many other practice should be based on this power. In old time-in ancient time, the people practiced or applied various way in our practice. Sometime they meditate on white skeleton; sometime they meditate on water; or sometime they practiced zazen to obtain detachment-thinking filthy bag containing [laughs], you know, lung and stomach and many nasty things within it.[1] Even the beautiful [laughs] person contains many things [laughs] in her.

So we are all a bag of filthy [laughing] things [laughter]. To forget, someone who cannot get married, they sit thinking about [laughter] things like-.[2] Actually they did it. There are many kinds of practice for us. You are just laughing at them, but if you are in the situation, you will do it. But in America, this kind of thing will never happen [laughter]. All those practice, when it based on this true way of zazen, it works. But as long as those practice is directed to one way only, it doesn't work.

Because this-the attainment by this way of practice is-something is missing, and that is only delusion for us. It is not real. So true understanding of zazen is necessary, whatever practice you apply, if you do not understand our way as it is-our way of life as it is.

Evolution of living being is going on in the course of specializing the original nature. You know, something like our human life started from some-a kind of amoeba, you know, in the muddy pond [laughs] in which something was lived, and they divide their body in two and four and eight. In that way our life started. The more and more our life specialized as a human being or animal or plant-the more our life is specialized, the more complicated our life activity become. So a human being has more complicated life. Human being has the more

complicated life. So to be divided or to be specialized means to evolve ourselves-evolution of life going in this way.

Nowadays we have very complicated life. But in this direction, as long as we are making effort to reach the moon or the Venus, if that is only way we know, there is no hope for us to be-to attain liberation. The other day-the last year, or the-no-the year before last year, I went to Yosemite and saw a waterfall.[3] I was watching it. It was one sheet of, you know, white pearls hanging on the rock. But a part of it, you know, separated from-by the rock. Part of the water separated from the rock and falling down. When I saw it, I felt very sorry for the [laughs] separated water, you know. It is-it was almost going to be mist, you know, but still water. If it become completely mist, there will be no problem [laughs] for it. But they are not mist yet and water. So it has to travel one thousand feet, you know, all the way down to the bottom. If, you know, when-if I didn't see that separated water, I have that kind of feeling for the water. But separation from the original source creates some feeling for us.

The evolution of life creates many problems for us. So I don't-I do not regret-I am not regretful about our civilization to be-to enjoy this civilization. I enjoy it very much. But at the same time, we should know that there is no complete freedom or complete renunciation in this kind of civilization. Only when we know that even though evolution of life brought our individual life to this point where we have many fears, we know how to resume our original life-source of life. Then, you know, we can enjoy this civilization at the top of evolution of life activity. So without this kind of understanding, we cannot enjoy anything. When you are involved in it you may be all right, but what will happen to next time? You will be very regretful.

In Chinese character-no, in zazen, we should get rid of, or we should be-in zazen, our mind should not be instead of contamination or in the state of sleepiness, you know. If [we] are sleeping, we cannot practice zazen. But on the other hand, if our-we are-our mind is state of agitation or state of extreme joy, we cannot practice our way. And describing this extreme joy, Chinese people used two words-two characters. One is culminating joy, you know. One is culmination of joy. And one character is regretfulness [laughs], you know. This is very, you know-it describe to the point if the culmination of joy happens to us, next moment will be the regret [laughs].

So if we do not know how to resume the ori- [partial word]-source of life, what we will have is the culminating joy and regretfulness. We cannot enjoy our life in its true sense without this practice. That is why Dogen-zenji put emphasis on this practice. It does not mean to slight the other practice, but if we forget this point, whatever practice it may be, it doesn't work. It doesn't help us in its true sense. On the other hand, if we understand this point, to apply whatever way you apply-way of practice you apply, it will work.

In this way, to open up your mind for everything and to be ready for accepting various difficulties is the purpose of zazen.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/2/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi may be referring to a traditional meditative practice of concentrating on the body (including a beautiful one) as an object subject to decay in order to diminish greed or craving.

[2] Possibly: "For someone who is celibate, to forget about their attraction to others they follow this practice."

[3] See also "Nirvana, the Waterfall," in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, p. 93.

## **7 - Evening Sesshin Lecture**

Tuesday, December 05, 1967

Evening Sesshin Lecture  
Tassajara

Lecture B

As the nature of our practice is, like I told you over and over, and the point [of] our effort is directed-is like this, for beginner it looks like very discouraging and frustrating. Someone said it is [laughs]-Zen is like standing on-on your head [laughs], you know. It is simple [laughing], but to keep standing is very difficult. In dokusan someone said. I think that is very true, but to stand on your head should not be difficult. But to keep standing is too difficult.

But if you don't know what is true practice, and where you should put your effort, and nature of our practice based on the human nature or nature of culture-human culture, we cannot make appropriate effective effort in helping ourselves and others. This kind of instruction given by Dogen-zenji is like a lighthouse in the stormy ocean. When the sea is very calm, you should rather expect-you should rather to have-like to have a storm [laughs]. And most-most of the young people has this kind of feeling-this kind of resistance.

When we have this kind of resistance, to observe something quite common is difficult because it is not so encouraging thing. But if you are under a very critical situation, you will have-you will have to have, or you will find out your true nature.

I talked about "insane" last lecture, this afternoon.[1] Most people who are insane at first, I think, the symptom of them is to express the feeling of resistance in various way. And they cannot help resisting what people say, what people may like to doing. If you say "stay at home," they will run away. If you don't say so, he might stay home, but the instant-the moment you say "please stay-you should stay at home more," he will go away. That is the expression of the resistance.

By nature our effort is directed to outward, not inward. So for them it is- for them because they are not mentally so strong, so it is difficult to work in opposite way, or you may say to control their way. It is quite different from controlling power. Our, you know, way is not to [be] prohibitive or controlling. Just to put our effort to the other direction is our way, and we will have more difficulty in make shift of our direction of effort. So for the weak-mentally weak person, it is difficult to keep themselves-themselves from feeling of resistance. At first they resist everything, but sometime they may feel big-great regret, or they may feel great sad feeling because they cannot observe things-he cannot observe things as he should do. And well-developed human nature-the revival of well-developed human nature all of sudden happens to their mind. Once this kind of revival of highly developed human activity take place, they feel very sad that they cannot observe things as they should do according to the highly developed human nature. Originally it is our joy to develop our nature, but that development of the human nature is contaminated-is in the-a kind of contamination in our culture-in our social framework. We become sick of it. We become tired of it. And we feel big resistance against it. But when we are in the position from where we have to reach for the well-developed human life, we seek for it, and we adore for it, and we miss it. That is actually how we feel resistance and how we become very obedient.

Usually resistance and obedience is two quite different tendency or activity of mind or function of mind. But originally it is not different. There we have reason why we practice something informally and why we practice our way in the opposite way. Because you feel some resistance to your old culture, you should practice zazen. And you feel better to practice our way, because our practice is the expression of our resistance to the old way of life.

In our practice, we should forget all about the idea of good or bad, right or wrong. But when old culture become rigid and concrete, the old culture will force something always anew. But in our practice, even though we do not ignore the idea of good or bad, but we are not caught by the idea of good or bad any more. Instead of expressing resistance to outward, we resume our original nature or universal nature or stage-state of our mind before crystallized in some particular way.

I think if you know the true way of zazen, because you are young- because you have some feeling of resistance, you will practice more our

way, and feeling of resistance to old way of life will encourage your practice. Moreover, you will-your mind will be big enough to accept the old way of life we had. When our practice come to this point, we say don't think "good and bad," or "right or wrong." When we do not think "right or wrong," "good or bad," our mind is big enough accept things whether it is old or whether it is new. Who told us the teaching or who force some way of life to us doesn't matter. We will not lose our way, and we will create-we will develop our way in our own idea and in our own way. There is freedom of creativity.

It is silly for us just to be caught by the feeling of resistance. The resistance, because of the discrimination, is a kind of imitation. But usually [in] imitation we imitate something. In the same way, but in-when we have resistance, we imitate in opposite way [laughs]. That is just-you imitate in the same way or the other way is the difference. But your way is caused by some outward object. In other word, your mind is enslaved by outward object. In this point, resistance and imitation is the same. You have no freedom. It means you-your mind is enslaved by it-by something. So if you want to obtain the perfect freedom from everything, your effort should be directed inward. As long as you have this kind of practice, you have no danger-danger of being enslaved by anything. You have always perfect freedom.

So the more you understand a human being-human nature, the more you will [be] interested in our way. Another human nature is-maybe we like something wrong rather than right-rather than true [laughs]. This is something, you know-this is, maybe, same tendency we have when we feel some resistance. Something which is true is maybe always very common and not so interesting, not so colorful. It is just plain and common. So you do not-you have no interest in it. Something which is wrong [laughs] is very interest-interesting to you to see, you know.

As Dogen-zenji in his instruction of zazen, "Don't," you know, "be afraid of true dragon." [2] In China there was a man who liked dragon very much. Even though he didn't see-he haven't dragon-but even though he didn't know actually what it was [laughs], he was very much interested in dragon, and he liked to talk about dragon. This kind of, you know, feeling we have always. Even though we don't know what is zazen, people like to talk about zazen all day and night, all night and day [laughs, laughter]. But Dogen-zenji said, "Don't be surprised at the true dragon." [Laughs.] You know, those people will be surprised-or not surprised but will be silent when they see true dragon because it is not so interesting [laughs, laughter]. So Dogen-zenji said, "Don't be surprised at true dragon." [Laughs.]

But common as it is-if you know how common it is, you know, and if you know-if the true dragon will appease your ambitious thought or your unsatisfied feeling in your everyday life, you will be interested in our practice in its true sense. This kind of interest is not usual interest to be [of being] proud of your power or your understanding, but something

which will give you-which will appease all the ambitious thought and all the resistance. That is why many artist and poet and samurai or some influential person who found dead end in their way practiced zazen.

There is limit in our effort, and there is limit in our power to attain something. Whether you become famous or not is the difference of- difference of whether you become famous or not is by-may be by sheet of paper. If you are strong-stronger than the other a little bit, you know, you will become famous. That's all. If you can do it bit-little bit ahead of people, you will be successful. To be involved in that kind of competition is to sacrifice yourself. And it is silly, you know, to be involved in this kind of life.

Our way of life should be more stable, and more wide, and more open to everyone. Keeping something just within yourself is one of the violence [violations]-violence of one of our precepts. What-whether it may be material or spiritual, not to open up for others is the violence of the precepts. Our mind should be open to everyone. If you want to open up your mind, you should resume your true mind or essence of mind-some essence of mind, according to the Sixth Patriarch.

I am sorry I didn't bring my glasses, so [laughs] will you read it from here to here? About one page. I-I have read it up to here.[3] You are jisha,[4] so [laughs, laughter]-ask you to read from here-

Jisha: To here, or-?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. "Think unthinkable," and there is some paragraph here. No paragraph?

Jisha: No.

Suzuki-roshi: Okay. Just start by your-by the new sentence.

Jisha: [3-4 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Jisha: No-to where?

Suzuki-roshi: To here.

Jisha: To here. Okay. [2-3 words.] Okay. I'm a little hoarse, so I hope you can understand it.

Suzuki-roshi: Okay.

Jisha: When you stand from zazen, shake your body and arise calmly. Do not be rough. That which transcends the ordinary person and the sage-dying while sitting and standing-is obtained through the help of

this power. This I have seen. Also the supreme function[5] (lifting the finger,[6] using the needle,[7] hitting the wooden gong) and enlightenment signs (such as raising the hossu,[8] striking with the fist, hitting with the staff, and shouting) are not understood by discrimination nor differentiation. You cannot understand training and enlightenment well by using supernatural power. It is the practice (sitting, standing, and sleeping) beyond voice and visible things. Isn't this a true rule beyond discriminatory views? So don't argue about the wise and foolish. If you can only train hard, this is true enlightenment. Training and enlightenment are by nature undefiled. Living by Zen is not separated from daily life.[9]

Suzuki-roshi: What was he says is very, you know, common, and Zen is for everyone. But, you know, in everywhere you will find some unusual statement. All the unusual activity of Zen master is based on this deep understanding of our practice, or else he does not deserve the name of true Zen master. His whole day-whole life effort is directed on this point. And I have been talking about maybe same thing over and over again, so many times. And I will continue [laughs, laughter]. I am sorry-same thing over and over again [laughs]. But I feel very good, you know [laughter], because I find something new, you know, in my feeling whenever I continue [2-3 words].

This is the joy of our practice. And it may be good idea for us to read this Fukan Zazen-gi little by little after zazen. We will discuss how we should do with Chino-sensei[10] later.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] SR-67-12-05-A.

[2] Probably referring to the story of Sho-kung or Yeh Kung-tzu (Jap. Seiko or Shoko) in the Hsin-hsu or Shen-tzu lüeh (Shinshi Ryaku) and the Latter Han History. Sho-kung loved painted and carved dragons but was terrified when visited one day by the real thing. "Do not become so accustomed to images that you are dismayed by the real dragon" (Dogen-zenji, Fukan Zazen-gi, in Nishijima and Cross, ed., Shobogenzo, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 282). See also SR-69-09-00-A and SR-71-06-05.

[3] In SR-67-12-01-A. The student appears to be reading from Reiho Masunaga's translation of Fukan Zazen-gi (The Soto Approach to Zen, 1958, pp. 101-102), but several phrases are translated differently. Therefore, the translation of this passage may have been modified by



Suzuki-roshi. There is a gap of one-half paragraph between the passage Suzuki-roshi read in SR-67-12-01-A and the passage read here. Not all lectures in the sesshin were recorded and/or survived on tape, so the missing half-paragraph was probably read between Dec. 2 and Dec. 4, 1967.

[4] jisha: attendant to a priest.

[5] Means employed by Zen masters for leading their students toward enlightenment. (See N. Wadell and Abe Masao, "Dogen's Fukanzazengi and Shobogenzo zazengi, in *The Eastern Buddhist*, 1973, 6 (2).)

[6] Gutei raising one finger (Case 3 of Mumonkon, Gateless Gate). Most translations include "banner" here, a reference to Ananda becoming enlightened upon taking down a banner over a gate (Keitoku Dentoroku, 1).

[7] Kanadeva dropping a needle into a bowl brimming with water (Keitoku Dentoroku, 2).

[8] hossu (Jap.) (San. vyajana): a whisk made with long animal hair.

[9] Two more paragraphs of Fukuan Zazen-gi remain to be read.

[10] Kobun Chino Otogawa-roshi came from Eihei-ji in June of 1967 to Tassajara, where he served as head of training for monks (see *Wind Bell*, Fall 1967, Vol. VI, No. 2-4, p. 17). In 1983 he founded Jiko-ji temple in Los Gatos, in the Santa Cruz mountains of northern California.

## **8 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture**

Wednesday, December 06, 1967

Afternoon Sesshin Lecture  
Tassajara

Lecture A

The mind which [we] will acquire or obtain by our pure practice is, as I said, something which is not graspable-which is beyond our words. But at the same time, the mind will respond to everything. So positively speaking, our mind is like a mirror which reflects various object on it. But when there is no-no object, the mirror is something which you cannot even see. This is the mind we will obtain by our pure practice.

This afternoon I want to make the relationship between our big mind and everyday activity. In everyday life, how the big mind reveal itself will be the point I will talk [about] right now-or the function of-you may say the function of the great mind.

Dogen-zenji explained this mind in his Tenzo Kyokun.[1] Tenzo Kyokun

is the instruction for the monks who works in the kitchen. Those who work in the kitchen must have this mind. And work in the kitchen is the extended practice of zazen, or their way should be-their way working in the kitchen should be based on our pure practice or big mind. Especially [for] those who work in kitchen, it is necessary to have big mind because they will have various difficulties.

Food is very important-to prepare food is very-may be the most important work in the monastery. And usually we do not eat good food. The food we will prepare will not please the monks in the monastery. That is quite usual. And monks-even though they prepare something good, they will not satisfy-will not be satisfied with it. They will want something better [laughs], and there is no, you know, limit in their [laughs] desire. So they will have always complaint, and what they will do in the kitchen will be always criticized. Even though there is nothing to criticize, they will [be] suspicious [laughs, laughter] about the, you know-what they will do in the kitchen. So to work in the kitchen is very difficult work.

And so, first of all, Dogen-zenji says he must be a man of big mind to accept various criticism and complain with, you know, not smile, but [laughs] if you smile they will be more angry [laughs]. So you cannot even smile [laughs]. Just to accept what they say, and just to understand our human nature is only the way.

So-the first of all, Dogen-zenji count the big mind: the mind as great as a mountain and as wide as sea, or else you cannot-you cannot be responsible for the kitchen work.

And next thing is kind-kindness. Even though the material is not so good, you should take care of food and vegetables and fruits with great care. So he counts kind heart or kind mind. He say-he says all-all the monks' mind.

And third one will be to have always joy in his work. I-the order [in the text] was not like this. Joyous mind[2] is the first, and old ladies' mind [3] is next-kindness, kindhearted mind. And-and the great mind-the third one is the great mind.[4] The second one is kindness. And the first one is joyful mind.

In Japan, you know, there-there are many fishermans and fish store. There are many fish stores. And besides so many fish store, we have some people who is carrying fish and selling it, you know. Those people-you know, fish should be always fresh, so they are running on the street always with big flag [?], and they are always full of joy. They looks very happy. They are always active, you know [laughs]. If they are not happy, the fish look-will looks like old [laughs]. Even though fish [laughs, laughter]-is just more fresh if they carry with joy. It looks like fresh [laughs, laughter]. When fish become old, the eyes, you know, turn to white from blue, you know. Blue eyes is not anymore blue

[laughs]. Even though [laughs] they carry white [laughs, laughter]-white-eyed fish, you know, if they carry with joy, you know, and if they are running [laughs, laughter], fish looks like very fresh, you know [laughter].

So if the-if a monk who is responsible for the kitchen work is not happy, you know, food tastes very bad, you know. Even though it is good, it doesn't taste too good. So Dogen-zenji said [laughs, laughter] they must be like a, you know, man is who carrying fish. No, he didn't say so, but [laughs, laughter] he means, you know-what he means [is] he should be always happy, you know. If he is not so happy, you know, the all the monks will not be happy. And the more-more complain he will have, and he will be criticized more. So first of all, Dogen-zenji says he should be always happy.

And next thing-next thing is to have old ladies' mind. Usually, by nature, old lady is very kind. Or we say Buddha's mind is-the mind of parents is Buddha's mind. Buddha's mind is parents-mind of parents. They raise children with great care, with great love, and they do not miss any expression of their baby. And when it is cold, they will take off his own coat and cover the baby. When it is hot, they will carry their baby in the cool side, exposing themselves to the sun. In this way they raise their children.

So buddha-mind is-should be-must be like the old-ladies' mind who raised children. You may say that is our instinct. Whether it is instinct or their-their act- [partial word]-kindness. The mind they have is valuable. Because of this everything grows. Because of this we-we were so happy at-when we are at home, and you will not forget how you were raised in the family-in your family when you are young. Even though you do not say "thank you," but you cannot forget it.

This kind of mind is the mind of parents. And big mind, great mind should be like this, he says. And the great mind-he says great mind is the mind of mountain and-or the sea. If you do not have great mind, you cannot take responsibility. Because we don't know when he will give up his-when he will quit his responsibility, we cannot rely-we cannot trust him. Especially a man who is responsible for kitchen quit his work, you know, you-all the rest of the monks cannot eat. That is why this mind is necessary.

By this explanation, I think you must have understood what do we mean by buddha-mind or big mind. Although our mind is something graspable-something ingraspable, its activity is so great, and so warm, so clear, and full of joy. This are-this is the interpretation of the buddha-mind or great mind by Dogen-zenji.

Because we are too intellectual and so, too difficult to put faith in something which you do not know exactly, so some explanation is necessary. Some intellectual explanation or interpretation is necessary.

So we have to talk [about] something very intellectually and logically. But actually there is no other way to appreciate than to practice our way, knowing the purpose of practice with right understanding of our way.

Here is the brief translation of the three mind by Dogen: [5]

The sole [soul?] mind as expounded in Zen differentiate itself into three minds: the joyful mind, the kindly mind, the generous mind. They are the three function of the three mind-sole mind-the sole mind. The joyful mind means the joyful frame of mind. A man of joyful mind is contented with his lot, even in adversity. He will see bright light and value, and never grumbles or complains. He finds some of the Buddha's grace in difficult circumstances. He feels pleasure even in-when even in painful conditions, and always rejoices. Seven hardship will disappear at-at once, and seven kinds of happiness will come at once. In this way, he can experience the spiritual joy and realize that the world of birth and death is the world of nirvana.

The joyful mind is volitional aspect of the Zen mind-volitional aspect of Zen mind or mentality.

Seven[6]-seven hardship-seven hardship-seven hardship, yeah-seven hardship is, you know, are the hardship when you have-you are born, you know. We don't remember-I don't remember, but [laughs, laughter] it must be pretty hard [laughs] to come out. And to the old age, you know-we become older and older-that is hardship, and sickness, and death. Those are-here we have four. And we count three more. One is to have too much energy [laughs]. That is hardship too [laughs]. So that is why you don't eat, you know, so strong stimulus food in the monastery. It will create a hardship [laughs]. That's very true [laughs].

And even though you expect something, almost all the-all the expectation will not be fulfilled in this world because by nature we expect too much. So it is [laughs] impossible to appease your, you know, desire. That is another difficulties.

And the third one is to depart from someone who [whom you] love. And to be with someone you do not like [laughs, laughter]. This is [laughs, laughter] hardship we have in this world. This is very true [laughs]. But if you have joyful mind, you know, all the friend will be, you know-all the people will be your friend. And all the-if you are healthy, the more you are healthy, the more you can enjoy your life. And birth should be happy occasion, and death is also-should be happy.

In this way, all those seven hardship, all at once, when you have joyful mind, change into happy mind or happiness.

The joyful mind means joyful frame of mind. A man of joyful mind is contented with his lot. Even in adversity, he will see bright light and

value and never grumbles or complain. He finds some of Buddha's grace in difficult circumstances. He feels pleasure even in painful condition, and always rejoices. Seven hardship will disappear at once, and seven kinds of happiness will come at once. In this way, he can experience the spiritual joy and realize that the world of-world of birth and death is the world of nirvana.

The joyful mind is the volitional aspect of the Zen mind. The compassionate mind is the affectionate mind of the parents. Parent always think of the growth-growth and welfare of their children to the neglect of-neglect of their own circumstances.

A Buddhist scripture says the Buddha's mind is the mind of great compassion. One of the lotus-excuse me-one of the [1 word] three treasures is compassion that allows courage. These are nothing but the kind mind. The kindly mind is the emotional function of Zen mind. The magnanimous mind is as big as a mountain and as deep as a sea. A man with the magnanimous mind is impartial. He walks the middle way. He never attach to anyone. He-he is never attached to any one side or aspect of things. The magnanimous mind works-walks justly and impartially. It denotes the intellectual function. The bodhi [body?]-the holy mind is the harmonious unity of intellect, emotion, and volition, and [is] equipped with the intelligence, benevolence, and compassion. The function of the great mind may be limitless. According to the circumstances you will-various virtue will appear from this great mind.

In this way-that is why we should not attach to any particular practice. Whatever the practice may be, we should practice it with big mind. If we know the fundamental purpose of our practice, you can practice our way even in your work-walking or sitting or stopping or lying down. So we should open up our mind without clinging to some particular thing. This is how we practice our way.

And our practice will be-should be refer to how treat things-how to make friends and how to study our teaching. Respectively there are some teaching told by Dogen-zenji. Anyway, our way is limitless. So without satisfying or without stopping our effort, we should express the big mind. This is the life of we Buddhists.

---

—

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] Eihei Dogen, Instructions for the Tenzo, 1237. The tenzo is the head cook in a Zen monastery.

[2] ki-shin (Jap.): the mind of gratitude or joy.

[3] ro-shin (Jap.): the mind of kindness, the aged, or parents.

[4] dai-shin (Jap.): the great mind.

[5] The three minds are mentioned in Tenzo Kyokun, but Suzuki-roshi's translation or commentary does not follow the available translations of Tenzo Kyokun currently available in English.

[6] The traditional list includes eight hardships of human existence (as listed by Suzuki-roshi himself in Lectures SR-68-10-00-F and SR-68-10-00-G): (1) birth; (2) old age; (3) illness; (4) death; (5) to be separated from those who are dear to us; (6) to meet those who are not dear to us; (7) not to obtain what we desire; and (8) difficulty of guarding our possessions. (See also Garbhavakranti-sutra in H. V. Guenther, trans., *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, Rider & Co., 1959, pp. 63-69.)

## **9 - Evening Sesshin Lecture**

Wednesday, December 31, 1969

Evening Sesshin Lecture  
Tassajara

Lecture B

We say everything has buddha-nature, so we have to treat as a buddha. To say "everything has buddha-nature" is not appropriate, because if I say-to say-if I say everything has buddha-nature, then [?] buddha-nature and everything is dualistic. Actually, everything itself is buddha. "Buddha-nature," we say, but this word is not so appropriate. Buddha-nature, you know-if I say "buddha-nature," it looks like we have many nature: human nature, buddha-nature, and nature of animal. But buddha-by-what we mean by buddha-nature is some special nature in comparison to other nature, or human nature-human nature itself, buddha-nature. So there is nothing but buddha-nature.

hada, Japanese character

for "skin" or "body"

So, when we say "buddha-nature"- "everything has buddha-nature," this is already wrong. But tentatively, we must say everything has buddha-nature. In Japanese, for an instance, I have, you know, two eyes. You say I have two eyes. But we do not say I have two eyes. We say, "There is two eyes." The meaning is different, and in Chinese character, "I have"-the word "have" means "skin," you know, which is part of our body. So when we say "I have two eyes," it means our eyes is a part of ours. Or we do not say even "I." "There is two eyes," we say. So I is-we do not say I, you know: Mega futatsu arimas. Mimiga futatsu arimas. Kuchiga hitotsu arimas.[1] "There is one mouth." "There are two eyes."

And, "There are two ears." It means, you know: "I have two eyes." And, "I have one mouth." And "I have one nose.[2]" And that "have" is-means a part of us. It means "flesh" or "skin." So when we say "I have-everything has buddha-nature," what we mean is not so dualistic.

Everything has buddha-nature, but tentatively because there is no other way to say it, we should say there is-we have-everything has buddha-nature, even though it sound very dualistic. And according to Dogen-zenji, to say a part of it is not perfect enough. Buddha include everything. Whatever there is in this world, that is a part of buddha-nature. If there is something outside of it-outside of buddha, that is buddha too [laughs]. So it include everything. Because it include everything, it is independent being in its absolute sense. Even though you accumulate things one by one, it will not result [in] buddha. If you divide buddha in various way, that is everything we see.

But according to Dogen-zenji, a part of it is not perfect enough, because if I say-if we say "part of it," the relationship between things is ignored already, you know. Part of-"I am part of," you know-"I am a member of our family." If you say [so], the relationship between you and your brother is not expressed well. It is ignored. So Dogen-zenji said everyone is not member of. Everyone is family itself because if there is-if someone is missing, you know, that is not perfect family anymore. So relationship between our member of families is more than the member.

So that is why I must say "everything has buddha-nature" is not perfect expression of the teaching. So Dogen-zenji says, if you-to treat-if you treat you-you must treat everything, or he says you must-you must treat a grain of rice as if it is your own eyes.[3] Eyes is part of you, and so is the grain of rice.

As you know there is famous story.[4] If you go to Eihei-ji, there is Half-Dipper water bridge: Hanshaku-kyo [so named] because Dogen-zenji used to bring back the leftover water to the river. After he use, you know, half of the dipper of water, he took it back to the river again [laughs]. At Eihei-ji we never wash our face with, you know, [the basin] full of water. We use just seventy percent of water in our washing basin. And when we empty it, we do not empty water this way [away from the body]. We dip it-we empty it this way [toward the body], you know [laughs]. If you empty it this way, you must be very careful [laughs]. If you are [1 word], we know what will happen to us. So we must-anyway, we will have to empty it very carefully. We treat things very carefully. And we respect things very much.

In your framework of economic world, you know, to consume things will be-will encourage the [1 word: producing?] things [laughs]. So to use many things will be the-will help, you know, circulation of money. In this reason-in this economic reason, you do not, you know, treat things so well. Nevertheless, you know, I found your cup is very thick, you know, because you will break it [laughs]. If it is thin-as thin as we have in

Japan, you will [laughs]-one dozen of cup will be destroyed every day [laughs, laughter] in your kitchen. So yours are very thick, but ours is so thin, you know. It is easier to handle if it is thin. But you have to treat it very carefully, or because we treat it very carefully, there is no need for-for us-cup to be so thick.

And usually we treat things with both hand. Sometime some beginners will carry their eating bowl like this [laughs]-in one hand like this. It looks very strange [laughs], like pumpkin [laughs, laughter]. We always carry things, if possible, [with] both hand. And you carry things-many-you carry many things in one hand or at once, you know. We carry-we do not carry so many. And we will carry one by one, going back and forth [laughs]. This is more-or-less Japanese way.

Why we do that is out of a question. It is not just to save money, or it not just to-to be economic. It is-right now it is a kind of Japanese habit, but this kind of idea originated from Dogen-zenji's way. And we appreciate-when we appreciate a smaller things rather than big things-big one. Our mind is directed always [toward] trivial matters rather than something great. And we do it without asking why. We just do it because we respect it. That is even more than respect. To respect things is something dualistic. "To be one with it," we say. When we become one with it, there is no idea of big or small. Smaller things is easier to be one with it, and simpler things is easier to practice one of the duality. We do not even figure out why we do this.

So this is the matter of sense, you know. This kind of thing is created with-with our way in our practice in a long time. So it is rather difficult for you to observe our way, I think. Nowadays young people come and practice Zen in Zen temple in summer vacation. If we told-if I told them to observe our way, they ask me why [laughs]-like you do, you know. And it is rather difficult to explain why [laughs], because we do not do it with some reason. This is just habit. Habit is very important. So to observe way until you-it become habit of you is very important.

Sometime I, you know, I am amused myself [laughs] to observe Japanese way in America. When I go to grocery store-grocery store, I usually buy worst fruits or old-oldest [laughs] vegetables. If I see something good I, you know, I take off the something good to find something bad. And why I buy something-the worst one, because I feel very sorry [laughing, laughter throughout story] for the worst one. This is habit, you know, and I pay same amount of money. So at the store they are interested in my way of buying. "Why don't you take this one? This one is better," they say. "No, I want to buy this one." And they say, "Why? Why?" I will say, "I don't know why." And I-I amuse myself, you know, [with] my habit. I have very funny habit. But I couldn't get rid of my forgetfulness. I tried pretty hard, but I still forget.

But to repeat something is not so difficult. If you repeat it, it will be a part of you, and this is, you know, how we observe our way. Here at



Tassajara you do not pass big pickle dish, you know. You divide mine and put it in front of me. But if you pass, you know, our pickles in one big dish starting for me, I always eat [laughs]-I shall always eat the worst part [laughs], and in the monastery, the last one will eat the best part.

This is, you know, our-our way and our habit. No one ask us why. But sometime, or when I was young, some people explained why. He said, "You should cultivate your virtue. You should accumulate your merit. If you do not eat, if you give others good part of the pickle, that much you will accumulate your virtue-merit. That is why you should take worst part of the pickle." And I thought, you know, it was, you know-then I would rather take the best part [laughs, laughter] to save others-to let them [laughs, laughter]-to let them accumulate more merit. I don't want to accumulate merit for myself. But I didn't try, but I thought so. Really I thought so.

So there is no reason, actually, if there is some reason, as already said, you will be punished [laughs] by it-by it. But punishment, you know-but we cannot believe punishment either. The reason why is everything has buddha-nature. That will be the final answer. In this way, and the best way to understand what is buddha-nature is just to practice our way and treat things very carefully. Because even though everything has buddha-nature, it does not mean you can mix up everything.

As Dogen-zenji said in his Instruction for Cook,[5] "Something which should be put [in a] higher place, should be put higher place. Something which should be lower place, should be lower place." Everything has its own function and virtue. So according to the virtue, we should treat them. If we treat them according to its virtue-only when we treat them according to its virtue, true value or same value-everything will have same value. Because water cannot be exchanged for fire, fire has its own virtue and water has its own virtue. So water should be in the kettle and fire should be under the kettle, you know. If everything is its own place, everything has same value, he says. So we should not mix up everything.

In same value is in the different-the absolute value-everything has absolute value because of its differentiation from each other-because it is different from others. If everything is same, they will lose the value. It should be different. Because it is different, it is value. So to mix-mix up everything is to kill buddha-nature. There is no more buddha-nature. So when one is teacher, he should be teacher. When one is student, he should be a student. But it does not mean student cannot be a teacher. So we rather put emphasis on validity than universality. We acknowledge the differentiation, or we appreciate the differentiation rather than universality. The valid-validity is-will be acknowledged when universality or when the absolute value reveal itself on some special thing which is-is different from others-other being. When you put emphasis on the universality, you know, everything lose its own value.

When you mix, you know, male and female and divide in two [laughs], you will lose your life. Man should be a man, and woman should be a woman because, you know, man and woman is different. There is value and there is life [?].

So we rather put emphasis on the difference between each being. Although we put emphasis on difference, we do not acknowledge-we do not discriminate which is better. It is different, but both is same value or absolute value because it is different. When you put emphasis on universality, it means you are killing things. At least the value of things will be ignored. True value of each existence will be ignored. If you see-if it-it is like to see many mountains in one view. You can see many mountains, you know-you will enjoy to see many mountains, but if you are interested-when you are interested in the sight of the mountains you see, the value of each mountain will be ignored. To call you, you know-if I call you by name of human being-"Hi, human being!" [laughs, laughter], your character will be ignored. Everyone is human being, you know. We don't know whether [laughs] you-you are man or woman or young lady or old lady: any human being [laughs]. It doesn't make any sense. If you are called by your name, you know, you will be happy.

So universal value is something very vague [?], and not distinctive, and not interesting at all. So when-only when you see-you appreciate many kinds of things which is different from each other, you will have happy life. You will enjoy our life. This kind of thing is quite obvious. It is-there is no need [for] any interpretation or philosophical discussion about it. It is actual truth. But there are various way of life, and there are misunderstanding with your life, so there must be some philosophy as a background of this kind of teaching. That is why we find our teaching pretty difficult, especially when you studied intellectually. The best way is just to practice until you understand it. This method is completely different method: to force some way on us.

In our practice we do not like to be caught by some rules. Nevertheless, we make best effort to observe our way. When we make best effort to observe our way, there is no more rules. The rules are part of us. Whether the rules are part of you or not will be checked out by your teacher [laughter]. Even though you are observing our way, you know, if the rules is not a part of you, you know, he will see it. The point is your sincerity, not form. We rather put emphasis on each one's own way.

In Tassajara-here in Tassajara, I think you have difficult time in observing our way, which is not familiar to you. But I want you to observe it first of all, and then you can discuss about our way. So observation is first and discussion is next. Now if you discuss, you know, I think the conclusion [laughs] will still-will not be-will not-your discussion will not result [in] same idea we have had. So if you practice it, and if you have-if you find some problem, you know, about that problem I want you to discuss. This kind of discussion is very important,

I think. Especially this kind of idea is quite new to me. By discussion you will have chance to explain why you observe our way. So others will be interested in our way.

So without experience of observing it, to discuss our rules is not right, because we put emphasis on our experience, not, you know, discussion itself-intellectual discussion, whether this is Japanese way [laughs] or American way. We have not much idea of Japanese or American way. Whatever way may be good ways [laughs]. American way, I think, or our way. So we should find out. We should try to improve our way, and we should develop our way. This is bodhisattva's mind or spirit.

---

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] "There are (ari) two (futatsu) eyes (me). There are (ari) two (fusatsu) ears (mimi). There is (ari) one (hitotsu) mouth (kuchi)." Suzuki-roshi also discussed this topic in a Sandokai lecture (SR-70-06-20). Japanese phrases were graciously translated by Yoko Hanabusa.

[2] Suzuki-roshi probably meant to say "mouth."

[3] In Tenzo Kyokun, quoting Baoning Renyong (Honei Ninyu)-c. 11th century Linji (Rinzai) master.

[4] Hanshaku-kyo: a bridge beyond the entrance gate of Eihei-ji. See also Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: "Nirvana, the Waterfall," p. 92, and SR-69-08-01.

[5] Tenzo Kyokun.

## **10 - First Shosan Ceremony at Tassajara**

Wednesday, December 31, 1969

First Shosan Ceremony at Tassajara  
Tassajara

Buddha-although Buddha started teaching at Paranasi,[1] but actually when he attained enlightenment under the Buddha-Bodhi tree, he started his teaching for the people now. After sitting for seven days, I want to see and I want to hear your true teaching. Now come and show me your teaching.

Student A: My heart is full of joy. This zendo at Tassajara is like my own home. Sitting in zazen, eating with my fellow monks, trying to follow the

way of my roshi. Word by word, moment by moment, feeling by feeling, my delusion and my feeling is expressed in this moment.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. "In this moment" is right. Don't live in future or past.

Student A: Thank you very much.

Student B (Dan Welch): Docho-roshi, as the sun enlightens our daily life, as the stars never cease to shine, how is it possible to forget?

Suzuki-roshi: To-excuse me?

Student B: Forget.

Suzuki-roshi: To forget it. Originally you do not forget it.

Student B: Thank you very much.

Student C: Docho-roshi, outside I see the trees, and the things that grow, and the rocks seem to do perfect zazen. And I see my own potentiality for this, yet still I feel great fear. Please tell me what is the true nature of fear?

Suzuki-roshi: Fear has no reason why it arise. So when the rocks and running water become a part of you, when you become truly their friend, there will be no fear.

Student C: Thank you very much.

Student D: Docho-roshi, the fish is in the water. The water is in the fish. It is soundless, and you cannot hear it. It is clear, and you cannot see it. It has no smell. How can there possibly be a mistake?

Suzuki-roshi: There is no mistake whatsoever.

Student D: Thank you very much.

Student E: Docho-roshi, I have two questions. Where is home? What is true strength?

Suzuki-roshi: When you start wondering about there is no home, there is no strength. But if you find your home in this moment at this place, you have enough strength to practice our way. And home is right here.

Student E: Thank you very much.

Student F: Docho-roshi, in our practice should we try to overcome our weakness or should we try to work through it?

Suzuki-roshi: Why you should overcome? You should try to overcome

when there is no big mind or no small mind.

Student F: Thank you very much.

Student G: Docho-roshi, what place is this?

Suzuki-roshi: What place is this?

Student G: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: This is Tassajara zendo.

Student G: Thank you very much.

Student H: Docho-roshi, after four months' training and seven-day sesshin, what am I doing here?

Suzuki-roshi: You are doing nothing.

Student H: Thank you very much.

Student I: Docho-roshi, I'm afraid to ask you a question. Why?

Suzuki-roshi: Because you see me as your teacher always.

Student I: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Open your eyes and listen to me more.

Student J: Docho-roshi, how is it possible to lose the fear of no nose, no mouth, no eyes, no world of eyes?

Suzuki-roshi: Fear comes from your ego. So the way is to open up your mind so that there is no more ego.

Student J: Thank you very much.

Student K: Docho-roshi, is there only one act of devotion?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me? There is only-I couldn't follow you.

Student K: Is there only one act of devotion?

Suzuki-roshi: After devotion, devotion itself only one. And devotional life will be continued one after another incessantly.

Student K: Thank you very much.

Student L: Docho-roshi, when we are silent, what is the question?

Suzuki-roshi: There is no question when you are silent, but when you are in activity, you will have innumerable questions. But questions should be answered on each moment-in each moment.

Student L: Thank you very much.

Student M: Docho-roshi, how can I stop to ask a question?

Suzuki-roshi: Originally there is no need to ask a question. Your active mind bring about many questions. So the point is to practice our pure way. Then at least at that time you have no question.

Student M: Thank you very much.

Student N: Docho-roshi, why did you and why did all the buddhas and patriarchs joy [join?] to teach and save others?

Suzuki-roshi: Try to teach what?

Student N: Why did they teach and try to save others?

Suzuki-roshi: Save others. Because all of them are part of them [?].

Student N: Thank you very much.

Student O: Docho-roshi, as I accept you as my teacher more and more, I find more and more a growing dependency on you in that role, and I'm afraid of this. What can I do about it?

Suzuki-roshi: There is no need to be afraid of being a part of me. Don't be afraid of me, and try to study hard.

Student O: But what happens if something happens to you, and you can't be our teacher any more?

Suzuki-roshi: That cannot be happen. I am always with you forever.

Student O: Thank you very much.

Student P: Docho-roshi, how or why has this come about that we can feel that we have lost our home and make the journey-what we think is a journey to return to it? How-why-why is this?

Suzuki-roshi: That's-your feeling is opposite. You think you started your journey from home, but real home is here. Don't [go] wandering about to various countries.

Student P: I understand that, but I wonder why it is that we do that?

Suzuki-roshi: Because you started your-you feel you started your

journey from your home, which is not true home. It was not true home.

Student P: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: You must feel as if you came back to your home right now.

Student Q: Docho-roshi, what is the fundamental cause of the universe?

Suzuki-roshi: Cause of youness [?]?

Student Q: Universe.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student Q: Universe.

Suzuki-roshi: Universe. Ah, we do not discuss about it because there is no beginning or no end for the universe.

Student Q: Thank you very much.

Student R: No beginning, no end. No teacher, no student. No and yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, no, yes, yes, no, no, yes, yes, yes, no.

Suzuki-roshi: That's right.

Student R: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Don't forget you said "yes." Do not forget that you said "yes" with "no."

Student R: Thank you very much.

Student S: Docho-roshi, what is it that the great sages have said speaks when you are silent, yet is silent when you speak?

Suzuki-roshi: Great sages always, incessantly [are] giving teaching, not only through his mouth, but also by his blinks of eyes, walking, sitting, lying down. Always he is showing the truth.

Student S: Thank you very much.

Student T: Docho-roshi: Roshi, when a person has saved himself or herself, has that person also saved the world?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Whole universe will be saved. If it is not so, he did not save himself or save others.

Student T: Thank you very much.

Student U: Docho-roshi, we can succeed in directing our effort inside. How can there be anything outside our effort?

Suzuki-roshi: There is no inside or outside. We say our effort should be directed towards inside, but why we say is to suggest to you the direction. One arrow will get through past, present, and future: the three worlds. And the arrow will continuously go forward. Don't think the arrow is always going outward. To outward-to go outward, one thousand miles means to come back-to going back one thousand miles. So don't think there is outside or inside in our practice.

Student U: Thank you very much.

Student V: Docho-roshi, should we think or ponder about [1-2 words] our problems or anything?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes you should. But if you want to think in its true sense, you should resume the area where you do not think. That is pure practice.

Student V: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Your thinking should not be based on unreal foundation.

Student W: Docho-roshi, is it necessary-words, questions, or even thinking?

Suzuki-roshi: For you it may not be necessary. Continue your practice.

Student W: Thank you very much.

[Long pause.]

Suzuki-roshi: I know what you mean. Go and rest. Go and rest.

Student X (Ed Brown): Docho-roshi, I have many questions. But they seem to come and go, and they don't seem very important. And everyone seems to have worked very hard during sesshin.

Suzuki-roshi: The question is not-should not be about whether it is right or wrong. Right now, the most important thing is to find what is the most important thing. Still, your question is directed to wrong direction. You are asking yourself for others, which is not important. The most important thing is to find-to be involved in what you do-what you are doing now, without thinking "good" or "bad." Stop asking-stop thinking, and devote yourself to your kitchen work. Whatever people say, or whatever you yourself say, you should not be concerned about it.

Student X: Thank you very much.



Student Y: Docho-roshi, you have told me at first I must serve in calmness.

Suzuki-roshi: Serve?

Student Y: Serve in calmness others.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student Y: Is the boss that is illumined by the mind[']s] calmness only a small boss?

Suzuki-roshi: There is actually no small or big boss. When you call any boss, that is your boss. Because you think this is big boss or great boss, your practice is not any more true practice. Don't be involved in good or bad, high or low. Just do what you should do at that moment.

Student Y: Thank you very much.

Student Z: Docho-roshi, automobile go to San Francisco, jet plane to New York, rockets to the moon. Where does instant mind go when it's not here?

Suzuki-roshi: Instant?

Student Z: Instant mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Inst- [partial word]-?

Student Z: Where does the mind go-

Suzuki-roshi: When?

Student Z: -when it's not here?

Suzuki-roshi: Mind does not go or come back. Mind is always here.

Student Z: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: The mind which [goes] wandering about is not true mind.

Student AA: Docho-roshi, there is no question that is not answered before it is asked. Have I spoken truly?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me, I couldn't follow you.

Student AA: There is no question that is not answered-

Suzuki-roshi: That is not answered.

Student AA: -before it is asked.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Every questions is answered when you ask question already.

Student AA: Thank you very much.

Student BB: Docho-roshi, to do it all in the present moment, and to be totally involved in the present moment, and yet it seems so impossible with so much feeling and so many thoughts. It seems so impossible.

Suzuki-roshi: Too many thoughts is all right. That is not the point. The point is to be concerned about too many thought or no thought. All thought-all the thought you have is one thought or no thought. I am not saying to stop your activity. I am not counting how many thought you have. All the thought you have is originally one thought. If it is one thought, that is no thought.

Student BB: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: So don't be concerned about the thought you have. Don't be bothered by it. You should think. To think is all right, but to be bothered by it or to discriminate good thought or bad thought is bad.

Student BB: Thank you very much.

Student CC: Docho-roshi, snow is piled deep in the mountain pass making it nearly impenetrable. How do we pass from here?

Suzuki-roshi: If you want to pass, you can. There is no difficulty in passing through. Is there any difficulty? I don't think so.

Student CC: Thank you very much.

Student DD: Docho-roshi, thank you for coming to the United States. Thank you for bringing us your teaching. And thank you for showing me this new life and our way. Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Thank you.

Student EE: Docho-roshi, what now?

Suzuki-roshi: Now. Don't ask me. Now is now. You have now. I have my own now. That is why now is so important. It is beyond question and answer.

Student EE: Thank you very much.

Student FF: Docho-roshi, who are the sangha?

Suzuki-roshi: We are. Those who are in Tassajara is sangha-in limited sense. But all of us-all sentient being are sangha.

Student FF: Thank you very much.

Student GG: Docho-roshi, if everything changes, why is there always suffering?

Suzuki-roshi: Because-because of change. Change itself is suffering. If change is essential nature for everything, suffering cannot be avoid. There is-because there is no way to avoid from it. If you know there is no other-no way to avoid from it, there is our relief.

Student HH: Docho-roshi, neither mind nor Buddha, what is this?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student HH: Neither mind nor Buddha. What is this?

Suzuki-roshi: Neither mind nor Buddha, did you say?

Student HH: Right.

Suzuki-roshi: Neither mind nor Buddha points out the real Buddha because we are caught by the word of Buddha. If we say "Buddha," we want to find out where is Buddha, when Buddha is right here. So "neither mind nor Buddha," we say.

Student HH: Thank you very much.

Student II: Docho-roshi, who observes our way?

Suzuki-roshi: You observe our way-when you observe our way everything observe our way. So our way is universal way, and at the sa-[partial word]-at the same time your own way.

Student II: Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Yakusan-zenji-Yakusan-zenji did not give lecture for a long time.[2] The monks asked him to give them lecture. Yakusan-zenji mounted on-on the altar, and seeing every monk one by one, and came down from the altar, and went back to his own room again. A monk asked-a monk who was responsible for the zendo asked him why did he-didn't he give any lecture? Yakusan said, there is a master-there is scripture master or Buddhist philosophy master, and I am master of Zen. Don't wonder who I am, he said.

Zen monks are Zen monks because they are speaking in fluently without saying anything-just by everyday activity. That is how Zen student

should be. That is why I said Buddha started giving teaching when he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in the country of Magadha. [3] We should not forget this point.

And we should take care of our practice, not only zazen practice but only-whatever we do in Tassajara. I am very grateful for you to observe our way in various way without asking why we do that or why we should do this. Whatever you do, that is our practice. There you will find out yourself. Our practice is valuable because we can find out ourselves on what you do in that moment.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/5/01).

[1] From a meal chant: "Buddha was born at Kapilavastu, enlightened at Magadha, taught at Paranasi, entered nirvana at Kusinara."

[2] Yaoshan Weiyen (Jap. Yakusan Igen): 751-834. Disciple of Sekito Kisen. Master of Ungan, Sensus, and Dogo. This story is Case 7 of the Ts'ung-jung lu (Jap. Shoyoroku, Book of Serenity) collection of koans. See also SR-68-10-12-A, SR-69-06-00, and SR-71-08-08.

[3] One of the newly formed and powerful monarchies on the Ganges Plain at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha.

## **1968 (25)**

### **1968 januari (2)**

#### **1 - Ten Buddhas**

Thursday, January 11, 1968

Ten Buddhas  
Tassajara

I already explained about Maitreya Buddha when I explained about the three period-three period of Buddhism. And in this occasion, I want to explain this-all of the Ten Buddhas which we recite [at] mealtime:

Homage to the pure Dharmakaya Vairochana Buddha.

I already explained Vairochana Buddha.

And to the complete Sambhogakaya Vairochana Buddha.

To the numerous Nirmanakaya Shakyamuni Buddha.

To the future Maitreya Buddha.

I explained already Maitreya Buddha.

To all buddhas, past, present and future all over the world.

To the Mahayana Saddharmapundarika-sutra.

To the great Mañjushri Bodhisattva.

To the Mahayana Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

To the great compassionate Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva.

To the many bodhisattvas, mahasattvas.

To the Mahaprajñaparamita.

Here we have complete teaching of Buddha. Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, Nirmanakaya Buddha. This is Buddha. And here we have Mahayana bodhisattvas. And we have also the Mahayana Mahaprajñaparamita. This is the teaching. So we have here Buddha and sangha and dharma. So to recite those names actually-if you recite those names with deeper understanding, it means you are repeating, you are practicing the Buddha's way.

And Buddha-we have three ways of-meaning of Buddha, or understanding of Buddha: Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, and Nirmanakaya Buddha. Buddha as a truth-as the truth is Dharmakaya Buddha. The Buddha as rewarded body is Sambhogakaya Buddha. And Buddha which takes various form to help people is Nirmanakaya Buddha.

When Shakyamuni Buddha help people, providing various teaching, like a doctor who make prescription for the invalid, is Nirmanakaya Buddha, "incarnated body," we say. Sambhogakaya Buddha is the Buddha-rewarded body or attained the buddhahood which was attained through his practice, is Sambhogakaya Buddha. Dharmakaya Buddha, as I said, Buddha as a truth. So historical Buddha is actually Nirmanakaya Buddha.

And Buddha who express-who realized the truth is Dharmakaya Buddha, Buddha as the truth. Whether he attained enlightenment or not, Buddha will be there. Truth is there. So, in this sense, although he realized the truth, but he-although he realize the truth, if we put emphasis on the

truth itself, rather than its body or rather than its spiritual or physical being, that is Dharmakaya Buddha. Although he has-he is the embodiment of the truth, without practice he cannot attain enlightenment or he cannot express the truth. Only when he actually practice the truth, the truth will be realized-realization of the truth will take place in this sense. We called him Sambhogakaya Buddha.

So Nirmanakaya Buddha, or Sambhogakaya Buddha, or Dharmakaya Buddha, actually one. In this way we understand Buddha. And here, instead of Buddha himself, the name of Vairochana Buddha is here.

To-homage to the pure Dharmakaya, Vairochana Buddha.

To the complete Sambhogakaya, Vairochana Buddha.

Vairochana Buddha sometime may be Dharmakaya, but sometime he is also Sambhogakaya because he is the bodhisattva. Before he become Vairochana Buddha, he was a bodhisattva and practiced his way according to his vow.

To the numerous Nirmanakaya, Shakyamuni Buddha.

We say:

All the buddhas, past and future-past, present, and future.

When they realize-when they become buddha, they become Shakyamuni Buddha. So Shakyamuni Buddha will be numerous. So it is not only Shakyamuni Buddha that-who attained enlightenment. All the patriarchs and bodhisattvas will be the Buddha-Shakyamuni Buddha.

To the future Maitreya Buddha.

I explained Maitreya Buddha already.

To all buddhas past, present, and future all over the world.

Here "world," this "world" is not just this human world. There are many worlds. So this "world" means worlds-various worlds in which there are various worlds.

To the Mahayana Saddharmapundarika-sutra.

This is-this sutra is supposed to be-to-supposed to have highest teaching of Buddha as well as Avatamsaka-sutra.

To the great Mañjushri Bodhisattva.

Mañjushri Bodhisattva-I explained the great Mañjushri Bodhisattva when I explained Prajñāparamita-sutra.

To the Mahayana Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

The Mahayana Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is the bodhisattva who is famous for his ten vows. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Samantabhadra. Samanta means universal. Bhadra means wisdom or sagacity or deep wisdom [?]. Here when we say Samanta and bhadra looks like near the same, but there is great difference.

Usually through intellectual understanding, you will-you may have the universal truth, you know. You may understand what is universal truth inducing-by induction or by experience or by thinking. But wisdom which we mean cannot be acquired through thinking or by experience.

In your philosophy there were various dispute whether it is possible to have perfect wisdom by experience. Through experience you will have some knowledge or deep perfect understanding, or that is-or someone may say it is not possible to acquire the perfect understanding by experience. So even experience-it is-we are-we cannot be sure to have perfect understanding. In-according to Buddhism, it is not possible to have the perfect understanding through experience. The accumulation of experience-even though you repeat same experience over and over, that result of experience is still experience, and that is not-that cannot be the perfect truth.

We-that which you will attain through experience will be some universality. But some accurate, substantial, solid, tangible feeling, or meaning cannot be attained by experience. So we put emphasis on validity rather than universality. This validity could be acquired through right meditation. If you, you know-if zazen practice is just to acquire or to attain some special experience, that is not true zazen. True zazen that you have acquired or obtained by-through right practice is not-is more than just experience. You may say this-what you acquire by right meditation is something-the power, you may say power of adjusting yourself according to the circumstances. Sometime we put emphasis on flexibility. You know, you should be always ready to respond to the circumstances. So when you have perfect ability to respond to the circumstances is the purpose of-is what you will have through right meditation. Even though you do not realize, you do not think, or you do not aware of your-the merit of your zazen, it does not mean you haven't acquired anything. Even though you think you have-you have had some special experience, but that does not mean you acquired the true power of meditation. That is why we say "think non-thinking." So you may say-obtain something which you cannot obtain, or you know, whatever. Anyway, what you will have through zazen is more than what you think you have acquired. This kind of acquisition cannot be attained by experience or thinking.

That is why this bodhisattva has-Samantabhadra Bodhisattva-this bodhisattva is called Samantabhadra. Samanta is "universal,

universality." And bhadra means "wisdom" or "validity"-more solid and concrete idea. Anyway, his name is Samantabhadra, universal and-universality and sagacity. So this bodhisattva is bodhisattva of all the dharma, all the universal teaching, all the dharma. As bodhisattva, Avalokiteshvara is the bodhisattva of compassion. This bodhisattva is the bodhisattva of wisdom or truth. But this truth here-by "truth" I do not mean some truth in ordinal [ordinary] sense. It is more than truth. It is more concrete. It is more tangible.

And here-and there is-again there is two meaning in samanta. One is universal buddha as a Dharmakaya Buddha, and the other is the universal buddha as a Nirmanakaya Buddha, you see? He is-he is Dharmakaya Buddha, but on the other hand he is Nirmanakaya Buddha. He is also Nirmanakaya Buddha. Nirmanakaya Buddha is more concrete, not abstract. Dharmakaya Buddha is more abstract buddha, buddha as a truth. Buddha before he takes various form is Dharmakaya Buddha. But Nirmanakaya Buddha is-may be various being which has form and color. So this bodhisattva has two side: He is universal buddha as a Dharmakaya Buddha, and also Nirmanakaya Buddha as a more concrete buddha which has form and color.

As a Dharmakaya Buddha, his body is omnipresent or-truth itself as a Dharmakaya-as a Nirmanakaya Buddha, his body is more real, tangible buddha. So each one of us will be Nirmanakaya Buddha. But if you think in this way, it is not only this bodhisattva who is Dharmakaya and Nirmanakaya. All of us is also Nirmanakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha.

So if you practice, or if you realize who is this bodhisattva, you will realize who you are. This is the characteristic of Mahayana buddha or bodhisattva. So to repeat, to-and every bodhisattva has their own-his own vow. And if-his vow may not be just his special vow but our-may be the vow we should take.

This bodhisattva has ten vows-ten vows. And I want to explain one by one. But before I explain it I want to explain, or I want to make it clear what is true wisdom. I think I already explained about what is true wisdom once or twice. But it-as it is rather difficult to explain it, so I don't know whether you understood it or not, partly because [laughs] it is rather hard for me to explain it.

Did I expl- [partial word]-do you remember the classifications of our way of observing things? To observe things from the viewpoint of existence-viewpoint of existence, and viewpoint of nonexistence, and viewpoint of superior existence-superior viewpoint. Viewpoint of existence is usual, you know, way of observing things, usual understanding of is one of nature. And almost all the people are involved in this viewpoint. The viewpoint-from this point, your question will be, "What is it?" And when you have true under- [partial word]-better understanding, or the second understanding, your question will



be, "How things goes?"

Even people who is not satisfied with materialistic way of life, as long as their view of life is based on some substantial viewpoint of existence, they cannot get out of materialistic way of life. Even though they seek for some spiritual life, in their spiritual life there is various materialistic values [?] or [1 word]. And evil and spirits there may be because their understanding is just bound by some idea of existence or substance which cannot-which exist actually. When nothing concrete exist, nothing permanent exist.

Some people believe in some evil spirits, you know [laughs], which works in the same way on you, you know. But no evil spirit can work in the same way forever. They are changing. Whatever exist-whatever the existence may be, they are changing. There is nothing that does not change. If so, there is no evil-special evil spirits who work in the same way. To believe in some permanent one deity, you know, is also based on the idea of existence. So we cannot take this aspect. Even though you say "spiritual life," but that is not spiritual life. It is another form of material life.

Then, if everything is changing, nothing exist, nothing special exist. This is true, but in the smallest particle of time, everything exist. Although everything is changing, but, you know, moment after moment it will change. But everything-at that moment, smallest particle of time exist in that form or color with close, close relationship with some other things. That is true.

So the third aspect or superior aspect include two aspects of existent and nonexistent, or the first and the second. But even though you understand this truth, it does not mean you have the third aspect. Actually, to attain-to have, to obtain the third aspect there is no other way to practice our way, or else you cannot obtain this aspect. Whatever you say, however, that is-as long as your aspect is in realm of thinking, that is not real[ly] the third aspect.

So if you study our way intellectually, you should arrange the various teaching in some order, or you have to find out some system of the teaching. But when it is necessary to-for you to accept teaching, one by one, as long as you rely on intellectual understanding, you should compare one teaching to the other. But our way of understanding of teaching is quite different.

In Rinzai school, if you, you know, pass one koan, it is good enough. You should pass koan, one by one, without comparing one koan to the other. Of course, in Rinzai there are some teachers who arrange koans, you know. We call it "stepladder practice"-stepladder, one by one [laughs].

But in Tendai school, they say that is-to arrange teaching vertically, to

compare teaching to the other teaching is to arrange teaching. But level? What-what do you say?

Student: Horizontal.

Suzuki-roshi: Horizontal way, yeah.

So we should not arrange teaching horizontal or vertical. We should, you know, realize the meaning of the teaching, one by one, without arranging. So this is not only Zen way but also Tendai's way. So-called-it, middle way in Tendai is a way to accept teaching one by one without arranging it. That is the middle way. That is the understanding-that is the third understanding which you will acquire by the third aspect, or wisdom, perfect wisdom. That is the middle way.

So when we practice our way, we give up the one, the first aspect which is aspect of existence, and aspect of nonexistence, or the second aspect. We give up all those aspects and practice our way, resuming in a fundamental life act [?] or life force which is not intellectual or emotional.

You may understand why we practice our way in so-called-it shikantaza. We do not say shikantaza [2-4 words]. But some people say shikantaza. In Shobogenzo there are many words. [Unclear phrase in Japanese: shikan plus 2-3 words] like the shikantaza. But it means-we say "just to sit," but "just to sit" does not-means not-don't depend on intellectual understanding. But use the intellectual understanding. This is our way.

So you may understand true-our Buddhist traditional way of practice or understanding. So whatever books, texts you read there is Zen. So all those scriptures is the truth of Zen by which you will understand what is Zen. If you have eyes to read it, you know, this is not just scripture, just Buddhist scripture. This is Zen text which you should read. But there is no need to read all of those scriptures because there is no need to arrange it vertically or horizontally. So if you open some part of the scripture, there is Zen. In this way, we should understand our way, and we should read scriptures. When you can read scriptures you can find out, you can enjoy your life whatever you do. To read scripture is nothing but to appreciate, to enjoy, or-. That is why we recite ten names of Buddha when we have meals.

Each buddha, you know, is Mañjushri Bodhisattva who is taking care of our practice. Even the name of-even he has many names, he is the buddha who is taking care of our practice.

Next time I want to explain the ten vows-ten vows of Fugen-Fugen-bosatsu or Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

Do you have question? Some question? Hai.

Student A: I don't quite understand the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: What do you mean by-that it's a realized [1 word] bodhisattva? I just don't understand.

Suzuki-roshi: Samanta?

Student A: Pardon me. Sambhogakaya.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: Sambhogakaya.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, Sambhogakaya.

Student A: Pardon me. The Sambhogakaya.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Sambhogakaya is-we say, you know, without practice there is no buddha, you know. It means practice is buddha. When you practice there is buddha. But if you do not have real understanding of practice or everyday life, you know, you-your understanding is not based on the real understanding. So that is-that understanding is not true understanding of ourselves, or each being, or everyday activity. That you have true understanding of practice means that you have the meaning of-true meaning of everyday life. You may say, "Even though I don't understand," you know, "true meaning of life, I am buddha." In this-if-when you say so, your understanding is based on, you know, some substantial understanding some buddha-buddha, you know-something buddha, some special thing, you know. But buddha is, you know, is not some substantial being. "Whether or not I understand him, there is buddha," you may say. Or, "I am buddha. Even though I don't practice zazen I am buddha. So there may not be no need to practice zazen." But when you say so, your understanding is quite different from our understanding, which is practice and buddha is one [?], or enlightenment is one [?], or whatever we do, that is buddha.

So Sambhogakaya Buddha, which is rewarded body, which is one with everyday life, which is nothing but each being, means to, you know, to realize the buddha through-or you may say to express your idea of buddha through your way of practice or your everyday life. That is Sambhogakaya-idea of Sambhogakaya.

[Laughs.] Do you understand? Not quite [laughs].

"Rewarded body," we say, but it is not like accumulation of our practice. We-as a rewarded stage, you will attain enlightenment. But rewarded body is-when there is something, there is already buddha. That is Sambhogakaya.

For ordinal [ordinary] people, of course, you know, because of many kalpas of time, you know-because of Buddha's many kalpas of practice he attained buddhahood in this way, scripture says. But that is just more dramatic, you know, or poetic expression. "Many kalpas of time-after he practice many kalpas of time, he attained buddhahood," or-. But actually the rewarded body is-means oneness of practice and buddhahood. Oneness of your everyday life and buddhahood. That is Sambhogakaya. [Laughs.]

May be, yeah-may be difficult to accept it, especially when I say your everyday life [laughs]-oneness of enlightenment and your everyday life. That may be difficult to accept it, but it is so. Because it is difficult to accept it, you sit, you know. Even while [1 word] you sit without thinking about this kind of, you know-not make any sense, you know. You can say-so if you want to understand it, just sit [laughs] without asking question. In your sitting, you should not sit for anything [?]. Just sit. When your find-when you find yourself in zazen, you will have various ability [?] you can [3-5 words] without any problem.

You have some question?

Student B: When you say Mañjushri Bodhisattva takes care of our practice, does that include prayer, then?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: When you say that Mañjushri takes care of our practice should we pray to him [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Mañjushri.

Student B: Mañjushri Bodhisattva. Am I pronouncing it wrong?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Again, that is your understanding-based on the substantial understanding, you know. Forget all about any substantial idea. This is-I-I-I realize this point is very, very important for, you know, for people. When doctor come, I was listening to him lecture. And I was very much interested in his [1-2 words]. He is rejecting substantial, you know, understanding from beginning to end. And this is the, you know-this is why, you know, we cannot understand Buddhism or our way.

Actually there is nothing, you know [laughs], including you. If so, we should just sit. Then you will be, you know-you will be the one including everything. Because, you know, you do not get accustomed to this kind of-to live in this form you are not accustomed to it, your own home. So you are, you know, seeking for, you are wandering [wondering?] about finding your home. "Where is my home?" You are right-right in your home, and you are seeking for a home with substantial idea. The ...

[End of tape. A fragment of a lecture was found at the start of the master tape for SR-68-01-11-B, which seems almost certainly to be the end of this lecture. The fragment follows below.]

... without expecting anything. Just you can enjoy things outside of your home. Sometime you can-if it is something good, you can take-take it to your home [laughs]. But home is the most important [laughs] thing, not something which you-you have brought. That is zazen. [Chant follows.]

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (3/20/01).

## **2 - Samantabhadra**

Friday, January 12, 1968

Samantabhadra  
Tassajara

We are still studying about Samantabhadra Buddha. This buddha is told in Saddharma-in Kegon Sutra.[1] In Kegon-Kegon Sutra is famous for its view of dharma. In Kegon Sutra-the main thought of Kegon Sutra is perfect harmony with truth and various fact or things, and perfect harmony between every existing-every existence.

Jiji muge or riji muge.[2] Most people knows this special technical term. Jiji muge and riji muge. Riji muge-ri is truth or theory, and ji is things. Where you-where there is something, there is truth or theory. So through things you will understand the theory on which everything are based on. This much is understood [by] almost everyone, but perfect harmony between each things-this is rather hard to understand or rather hard to accept unless you study Buddhist thought more.

We say-we have-as I said last night,[3] our thought or our view of things is very substantial. And we think everything exist as it is and everything is independent from the rest of the things, but actually everything exist-everything is dependent with each other. Things are dependent with each other, and things are changing always. That things changes means it is not independent being. So there is-there should not be-there must be-originally things does not exist having some special self-nature. Strictly speaking, everything does not exist, but in the smallest particle of time things exist. Or as a smallest particle of element things exist.[4]

So in Kegon Sutra they divide things-they divide time and space in smallest particle. So in Kegon Sutra, when we-when we ex- [partial

word]-when they explain this dharma world they use cosmic scale of explanation. So that is why the description is so great. I think I already read it. I read some of the description:

With deepest belief and understanding, through pure physical and mental action, to bow to the number of ultimate elements, to bow to the number of ultimate elements of all the buddhas-land in ten direction of the three worlds.

We don't know how many, you know, buddha here we have to bow to. It means that when we realize that in the smallest element there [are] innumerable elements. So each element consists of the innumerable elements. So we don't know what is the ultimate existent-existence.

When we reach this understanding-when we have this understanding, we have no more idea of self. Instead of having idea of self, we will see the Buddha in each world. So this world, if you say is great-this world is as great as cosmos. If you say this world is small, you will see the innumerable world in-even in a speck of dust. In this way we have to understand our world, and in this way we have to practice our way. So accordingly, this bodhisattva's practice is always based on this understanding.

To respect tathagata, this is the [vow] Number 1.

With the deepest belief and understanding, through pure physical and mental action, to bow to the number of ultimate elements of all the buddha-lands in ten directions of the three worlds, appearing in each of those world as innumerable bodies, as many as the number of ultimate elements of all the wondrous, incomprehensible buddhas, and bowing to them [1 word: sounds like casana] by [same word], and to continue this practice perpetually.

This is the first vow. So actually it means to continue this practice incessantly, and for us everything is Buddha. Large and small, everything is Buddha. So to respect Buddha means to respect everything.

And the second one-admiration of the tathagatas.

With deepest understanding, actually seeing innumerable of ultimate elements of all the buddha-lands in inexhaustible-

Excuse me.

With the deepest understanding, actually seeing the number of ultimate elements of all the buddha-lands in ten directions of the three worlds, making inexhaustible sound of sea from his tongue and from each of the innumerable sound making out world of the sea, to admire the sea of virtue and merits of all the tathagatas and to continue practice forever.

This is the second vow of the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. This is also the practice, to treat everything as you treat your teacher or Buddha. As Dogen-zenji says, "You should not call rice-rice kome,"[5] you know. "You should call it okome." Okome is more, you know, honorary prefix. Okome. Instead of saying mizu, "water," [say] omizu. It means-o means honorary prefix. Or, "You should treat a grain of rice as you treat your eyes." This kind of practice comes from this idea.

So instead of respecting-instead of respecting things objectively, here we have-we respect-here we respect our practice instead. It looks like we put emphasis on to respect something, some particular thing. But actually, we respect the practice-practice of respecting thing.

Usually, you know, you-when you bow to Buddha you look like you are respecting Buddha, but actually why you bow to Buddha is to continue your practice. That is the point. Without having any particular idea of-any particular substantial idea or materialistic idea, just to live in bodhisattva's vow is the point.

So we practice our way to solemnize this dharma world. So without practice things doesn't mean anything. Because of our practice, things come to have some meaning. So without practice there is nothing. But when you have materialistic understanding of things, even though you do not practice in our way, things exist. But if you understand how things [are] going completely, you should continue your practice as things are going. This is the point of practice.

And the third one is about kuyo[6] in Japanese-to provide things for Buddha or sangha or dharma. In Sanskrit we say pujana-pujana.[7] You know, in-Vedanta was in the five-I don't know when they practice pujana, you know. It means to make offering or to recite sutra. Actually we offer incense. That is kuyo. To offer flower, that is also kuyo. And originally, we count four kuyo. One is, you know, to prepare food for the Buddha. And to prepare something to wear. And to prepare something to sleep in. And to prepare Buddha for-for Buddha something to-some medicine. Those are four kuyo. But later we count many and many ways of making offering or kuyo. This is also our practice.

And in Kegon Sutra why we make those offerings is described in detail. Why we-we do not use zuko.[8] Zuko is, you know, very fine powder of incense, you know. And we rub it, you know-we put in our hands like this, you know, when we have special ceremony. Why we do it, or why we burn incense, or why we offer flowers to Buddha? Zuko, which is the fine powder of incense, is to purify our body and everything. And to offer flower means to have compassionate mind. You think as if a beautiful flower open in your mind, and with this flower in your mind you should decorate the buddha-land. That is why we offer the flower to the Buddha. Why we burn incense is to pervade our way all over the place, all over the world. So when you burn incense, if wind come from

east, incense will go to the west. According to the wind, the incense will pervade everywhere. That is why we offer incense. And each of the incense will be one merit. And one merit will be burned by wisdom fire and smoke of or smell of liberation will pervade all over the world. In Kegon Sutra, it is described in this way.

And food is to support our immortal practice. When we practice our way, sup- [partial word]-when we support our way by food, we will attain enlightenment. So to offer food, or to take food is to practice our way.

And light, candlelight or whatever light it may be-why we light-offer light is to break the darkness of ignorance. That is why we offer light. This is understanding.

And this is material offering, but there is dharma offering. The dharma offering is very symbolical and idealistic. To read, to recite sutra, or to build that-to build a shrine. Or to copy-to make copy of scripture, or to build, to make a bell, or to make buddha image, or to give lectures about scriptures, those are dharma offering or dharma kuyo, we say.

This is-it is not only-there are many kinds of description. When Buddhism was introduced to Japan-soon after Buddhism was introduced to Japan, we made big, big Vairochana Buddha. Do you know-I think you know the big bronze Buddha in Nara. This is a kind of, you know, kuyo in pretty large scale.

As the description of-cosmic description of Kegon Sutra-as it was described, way of making kuyo described in Kegon Sutra, they did it very big-they made big-great big Buddha, you know [laughs]. But it does not mean-what-true understanding of Kegon Sutra is not matter of big or small. But their understanding was rather primitive so they [laughs] made a big, big Buddha. With the best effort of the nation, they did it. And since then, Buddhism became more and more elaborate. Their practice more and more became elaborate. And they spent most of the time in their devotional way of practice until no commoner can follow their practice.

So when Kamakura period-when the government lost their power, the Samurai class arouse-arose and take over the influential controlling power. That was the Kamakura period. And various new schools appear at that time. Zen was one of the schools-new Buddhist school.

If you understand this kind of spirit of making offering, as Dogen-zenji says, offering should be like to offer the flower which blooms in remoted mountain to the Buddha. It should be like this. In spring, we-in Japan we have cherry blossom, and to offer that cherry blossom to the Buddha is kuyo-is offered to make offering.

This evening, you know, you saw big ring [laughs] around the moon, you know. To make offering to Buddha, to make the big ring-with a big



ring to make offering to Buddha is kuyo. To hear the sound of the river should be kuyo, according to Dogen-zenji. So to have deeper understanding instead of shallow, substantial understanding is to make a perfect offering.

I am very grateful for you to make various offering to the altar. Sometime, you know, wildflower, sometime stone, or candlestick, or is sometimes stone. But this is, you know, true offering I think. And this is the true practice, offering of practice-our practice, which should be continued-continuously practiced. And when we practice our way in this way, there is buddha and we are also buddha. In this way, we should understand this bodhisattva's vows.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: Could you explain again why the Kegon Sutra is supposed to have the highest truth?

Suzuki-roshi: Highest truth? The Kegon-yeah. You may say highest truth because the understanding of dharma is very profound. It is said that-I don't think that is true but-it is said that this is the sutra which Buddha had in his mind when he attained enlightenment. But he didn't know how to explain his lofty-his deep understanding of life. So he started to tell by Agama-sutra. Agama-sutra will be-is the first sutra which was told by him. Anyway, Kegon Sutra is very important sutra. But Saddharma-pundarika-sutra, or Hoke-kyo,[9] is also important sutra. The Hoke-kyo is more concrete-more concrete, while Kegon-kyo is very abstract.

First of all, when you want to be a Buddhist, you should understand the emptiness-or you should give up substantial viewpoint of life. But you should come back to the substantial explanation of the world. When you say something, you should put it into some word. When you put it in some word, it is already substantial. Saddharma-pundarika-sutra is more, you know, concrete and more-easier to understand and it is for everyone, while Kegon Sutra is very philosophical.

Student B: What is the English translation of Kegon?

Suzuki-roshi: Saddharm- [partial word]-no-Avatamsaka-sutra.

Student C: I don't understand about Saddharm-SamantabhadraBodhisattva. What was his role in Buddhist history?

Suzuki-roshi: Buddhist history?

Student C: How does he fit into the Kegon Sutra and into our meal chant?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, in Kegon Sutra, you know, most of the description of

his teaching is in Kegon Sutra. If you read Kegon Sutra, you will have his name and that which-there is very important teaching is told by Buddha.

Student C: Was he one of Buddha's disciples?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know. No one knows, maybe. Some of them, you know, some of the Buddha's disciples were Buddha's disciples, and some of them may not be actually, historically, Buddha's disciples.

Student C: Well then this sutra was supposed to be thought of by Buddha-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student C: -told by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

Suzuki-roshi: Or told by Buddha.

Student C: I don't understand.

Suzuki-roshi: Told by Buddha about this bodhisattva.

Student C: Oh, I see.

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student D: This is-I'm not sure how to put the question, but last night you said that when we find the true power of zazen-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: -we wouldn't have trouble affecting what we want to affect, or it will just come naturally.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And then at other times you've said that zazen doesn't help us or doesn't change us a bit.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] Yeah. Yeah. Doesn't help. [Laughter.] Zazen doesn't help, you know. But your true nature will help. If you, you know, practice zazen because zazen will help you-with this idea if you practice zazen, it will not help you [laughs] because that is not true zazen.

Student E: Docho-roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student E: From time to time you emphasize a different

recommendation for how we practice or do zazen.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Uh-huh..

Student E: Breathing, watching our breath, or concentrating our power in our hara, or last night you referred to shikantaza.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: When you change your recommendations, do you think that we as a group should change our way of practicing according to what you say in the lecture? Or just those who feel it?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is good question [laughs, laughter]. You know, I- the point is, you know-whatever practice you do, the point is to practice your way without expecting anything, you know. Just to be yourself you practice zazen. So even though you count [breathing]-even though you cannot do it properly, you should not be worried about it. Just do it. That is our way, you know. Even though your posture is not perfect, it is all right as long as you are practicing hard. You should not criticize your practice. Even though I recommend you some particular way, it does not mean if you cannot do that that is not zazen. Even though you can do it almost perfect, you know, it does not mean that is-it is not always true zazen. When you are involved in-when you limit the true meaning of zazen, or when you become critical with your zazen, or when you are proud of your good practice, that is not true zazen. Do you understand?

The way I recommend you is-I do not recommend it as the best way, you know. To put some strength in your hara is-means to take natural, deep breathing and to have calm mind. To be concentrated on your breathing or counting of breathing means-does not mean if you are just concentrated on your breathing I don't mind your posture or your mind-your wandering mind. You see? The point I-you concentrated on will be different, but the various instruction should be followed. Do you understand?

Student E: When you say-

Suzuki-roshi: Mudra, you know. "Don't lose your mudra," you know, means you should be-you should practice our way with whole-with all of your mind and body, in one word.

There are not so many, you know, points-pretty many, but, you know, in one word to keep your [laughs] posture right, and to keep your-when your posture is right your mind is also right.

Some more question?

Student F: Dogen-zenji said that the mind and body are one-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: -and the way is attained through the body. What did he mean by that?

Suzuki-roshi: Through? Not "through." To-mind and body is one, so if you practice physical practice, the mind is there, you know. True mind is there.

Student F: Thank you.

Suzuki-roshi: So what we should do is to sit in right posture.

Student G: Just a small question on posture. What your hands-should your fingers be together?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, fingers together. And you should not cross too deep or too shallow. See? Here, you have two joint here. And this joint and this joint will make one line-two lines.

Student G: Your first joint should be with your middle joint, and the middle joint-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yours is right. If your mudra is not right, we correct your mudra. Some more question? Please ask me.

Student H: What are the three worlds?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Three worlds?

Student H: Yes, that you mentioned tonight.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Past, present, and future.

Student I: And what are the ten directions?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] So in past-in present, you know, there is past and future, although-but we say "three worlds," and myriads of kalpas of time or something like that, you know. This is more-we should know, you know, what does it mean actually. The Indian literature is very, you know-scale is very big, and they repeat things-descriptions over and over again. And Buddhist scripture is not exception. But we should know what does it mean actually.

Student I: Are there supposed to be ten directions?

Suzuki-roshi: Ten-ten directions? Eight directions, and up and down-ten directions [laughs, laughter].

Student I: Like north, south, east, west?

Suzuki-roshi: And, you know, east and north [northeast], east-south [southeast].

Student I: Okay.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Eight and up and down. And there are a few this way [laughs, laughter]. So I don't know how many.

Student J: Is our community here different from the original Buddhist community? Or is it the same?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know exactly [laughs, laughter]. This is a big subject to study, you know. Anyway, in Buddhist community there were four: layman, and laywoman, and monk, and nun is four. We count four. We have, you know, four kinds of disciples or-in our community we have few or no nun yet [laughs]. But laywoman and layman.

We will have precepts too, you know, more and more. "You should respect the Buddhist or Buddhist thought," and "You shouldn't trip based on Buddha" [preceding sentence unclear: Suzuki-roshi seems to be giving examples of new precepts]. This kind of precepts we will have-new precepts [laughs, laughter] created by you. If Buddha says, "Don't do that," that is one precept [laughs]-precepts. After they have household life, they became a Buddhist, you know, at that time. This is the typical [?] thing [?] But there are many young disciples of Buddha. So may be the same.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (3/20/01).

[1] Kegon Sutra: Buddhavatamsaka-sutra (Sanskrit) or Kegon-kyo (Jap.). The fundamental sutra for the Chinese Huayen school and Japanese Kegon School of Buddhism.

[2] Suzuki-roshi discusses ri and ji extensively in the Sandokai lectures: "When you practice zazen more, you can accept things as your own, whatever it is, you know. That is actually the teaching of, you know, famous teaching of Kegon-jiji-muge.[2] Jiji-muge means 'being has no,' you know, 'no barrier, no disturbance.' It-it, you know-interrelated closely. And it is difficult to say, 'This is bird, and this is me,' because it is interrelated very closely. So it is difficult to separate bluejay from me. That is jiji-muge." [From fourth Sandokai lecture, SR-70-06-03, p. 3.]

[3] Lecture SR-68-01-11.

[4] gokumi: See Lecture SR-70-06-13.

[5] kome (Jap.): uncooked white rice.

[6] kuyo (Jap.): veneration.

[7] Or puja.

[8] zuko (Jap.): to powder one's whole body with fine incense.

[9] The Lotus Sutra.

## **1968 april (2)**

### **1 - (sick)**

Tuesday, April 23, 1968, Lecture A

Because I was not well, I'm sorry I couldn't join your practice so much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (12/26/00).

### **2 - (sick)**

Short end-of-sesshin lecture  
In spite of my lack of effort

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham (12/26/00).

## **1968 juni (1)**

### **1 - (sound problem)**

Saturday, June 01, 1968

June n.d., 1968  
Tassajara

... up to about the scroll right there.[1] That is Bodhidharma-  
Bodhidharma, the First Chinese Patriarch. He came to China five,  
maybe-we don't know exactly when. But 500, maybe 10 [510 A.D.] or

11 [511 A.D.] he came to China. He was a prince of some-some country near India-Koshi-Koshikoku in Japanese. And he was one of the many teachers who practiced zazen in India, and he came to China.

And there is a famous story about him. But before I explain-talk about him, I want you-to explain something about those scrolls. Excuse me.

[Sound problem: low volume. SR gets up and walks around

-----

[1] First words on tape are missing.

## **1968 juli (2)**

### **1 - Buddhist Schools**

Sunday, July 21, 1968

Buddhist Schools  
Tassajara

[1] ... I don't think [laughs] we can reach conclusion.

I was asked to talk about-about some-something like sectarianism. What is Soto and what is Rinzai? Or-and what is the position, or what is the attitude as a Soto priest to other schools of Buddhism? This is the subject I was given to-I was given to speak about it. But this is not so, you know, simple question. It is very big problem.

First of all, we should understand how-why we have so many schools of Buddhism. As you know, various schools arised [arose]-or especially Buddhism, various schools which we have now is the-almost all the schools are Mahayana Buddhism. So-called-it Theravada Buddhism is also-is not just Hinayana school or Theravada school. The scholars of Hinayana Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism knows what is Mahayana, you know, and intellectually, or so far as the teaching [is] concerned, there is not much difference between-excuse me-all of-all the Buddhists, I think-most of the Buddhist understand not only their own teaching of their own school but also the teaching of various schools too.

So, so far as the understanding goes-actually there is no particular school. But here Zen is not, you know-Zen school or Zen Buddhism is very much different from the other schools of Buddhism. The other schools of Buddhism put emphasis on understanding, but we Zen Buddhist put emphasis on practice, you know, actual practice.

So, you know, Zen Buddhism is something different. And why Zen Buddhism arrived in China is something very important point we should

know. Before Bodhidharma came to China, there were many schools of Buddhism already. There were Pure Land school, and Tendai school, and San-lun, and some other schools of Zen. And almost all the scriptures were translated. And Chinese people studied Buddhist philosophy very hard and established pretty well-organized understanding. And according to their way of understanding, there were many schools of Buddhism. And they put emphasis on some scriptures which was told by Buddha.

Those who or thinks Kegon Sutra is the best of all the sutra, their-their-was Kegon school. Those who thinks Lotus Sutra is best, Tendai school established. And those who thinks Pure Land-the three scriptures of Pure Land school is the best of all the teachings, then they started Pure Land school. But all those schools [were] based on the philosophy of Buddhism.

And in Mahayana Buddhism, the teaching is not anymore just teaching. It is something more than that. But they did not come to the turning point where they should switch over intellectual understanding to-from intellectual understanding to actual practice. Even Pure Land school did not, you know-was not completed like Pure Land school in Japan established by Shinran.[2] They, you know-even though they-I don't say they do not practice zazen, or they do not practice various rituals, and they do not attain enlightenment by practice.

But their practice is something different from our practice or from Bodhidharma's practice. The-what is the difference is the-according-as long as we expect perfection or enlightenment, it is-their practice is involved in dualistic understanding, you know. We are not perfect, but by practice or by believing in the teaching of Buddhism, then we will improve our understanding. And eventually we will attain perfection.

But according to even Mahayana school, it was not so easy, you know, to attain the perfection. It was necessary, according to Tendai school-it was necessary to many and many kalpas of time. And we-unless we continue our practice many and many kalpas of time for us which is not perfect, it is not possible to attain enlightenment, you know. That was their understanding. And some school like Kegon-this kind of, you know, many and many kalpas of time of practice was understood-a kind of teaching, you know, not practice itself, but they established, you know, the-another version of practice as a teaching, you know.

In Shingon school, they understood many and many kalpas of time as a-our evil desires, you know. Not actual so long time of practice. But this is another interpretation of our evil desires. Because our evil desires is so deep, it is necessary for us to practice so many kalpas of time, you know. So instead of emphasizing practice, they put emphasis on our evil desires [laughs]. And that is, you know-this is rather dangerous, you know. So unless they be a good teacher, this kind of understanding will create big problem for Buddhist. But instead of put-saying so many



kalpas of time of practice, they put emphasis on so deep and in-so deep and great problem of evil desires. And, you know, the-according to Buddhism or Buddha's teaching, evil desires itself, you know-if we understand it properly, it is enlightenment itself, you know, buddha-nature itself.

So buddha-nature and evil desires is one, you know. Originally it is one. So according to Shingon, with this kind of interpretation of evil desires and enlightenment is one. This is a kind of teaching, you know. With this teaching, they replaced so many kalpas of practice into a kind of understanding of evil desires we have.

So in this way, you know, even our practice was replaced by a teaching. And this kind-this kind of interpretation of so many kalpas of practice was-happened-happened in Kegon school too. So although they noticed that, you know, just intellectual understanding actually do not help us. And if-as long as we have the idea of buddha-nature as a goal of practice, you know, something to attain it, our practice should be dualistic.

So as long as it is dualistic, you know, it takes time until we attain perfection. But actually it is not possible [laughs], you know. But even though we can-we understand it-we understand that is possible, but it takes so many kalpas of time or else, you know, we cannot attain enlightenment. That is the, you know, dead end of [laughs] Zen Buddhism-that was, actually.

But Bodhidharma's, you know, understanding of Zen is quite different. They didn't-he did not, you know-let me put in this way: The difference between Bodhidharma's practice and Mahayana practice of various Mahayana schools of practice, even though they practice Zen, but the meaning of practice or way of practice or content of practice, it was quite different.

According to Bodhidharma, you know, buddha-nature is not something to be attained by practice. But according to other schools of practice, or understanding of practice, the practice is something to attain enlightenment. That is why this practice eventually come to the dead end, you know. And there is no other way to go back, or to-to have another version of practice, or to substitute practice-actual practice to or for the intellectual understanding or teaching of Buddhism.

But for Bodhidharma, our practice is quite independent from various teaching. This is-our practice is independent practice from Buddha's teaching. Although we acknowledge, or we accept Buddha's teaching, but our practice is not something based on some teaching. The-our practice is the practice based on our original nature-buddha-nature. Even though Buddha, you know, did not appear in this world, you know, we have [laughs] all nature, you know. And we, you know, should start our practice because of our true nature which Buddha found out.

So in this sense, Buddha is founder of Buddhism, but we do not depend on Buddha's teaching which was told by Buddha. Our practice is not depend on, because our practice is the practice which is depend on Buddha's, you know, true nature as long as our nature and Buddha-as long as Bud- [partial word]-there is no difference between buddha-nature-our buddha-nature and Buddha's buddha-nature. There is no need for us to depend on his teaching, but directly we should practice as he did. That is starting point of Zen Buddhism. And that is Bodhidharma's Zen.

So it is not, you know, after you practiced so many kalpas of time that attain enlightenment, but the practice is based on our true nature, you know, which is always within us. So starting-by-because of our true nature, we practice zazen. So the meaning of practice is completely different from the practice of other schools. Do you understand this point?

For other school, the practice is something-something-the practice is means of attaining enlightenment. To attain enlightenment we practice zazen. But a characteristic of Zen is, without depending on teaching-because of our buddha-nature, you know, or starting from buddha-nature, we practice zazen. Opposite, you know. Not to attain enlightenment, but to experience the enlightenment-to have enlightenment exper- [partial word]-enlightenment experience. To express our true nature, we practice zazen.

In this way you will have, you know, ten powers [laughs]. You know, I explained what are the ten powers [of a bodhisattva]. If [?] the ten powers is the power you will, you know, attain by practice, you know. I don't know when you will attain it [laughs]. Those ten powers are to some extent the power you have already, you know. You-if you understand what are the ten powers, you know, that is the power you have already. But because of your idle practice you cannot [laughs], you know, bring it, you know, bring about, you know, fully [wholly?]. But it is not something which you attain but-but something which you have already. And this is, for beginner, a kind of belief. But for some good student it is not just to be-it is actually you feel in its true sense, you know. Something you have it, and something you found not as a goal, but as a actual power you have. This is the difference.

So for us there is no dead end. You know, we say even though we have, you know-there are innumerable sentient being, we vow to save them [laughs]. That is our vow. This vow is not based on the possibility, you know, but possibility of attaining or saving all of them, but to express-to make your best effort to express it-to express our true nature, we vow to save-to save them all. And if it is impossible-if there are innumerable people, our effort will be endless. In this way, we understand our practice and our vow. And our evil desires are, you know, [in?]exhaustible. But we vow to, you know, put an end to it

[laughs]. This is something which you should do, which your buddha-nature ask us to do it. Not something which you should do or-or which should promise to do [laughs]. Something which you should do day by day, every day, you know.

This is the big-main difference between zazen practice of other schools of Buddhism and Buddhist-Zen Buddhist practice. Before I, you know, talk about non-sectarianism, you know [laughs], I must [take] pride on my sectarianism first. And how my sectarianism is non-sectarianism [laughs, laughter]. It is the next thing I should, you know, try to explain. But right now, you know, we should establish ourself, you know, in firm foundation. And we are talking about, you know, universal foundation to every schools.

This kind of understanding is true with Shin school in Japan too, you know. Before Shinran the-to repeat Amida Buddha's name is a kind of practice, you know, to be saved by Amida Buddha. So if you want to be saved by him, sooner we should repeat it, you know, many and many times. That was the idea of repeating Amida Buddha's name. But according to Shinran, because we are, you know, originally saved by Amida Buddha, so even you-even you repeat it, you know-even you say it once that is enough [laughs], according to him. If you are aware of your true nature, that is enough.

When-only when we, you know, reach this point-this kind of understanding, the Buddhism become teaching for everyone-to save every one of us. It is easy to, you know, maybe to repeat Amida Buddha's name by mouth. It is also [?]-maybe for Pure Land students or Pure Land school, everyone can practice it, you know. It is quite different from zazen. Everyone can do. And religion should be, you know, for everyone-not just for man, or for someone who can cross their legs, you know, in lotus posture. What will they do if they cannot cross their legs [laughs, laughter]? In this point [?], many people say Zen is not for everyone [laughter], and Zen is just for [laughs] men and not for ladies. Maybe Pure Land school is better [laughs]-is better, you know, because a religion should be for everyone.

So if, you know, zazen is the purpose of-means of-one of the means of to attain enlightenment, you know, the only-few people will be saved by Zen. But according to Dogen-zenji, you know, Zen is not such thing. Zen is for everyone whether you can cross your legs or not, you know. Everyone is Zen Buddhist as long as they have buddha-nature. This is, you know, difference.

Only when we understand zazen in this way, Zen is for everyone. And difference between, you know, if I say it varies-how we, you know, what will be the Rinzai school from our viewpoint-how we understand Rinzai school from our viewpoint? When-the time of Sixth Patriarch, you know, there was no koan [laughs]. There were no koans. Only Sung Dynasty, then koan started-koan study started. If koan study is only way to study

Buddhism, the Sixth Patriarch or Bodhidharma is not Zen master  
[laughs, laughter].

So I don't say koan study is not good, but if you think koan study is only way to study Zen, that is not, you know-you cannot explain why Bodhidharma or the Sixth Patriarch did not use koan [laughs]. So Zen is not just koan study. And the weak point of-of course, you know, there is some weak point or blind angle, you know, for every practice. Weak point of koan practice is-it is, you know, substitute [?] for the teaching, you know. Koan is a kind of teaching, and koan practice is, you know, the means of to attain enlightenment. If that is a means of to attain enlightenment, there will be many steps, you know. So that is why they say until you pass so many numbers of koan, you know, you cannot get inka.[3] You know, there should be, you know, many stages like stepladder, you know, until you solve-let me put in this way: Actually if-whether it is koan study or shikantaza, it is-if you practice it, you know, you will make some improvement. So in this sense there is many steps.

But in Soto-in shikantaza, there is no steps, you know, because we are expressing our true nature through practice, you know. We are already-we have already innate nature. And what we should do is to express it. So there is no steps. And if-as long as there are many steps, you know, then there will be someone who, you know, who can climb up so many steps. And someone will not be-for someone it will not be possible to, you know, climb even one step. If the practice is this kind of practice, that is not for everyone, you know, because it is-because we have originally true nature, and our practice is based on a kind of belief or a kind of experience for a good student. For a beginner it is a kind of dream [trip?]. Because we have-our practice is the expression-our understanding of practice is expression of our true nature. So whether our practice is good or bad, as long as we have true nature, you know, every practice should be true practice. Even though you cannot cross our legs, you know, if you have this kind of understanding, your everyday life is zazen practice. We understand zazen in this way. This is the-how we, you know-this is our understanding of Rinzai or-not Rinzai, but koan practice from our viewpoint.

Anyway, you know, the nature of practice is completely different, you know. Not the same thing. Completely different. This is, you know, one, you know-what I want to say first of all. And how-what is our attitude towards Rinzai? Or how Rinzai people-student from Rinzai standpoint, what is understanding of Soto, you know? "Soto is," you know, sleeping zazen" [laughs], you know. They understand that they have originally buddha-nature, you know. So whether they practice hard or not-whether their practice is good or bad, you know, originally there is no difference [laughs]. So, "They are not so sincere in their practice." Maybe that is true. That is, you know, what Rinzai students may say about our practice.

So for Rinzai students, you know, it is necessary for them to continue

practice forever, you know-not only aiming at enlightenment but also as a expression of their true nature, or with gratitude of attaining enlightenment, or appreciating former teachers' effort to transmit Buddhism to us. They should continue our practice, and they should transmit our practice to our descendent. In other word, their practice also should be continued forever. There is no time to rest on the black cushion, you know, even though they attain enlightenment. And I think many good Rinzai stu- [partial word]-teachers put emphasis on the practice after kensho, after enlightenment.

And we Soto student should practice more sincerely, you know, like the Rinzai students make their effort, even though, you know, because of- they may practice hard because of candy [laughs] of enlightenment. Anyway they are practicing very sincerely. So that is good example for us, you know. And Soto student like to talk about zazen. Rinzai student does not talk about so much about zazen. They give you some koan, you know, without any explanation, and they ask you to give some answer to it. And that is their way.

So of course Rinzai has some shortcoming, and as we have. And at the same time, they have good points as we have. But complete, you know- we should not lose-Zen priests and Zen students should not lose the key point of Zen-why Zen is independent school of Buddhism, you know. Why it is necessary for us to have this kind of understanding of Buddhism. If we lose the key point of understanding-in understanding of Buddhism, it is not even Hinayana school [laughter]. You know, it is, you know, some-it is not even religion, you know. It is a kind of exercise instead [laughs]. It is not religion. It doesn't help us in its true sense.

In China for a long, long time, 400 or more, there was not-there were not so many teachers who understood this point. That is why Dogen-Dogen-zenji wanted to come back to Japan, you know, because he couldn't find any good teachers in China. But fortunately they met with Nyojo-zenji, [4] who had a perfect understanding of Buddhism. So he became-Dogen-zenji became disciple of him. Not as disciple of Soto school, but because one of the disciple of Buddha. For Dogen-zenji, his teacher Nyojo-zenji was the only one teacher who understand-understood what is Buddhism in its true sense. What was the mercy of Buddha in its true sense? He was only one.

So he became his disciple. That is why Dogen-zenji, you know, did not like to say he is Soto-to use the name of Soto. In China, Soto school is one of the five schools of Zen. But according to Dogen-zenji, you know, this point-this understanding is-should be the understanding of all the schools of Zen as long as they are a descendant of the Sixth Patriarch or Bodhidharma.

Originally, there should not be any-there should not be so many schools of Zen. It should be one school of Buddhism. Even though their way of practice is different, but the key points should be the same. That was

Dogen-zenji's-his understanding of Nyojo-zenji. For him, Nyojo-zenji is Buddha himself, or the Sixth Patriarch himself, or the Bodhidharma himself. So for him there is no five schools, you know. For him there is no Rinzai or Soto.

So he respects various teachers who belong to Rinzai's lineage. He doesn't mind whether he belong to Rinzai or Soto. If he is good, he is

a descendent of Bodhidharma, and the Sixth Patriarch, and Buddha. That is his non-sectarianism.

So if people say, you know, because we stick to this key point [laughs] that is Soto-that is [laughs]-maybe all right, you know. They say-to say-for them to say, "He is Soto," it is all right. But we have no sectarianism. But we believe in religion-Buddha's religion who save all sentient beings-not selfless, good, good student [laughs]. That is, you know, our understanding of Zen.

So it is not matter of Rinzai or Soto, you know. If there is some school like Soto-Soto school is a school which put emphasis on the transmitted buddha-mind and practice our way as the expression of our transmitted mind, or to develop a buddha's mind. So way we practice may not be the same, but whatever we do is the expression of our true nature. If I say just "expression of true nature," you know, it is quite simple. How, you know, we express our true nature is the thing I am explaining in my previous lecture.

In short, I think there must be, you know, various schools of Buddhism. There must be. But it is necessary to have mutual understanding. And it is necessary to know the position of various schools. What position does one school have in history of Buddhism, or in the activity-actual activity as a religion, you know? What kind of good points and bad points? And what kind of responsibility every religion has?

And as we concerned-the most concerning point for us is not teaching, you know, but practice. So we cannot practice many things, you know, at the same time [laughs]. So we should stick to one practice. And with full understanding of our practice, as a Soto student it is necessary to stick to shikantaza. But sometime, you know, to practice koan or to understand koan will be helpful. But the key points should be, you know, shikantaza, or Dogen's zazen, or Bodhidharma's zazen, or Buddha's zazen. This point is very important, and all the practice or all the power you will have by zazen practice is based on-should be based on this understanding, or else your practice will become, you know-you will-your practice will end in dead end. It will create more problem for you.

Our practice is like a water, you know. Water is necessary for everyone. Even though wine or, you know, lemon juice tastes good, or ice cream is good [laughs], if you always take ice cream or lemon juice, you know,

you cannot survive. So you should not forget water, you know, the-our practice is like a water. So people liable to forget [laughs] why-you know, water which is so important, but you can find out everywhere [laughs]. So you do not appreciate water so much. But if you forget water, you will eventually get into some trouble. You should not forget water.

This is, you know, my understanding of sectarianism and Dogen's non-sectarian. I think this is not just-Dogen's sectarianism can be non-sectarianism with Christianity or some other religion too. Only if you have this kind of understanding, you know, Christianity is all right. [3-4 words] may be all right [laughs, laughter]. Maybe [laughs, laughter].

But they will not understand, you know [laughs], the point. It is they could understand our point, whatever the religion is, that is very helpful. This is my non-sectarianism. So my sectarianism is sectarianism and non-sectarianism [laughs]. Both. Do you understand? You cannot say it is non-sectarianism, because I am very proud sectarian [laughs].

You cannot change my, you know, understanding. No one can change it [laughs]. The only way is to change their understanding [laughter]. But you only frustrated [?] [laughs, laughter]. Even so I, you know, I do not reject any understanding. And I don't-it does not mean for me there is nothing to study [laughs]. I have to study a lot of things, but there is no need for me to change my foundation of religion.

Because of this foundation, I feel free to study many things, you know. If we-I lose this foundation, you know, I must be a kind of sectarian-very bad sectarian [laughs]. Because I feel some easiness, you know, I have no fear of losing my way. Whatever I study, it is all right.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: Do you and Yasutani-roshi[5] and Soen-roshi[6] have the same foundation?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh yeah, Yasuntan- [partial word]-at least, Yasutani-roshi, you know. I talked about [?] this point, you know. And he agreed with me. He knows what is Soto and what is Rinzai. Hai.

Student B: You were talking about non-sectarianism in Sung China. What does it mean in America?

Suzuki-roshi: In China?

Student B: In America?

Suzuki-roshi: In America there is, you know-because-my feeling is, you know, because your understanding is-first of all, you have no tradition, you know, of Buddhism-there is no Buddhism yet. And we are start to

establish some activity-Buddhist activity here. And you-intellectually you study many things, and you have various understanding, and you-I think some of you already studied under many teachers. So the situation is quite different. In Japan, you know, mostly Soto students study Soto only. But in-between Rinzai and Soto, they-some Rinzai students study Dogen-zenji, and we study Rinzai practice too. But mostly Rinzai student is Rinzai, and Soto students from beginning to end are Soto students.

But here, you know, you have-the way you study is not same as we do in Japan. And this is, I think, something like-this situation is something like the situation Buddhism-or Zen Buddhism started in China after the Sixth Patriarch. They recommended their students to some other teachers. Actually there was not much sectarianism, but there were various kinds of practice or way of giving instruction. And I think we are, you know, in America, under the same situation as they had in China.

So I think it is necessary, you know, for us-for teachers to have closer relationship with each other, you know, and to help students, exchanging students, or having discussion with each other. Or else we cannot help students, you know, if I say we should, you know, practice just Soto or Rinzai [laughs]. They don't know what to do. So students should choose their way. And we should encourage students to find out appropriate teachers. This is, I think, absolutely necessary for us as a teacher. Hai.

Student C: If we-if we feel that it is just a matter of different students needing different methods of instruction to understand the same foundation-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -then there really isn't any cause at all for controversy, and it can be just as fluid as possible. Am I correct?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. I understand in this way, and I think Nakagawa-roshi is also-very much like Soto teacher, you know. He understand Dogen-zenji very well, and Yasutani-roshi is originally Soto teacher, you know. For some reason he became independent from Soto. There is good reason for that. That is not matter of, you know-or that is just matter of activity, not matter of understanding. So I-I don't think there is any problems. Hai.

Student D: I have two short questions. The first one is, you said that it's impossible to attain enlightenment, and that didn't sound too good. So I thought [laughs, laughter], well, maybe you meant that it's possible to attain enlightenment, but we couldn't say that we'll attain anything. Is that what you meant? [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: No. In its, you know-in its usual sense, you know, people



think, "I attain-I attained enlightenment" [laughs]. What is, you know- they-doesn't make much sense, you know. He feels in that way, you know. If, you know, I-but it is true that, you know, you reach step. This is what I'm always talking about [laughs], you know. Whatever it is, that is Buddha himself, you know. And however it is complete, that is not Buddha himself, you know. It something that-as long as it is something which we can understand or which we can see because it has some form or color, that is not-cannot be absolute. We have this, you know, idea.

But usually you do not have this idea, so you stick to enlightenment. Even though you think you attained enlightenment, that is not the absolute itself or, you know, buddha-nature itself. It is something, you know, some expression of buddha-nature.

I was talking with-with a guest about, you know, our-and she had very good understanding. You know, I was amazed [laughs, laughter]. You know, I-I-we have been talking about maybe thirty-forty minutes, standing under the [1 word]-what do you call it?

Student: Trellis.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Trellis. Yeah. She said we are, you know, ornament of it, you know, instead of saying buddha-nature. First of all, he said-she said, he was thinking about the word for buddha-nature, you know. And she said-she said it-and we are tools of it, you know, she said. That was what she said-tools of it. And I said, "Yeah, maybe tools of it." And maybe so-and actually we say, "We ornament of it," you know [laughs]. We, you know, we have various form and color, and we-by our body and mind and we give various ornaments to Buddha to eat, you know. We are ornament of it, and she completely understood about it. And-and she said we are not even a part of it [laughs]-even a part of it because we change it [?] [laughs]. We are just tentative ornament of it [laughs]. I don't know how she-how she, you know, keeps this kind of understanding. It is [1-2 words]. And she was German, and she has some difficulty in pronouncing English words like philosophy [laughs]. And she did not believe in so much philosophy. But she wanted to figure out what is she, you know. And she said, "I am a ornament of it."

And-oh-first of all she said, "I am not I. I am it," [laughs], she said. "I am it." Not "me," "it." That was what she said, you know, before we say not much things-we talk not-not so many. "I am not I, but it." And she started to talk about the relationship between "I" and "it," you know. And I am a ornament of it, a tools of it. And I said maybe ornament of-we say ornament of it. Yeah that's better, she said [laughs].

And next question is-was, what is, then, karma? Karma. That was the second question. And I said karma, yeah, karma is if you do something it will leave a result something, you know. And that result will cause some activity, you know. In this way, we-our activity will continue. And

here we started to talk about, you know, eternal. We didn't say "eternal present," but, you know, cause and effect, cause and effect, cause and effect. And it is karma, and it is also eternal expression of each being or actual ornament of it. In this way we are free from karma. And yet we cannot get out of karma. [Laughs.] [4-6 words] communicate this kind of [laughs] things. I was rather amazed. And she is-she is from Redwood City. I don't know what was her name, you know. She was the lady who was sitting, you know, right there. She is very fat lady, wearing something like this, you know. Do you-do you acknowledge [remember?] it-her?

Student E: Was that today, Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Today.

Student E: Because I-I remember.

Suzuki-roshi: Her blouse was, you know, trimmed like this.

Student E: White blouse with red-

Suzuki-roshi: Red.

Student E: -Indian kind of braid.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, yeah. No, white on white. And there was red or- [laughter]-not like this, but like this [laughter]. That was good design for her, I thought [laughs], because it's, you know, divide her big, you know, body in two [laughs, laughter]-two small pieces [laughs, laughter]. More beautiful in this way. And her friend was waiting for her because they were leaving.

Student F: Roshi, she told me that she felt very awkward about doing zazen and doing the services and bowing. She said she was a little bit frightened.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: But-well-because at every move of your hands or bowing or turning, she said she felt it meant something, but she couldn't understand it. But I think she was very interested to know about it.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. I think she may come back [laughs]. Her understanding is very good, you know. I don't know. Yeah. Her practice is not so good [laughter], you know. And it may be very difficult for her. And if she-she has-she start some diet [laughter]. Some question?

Student G: She just said she was very pleased to be able to talk to you and somewhat surprised that she was able to.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Oh.

Student F: She also wanted to know how come so many people about 25 or 36 years old are trying something like this?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh yes! Yeah. Why-how come do you have so many young students? What is it-oh yeah, that was [2-3 words]. And then we started something about the teaching, you know. How come? And she was very much interested in-to see so many young students here.

May we-? [Chant follows.]

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/21/01).

[1] Opening words were not recorded, but the remainder of the sentence sounded like an aside to a student rather than the beginning of the lecture.

[2] Shonin Shinran (1173-1262). Student of Honen. Founder of Jodo-shin-shu.

[3] inka (Jap.): seal of confirmation.

[4] Tiantong Rujing (Tendo Nyojo): 1163-1228.

[5] Yasutani Hakuun-roshi: 1885-1973. Student of Nishiari Bokusan-zenji and dharma successor of Harada Sogaku-roshi. He is known for his synthesis of Soto and Rinzai practices-especially for using koan practice with Soto students.

[6] Nakagawa Soen-roshi (1908-1983): Rinzai master. Dharma successor of Yamamoto Genpo and abbot of Ryutaku-ji monastery near Mishima. In the West, he taught in the United States and Israel.

## **2 - Non-Sectarianism**

Wednesday, July 24, 1968

Non-Sectarianism  
Tassajara

To have complete understanding of our school or-is at the same time-to unders- [partial word]-to have perfect understanding of the non-sectarianism. I don't know precisely [?] [1-2 words] so much, but last night I briefly talked about how various sect appeared in our history of Buddhism. As I told you last night, at first-when-in China when various

scriptures was-were introduced to China or translated into Chinese-when some group of scriptures, like Prajñāparamita group or Kegon Sutra[1]-each time some important sutra [was] introduced into China, when that sutra was translated into Chinese, they did it under the help of the king. All the learned scholars, not only Buddhist scholars but also Confucian scholars, all the learned scholars in China, you know, participate [in] the translation of some special scriptures, and from China-from India, of course, some teachers. And someone who knows Chinese and Indian Sanskrit translated it into Chin- [partial word]-Chinese, and they-and many people were listening to it. And when they agreed with the translation, they, you know, write down.

In this way, in a big scale, translation was made. So each time the translation [was] made, the people who participated the translation or people who were listening to it, you know, naturally appreciate the big meaning of the teaching, and there they formed some kind of sect. In this way, there were in China there-there was many sects appeared. That is one way of, you know-it is almost by accident [laughs], you know, various schools appeared in China.

But this is not actually the one schools of Buddhism. In its strict sense-in its strict sense, when some great teacher study Buddhism through and through, by all means, not only some special scripture but also many scriptures, and organized the Buddhist thought, and finding out the key points of the Buddhist thought, they organized or systematized whole Buddhism. That is so-called it Kyoso-hanjaku,[2] you know: how you-some stand for it-"taking some stance for it"?-and organize or systematize all the teaching. If someone come to this point, there is no need to study all the scriptures, you know, as he did. The most of people can understand all the scriptures according to his way of understanding it. And actually those teachers who are very great teacher, and his-their characters were so great at the time that people naturally believed in his teaching.

And this is, you know, real-this is-in this way, true schools of Buddhism appeared as Kegon or Tendai, not by accident but by study. And what I was talking about last night is, although they-their understanding of religion is based on his philosophical study of Buddhism, but they also practiced Zen, you know, a kind of Zen.

And I talked about the difference between Bodhidharma's Zen and their zazen. Their zazen is to contemplate on some profound teaching. And to improved-improve their state of mind is their way, you know, by complete-by dwelling on the lofty teaching of Buddhism. And they-they try to have full understanding of it. And they try to improve their state of mind. "State of mind," we say, but this is, you know, it has more deeper meaning, but we say shinkyō-shinji [?][3]-shinkyō? Ji means also "zazen, Zen, or zazen practice." To-to have-to have higher state of mind or to be able to [attain] higher class [?] of zazen, you know, by studying various kinds of our teaching and they meditate on some kind

of teaching.

The difference between our practice and their practice is we, you know, do not, you know-our practice is not to rely on-is not the practice to having some lofty teaching in our mind, and to dwell on this kind of understanding, and to improve our state of mind is not, you know, our way. And why we do not take this way is already-I explained.

In this way, Zen, which does not rely on any teaching, whose practice is not something completely different from the meditation on some teaching started by Bodhidharma. But later, you know, in Sung dynasty, Zen students applied something like kambo [?], or contemplation on some teaching like koan appeared. This is, you know, something more like kambo or Tendai or Kegon practice, and some of them go back to the Mahayana usual practice.

And I compared our practice, which is independent from teaching, and practice which depend on some example or some teaching or some lofty teaching. I compared and-if we become interested in kambo or to-to practice zazen aiming at some higher stage of practice, more and more our practice will become special practice for some selected people or some great teachers. And then [it] will not be everyone's practice.

Why in Heian Period in Japan,[4] various new schools of Zen appeared is -at previous time, the religion-Buddhism become more and more aristocratic, and the people-Buddhists become more and more interested in some fallacy, you know, practice of Buddhism. And naturally their practice became more and more aristocratic-luxurious way, and lost the interest of majority of people. That is why new schools of Buddhism appeared in Kamakura Period.[5]

And even for us there is this kind of danger. If Zen is a practice for just men, or for just learned scholars, or for just great-man of great ability-spiritual ability, Zen will not help people. Actually in Japan, Soto Zen, who put emphasis on our everyday life, not only zazen practice but also everyday life, thinking everyday life is a kind of prac- [partial word]-Zen practice, and having great concern to our everyday life, aiming at spreading Buddhism all at once [?], under some influential-under the influence of some daimyo [6] or government. Just to constantly trying to make them understand, not by some impure motivation, but also-but only just to help others whether they can practice zazen or not, you know. Try and help people by all means, Soto spread little by little until Soto become one of the largest schools in Japan.

But in our history, you know, we never depend on any influential people. Although we helped, you know, for an instance, Emperor Go-Daigo,[7] you know, when he was in small island after [being] defeated by Kamakura government, you know. He didn't know what to do, so [laughs] Soto priests get together and send him something, you know, to the island. In that case we helped, you know, but we never helped,

you know-ask help, or we have no Zen masters of our schools [who] did not [did] like to practice our way under the influence of some patron.

You know, when Dogen-zenji was asked to help Kamakura government, he refused. But the Kamakura government asked him so intensely, so he went to Kamakura for one month and he came back. And he said to him, "If you want to help," you know, "people why don't you be a priest [laughs]? That is the best way. Why don't you give up your position as a, you know, head of the Kamakura government?" So they gave up [laughs]. "This is the best way, I think. Why don't you be a-become a priest?" he said-Dogen said, and he came back.

And there are many and many stories like this at [1 word] period. I think he was Joshu Tengyo [?]. He-he was so famous that Shikana [?] government wanted to invite him to Kyoto. So he, you know-if he stay at his temple, they will force him to come to Kyoto. So when he went for-he took a trip for some [?] day, and he went to the remoted country, and he was practicing zazen. Katsu, the Kamakura-no, Shikana [?] government found out where he was. But they thought-government thought-that was Yoshimi-Yoshimi thought he will-he will not come to Kyoto. So he sent artist, and he-Yoshimi asked the artist to paint his, you know, picture and to bring it back to Kyoto. And the painter-but painter could not meet him, you know, if he knows-if Joshu Tengyo knows he is making picture of him for the government, he will refuse it [laughs]. So he was hiding himself under the bridge [laughs]. And he was, you know, going to zendo, you know [laughs], and he draw his image and went back to Kyoto. And that is one of the national treasures [laughs, laughter].

In this way, you know, as you know, Soto Zen is peasant [?] Zen [laughs]-form of Zen, people say, you know, because we didn't have any support from daimyo or government-from outside. But there is some reason why we should be a farmer. For us there is no influential people or farmer. They are all Buddhist for us. As Dogen-zenji said, "You may say merchant is not Zen monk. But for Zen monks, there is no merchant or no Zen monks. They are all Zen students." This is our understanding of practice. So whatever we do, whether they realize or not, actually we are all practicing zazen. And why it is so is the-is the things I explained in my lecture [last night].

As you know, in Gakudo-yojin-shu[8] is ten instructions to-for the students how study Zen. He says our Zen is not kambo [?] like, you know-in one practice-practice which include three thousands of dharma, you know.[9] That kind of practice is not our practice, or he says the teaching of transiency is the found- [partial word]-people may say, is the foundation of the Buddha's teaching. But that is not, you know, something which you will know after you study Buddhism. Even though you don't study it [laughs], you know, that is actual truth, you know. That everything changes is actual truth, and it is not Buddhism. This is interpreted [?] [laughs]-outward [?] truth for Buddhist-for Buddhist and

as well as for everyone. So this is not, you know, just-this is not-those teachings are not just our teaching, but the teaching for everyone. Even though Buddha didn't tell it-talk about it, that is truth. That is a truth which I-we, you know, are observing every day. So there is no need to depend on teaching. But the most important thing is to practice and realize our true nature is the most important point [laughs]. This is, you know, Zen. If so everyone has, you know-as long as we have buddha-mind, Buddhism is for everyone.

In this way, Zen school established without depending on any teaching, any particular teaching. So Zen student use various scriptures, you know. We do not say this is the most important scripture or this is not so important. We do not say that. Whatever the teaching may be, that teaching will help at least someone. Not all or-it may not be for all of them, but it will help someone. So it is like a medicine, you know, medicine or prescription, you know. For some patient some particular prescription is necessary, but we cannot say this is better prescription or this is not so good. If it is appropriate-if you use it in appropriate way, that is the test of prescription. We understand in this way.

So far I-[is] what I talked about last night. Tonight, you know, I want to explain shikantaza. We say "just to sit." What does it mean by just to sit?

Some monk asked a Zen master, [10] "It is very hot [laughs]. How is it possible to sit somewhere where no hot or no cold weather come?"

The master-the master's answer was, "When it is hot, you should be hot buddha [laughs, laughter]. When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha [laughs]."

That is "just to sit." When it is hot, you should be hot buddha. When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha. But, you know, this is very direct, you know, understanding of the story. Actually it says when it is hot, you should kill hot. When it is cold, you should kill cold by practice. It says so.

But according to Dogen-zenji, you know, when it is cold you should be a cold buddha, and when it is hot you should be a hot buddha. But if you-if you say "kill," you know, "kill" is extra [laughs]. If you say "kill," you know, or "to attain enlightenment," you know, "attain" is extra. You know, when your practice is not good, you are a poor buddha [laughs]. When-if your practice is good, you are good Buddha. And poor and good is also independent buddha, you know. Poor is buddha, and you are buddha, and good is buddha, and you are buddha too. For every word, or whatever you think, whatever you say, every word become buddha. Then there is no trouble [laughs], you know. I am buddha. If I say "I am buddha," "I" is buddha, "am" is buddha, "b" is buddha, and "buddha" is of course buddha. Buddha, buddha, buddha [laughs, laughter]. That is how you say buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha

[laughs, laughter]. There is no need to translate it into English, you know [laughs, laughter]. There is no need to [be] bothered by fancy, you know, explanation of Buddhism [laughs]. If you say "buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha" [laughs], that is the way. That is shikantaza, you know: everything is buddha. So sitting is buddha, lying down is buddha, and whatever you say, you know, each word is buddha. He understand in this way, so he said, "When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha. When it is hot, you should be hot buddha."

If you understand-actually when you practice zazen, you know, with-with this understanding, that is true zazen. Even though we say "just sit," but to understand what does it mean is rather difficult, maybe. So that is why Dogen-zenji left us so many teachings to explain what is just to sit. But it does not mean his teaching is so difficult. When you sit, you know, without thinking or without expecting anything, and when you accept yourself as a buddha or as a tools of buddha or ornament of buddha, or if you understand everything is the unfolding of the absolute teaching or truth or [2-3 words], or if you understand everything is a part of the great being-one whole being, when you reach this understanding, whatever we say, whatever we think, or whatever we see, that is the actual teaching of Buddha. And whatever we do, that is actual practice of the Buddha himself.

The problem is-because you sit, or because you do something-trying to do something, that is the trouble. Or if you do not understand what it is, you think nothing result or nothing exist. Or if you feel you can rely on something-no teaching-teaching means nothing. But before you try to rely on it, teaching exists, you know. Before you attain enlightenment, enlightenment is there [laughs]. That is true. It is not after you attain enlightenment, you know, you un- [partial word]-it is not because you attained enlightenment [that] enlightenment appears. Because enlightenment is always there, so if you realize it that is enlightenment. If you think enlightenment is something, some particular thing which you can reach for or which you can attain, so sometime you will be discouraged because you are seeking for it, and you think that is something which can be attained. But if it is not possible, you know-if you do not feel it-it was possible to attain it, you will be discouraged. And you will give up the practice and you will try to find out some other teaching which is, you know, worth while to strive for. And in this way you will change your way from one to the other. And you have no time, you know, to realize you-our true nature which is universal to everyone.

So whether you can realize it or attain enlightenment or not is minor problem-not so big problem. If you realize it or if you attain enlightenment, that's all the better. But even though you don't, you know, there is no need to seek for some special teaching because the teaching is always here.

This is something, you know-this kind of understanding will be difficult for you to accept, you know, I-I-I think. After practicing, you know, one



or two months, if you don't think you make-you have made some progress, you will change-you will give up in seeking for something good. But religion is not-true religion cannot be obtained in that way. This kind of a way is the way to attain something in more materialistic sense.

But true spiritual way cannot be like this. The way to work on spiritual things is quite different from the way to work on something which is more materialistic. Even though you talk about spiritual things, that is not actually spiritual. That is a kind of substitute for the [laughs] spiritual things.

That you are here means, you know, that you will vanish [laughs]. Something, you know, which exist-things which exist are bound to be vanished, you know. So something which you attained cannot be perpetual attainment. Something which you cannot, you know, figure out what it is will exist forever. Something which exist before everything appear will exist forever. So as long as you seek for something, you know, you will get just shadow of the reality, not actual one. But when you do not seek for anything-only when you do not seek for anything you-you have it. So when you do not try to attain enlightenment, you have it, you know. When you-because you try to attain something you lose it. And renunciation is, you know, could be attained when A is just A and B is just B. Because A tried to be a C or a D [laughs], there is, you know, problem. A should-because A is just A, and A is bound to be disappear, that is renunciation, you know.

If you, you know, always stay in that way, that is not renunciation-that is attachment which does not exist. That is delusion. So A should be just A, B should be just B. And A should vanish, you know, in the form of A, and that will appear again in some form of C or D. And C or D should vanish in that form. C or D should not try to be, you know, [laughs], at the same time something different. So when you just sit and when you appreciate your being fully in your sitting, that is, you know, to lose your mind and body before you lose it.

When you have no mind and body, you have no problem [laughs, laughter]. Because you say, "This is mind and this is," you know, "body-body should not be the burden of the spirit," or something like that. "We should," you know, "mind should work hard to control our body" something like this. In this case, mind is not mind. Mind is delusion, and body is also delusion. And delusion and delusion is fighting.

What is practice, you know? We-when we were young, we disc- [partial word]-when we have discussion, we used to discuss about what is bodhisattva's way to save others before we saved [laughs] ourselves. What does it mean? Is it possible to save others before we save ourselves? That kind of thing. And what is the goal of practice, and-and-or what is idea and what is the reality-reality in its ordinal [ordinary] sense? And reality cannot be, you know, the ideas. The practice will be

the bridge to the reality to idea. This kind of, you know, discussion we had.

But according to Dogen-zenji, you know, practice is practice-practice buddha, reality is the reality buddha, idea is idea buddha [laughs]. There is no problem [laughs, laughter]. When you practice, there is no Buddha or no human being. That is-that which exist is the-just practice. When you say: "I am," you know, "human being," the hu- [partial word]-it means human-being-buddha-another name of buddha. We understand in that way.

So there is no need to have bridge to the, you know-to the other shore. Other shore is other-shore buddha, this shore is this-shore buddha [laughs]. Just name is different but actually everything is Buddha by himself. Bridge is ornamental Buddha, and this shore is also ornamental Buddha. The other shore is also ornamental Buddha.

And each being is necessary. How they attain renunciation is just to be this shore, you know-this shore, the other shore-and the other shore. And they are bound to be vanish, you know [laughs], as long as they actually exist it should-it should vanish. It cannot be in that way always. So when one-because one is just one, it is possible to vanish, you know. If it is possible for one to be something else, you know, he-it maybe perpetual being, but that is perpetual being in its wrong understanding. It is a kind of delusion because no such thing actually exists.

So to be just, you know, A like A-only when we satisfy ourselves as A, you know-as me, there is, you know, chance to-to have realization or there is chance to vanish [laughs], you know. It is necessary to vanish [laughs]. If you don't, you are ghost [laughs] in your delusion. Something that which exist should vanish, you know. Is there something which doesn't vanish forever?

So we say "just to sit," but this word-just A should be A, directly point out the liberation from A. Just because you try to be something else, you know, you lose your reality. Do you understand? So we should be just-I should be just me. Then, at the same time, I have liberation. I have enlightenment. I am not ghost [laughs]. I exist here, you know. I am Buddha himself. I am not ghost. This is, you know, just to sit.

And this is not some, you know, fancy teaching at all, you know [laughs]. This is direct teaching. There-there can be no more-there can be any other teaching so direct, you know. "Just to sit" is the most direct teaching. You cannot [laughs] say no or yes even, before you-you cannot say anything about it: "just to sit" [laughs]. So we say "just to sit." There is no more teaching.

This is not something-because-something you understand because I say so, you know. This is not teaching you believe in because Buddha say so. This is actual ultimate truth, you know. And only way to attain

renunciation without any problem-without causing any problem for anyone: just to be myself, you know. No problem whatsoever.

This is what we mean by "just to sit." So those-those masters who understand Soto way, you know, may use instead of "just to sit," they may say, you know, they may give you koan mu. What is mu? "Just to sit is mu" [laughs]. There is no difference. And this just to sit will be various kinds of koan, actually. So there may be thousands of koan for us, but if you can sit shikantaza, shikantaza include various power of practice. And this is the direct way to the enlightenment, or renunciation, or nirvana-whatever you say.

Thank you very much. Do you have questions? Hai.

Student A (Bill Shurtleff): It seems that on some evenings you emphasize the idea of non-attainment-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: -and that there is nothing to do except simply to give up and to just sit and to be whatever you are at each instant.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: And yet at other times, it seems that you speak of exerting your best effort. And when I think of exerting my best effort, it's in order to attain something. In other words, exerting my best effort to keep good posture, or you said that it's important, if you can, to cross your legs in full lotus, which is very difficult and requires great deal of effort.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Bill: Why do you bother speaking about effort at all? Why not simply stay to the teaching of not trying to do anything at all? [5-6 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. That is very good question. Yeah. You know-anyway, you know, even though I say stay, you know, and do whatever you like, you know, you are doing [laughs] something, you know, with some effort [laughs, laughter]. Can you do it without any effort-something? No, you cannot. Anyway you have some problem, you know. So it is better to have some good problem rather than bad one [laughs, laughter]. If you don't sit, you know-if you don't come to Tassajara, I don't know what you are doing right now [laughs] at city. I don't know [laughs, laughter].

But to have this, you know, kind of accurate, you know, understanding of ourself is very important, you know. It is like to-it is same thing to have a clock, you know. To know it is ten past nine is very important. But actually, there is no such time, you know [laughs]. It is no ten past nine, you know. When I am saying something [laughs], it will be eleven

past ten [nine] [laughs].[11] I am pointing up-at something, you know, which is non-verbal, you know. We say "just to sit," but this "just to sit" is extra, you know [laughs].

There may be some question like this: You know, if everything is, you know, one big whole being, according to-I don't know what-according to the ladies whom I met last night-yesterday to eat, you know-what is it-in some direction-in what way A is changing, you know? You will have this kind of question. And if you sit, you know-if you-if your purpose of zazen is just to sit, you know, is it possible to improve yourself, or which direction [laughs] you are going, you know: This kind of problem will be next question.

But before you realize who you are, you know, it is not possible for you to go your own direction. Because you-you are bound by some idea, you don't-you cannot find out your way for yourself. Only when you can "just to sit" you can find out your own way-best way for it. This kind of thing is, you know-I am explaining it as if it-this is some good teaching, you know [laughs], as if I know something-some secret, you know. But it is not so. I am speaking about everyone's own way. That is why we, you know-we put emphasis on "just to sit," because everyone has his own way and myriad of ways or dharmas. And moment after moment, you will find out your own way when you "just to sit," when you [are] exactly you yourself.

Student B: What about "just philosophizing"?

Suzuki-roshi: Philosophizing?

Student B: Just philosophizing. Just anger? Just anger?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student B: Just anger.

Suzuki-roshi: Just anger?

Student B: You know, just killing?

Suzuki-roshi: Just killing?

Student B: Yeah. Is-is there any distinction between that and just sitting?

Suzuki-roshi: Just killing? Just be angry?

Student B: That's foolish.

Suzuki-roshi: That's foolish.

Student B: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, there is big distinction, you know. That is why we sit, you know [loud laughter]. You cannot be angry. Anger is-appears, you know, when you lose yourself, you know, and when you-you are enslaved by B or C, you know.

Student B: But if you "just do it," how can you lose it?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: I-I think he means if you could, say, just be angry and nothing else-like "just sit."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. That is not possible [laughs] when you're angry, you know. Anger last pretty long time, you know.

Student B: Just that long.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Just that long.

Suzuki-roshi: Just at the moment?

Student B: Yeah-no longer, no shorter. You're just angry. Angry, angry, angry [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: But that is not possible [laughs]. You cannot be always angry, you know.

Student B: But you stop.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Yeah, until you stop. And if you forget all about it after you, you know, you are angry, that is good. But when it lasts, you know, so long time unnecessarily because of the idea of, you know, "I became angry," you know. "I-I'm no good." Or, "He made me angry" [laughs, laughter]. And more and more, you know, you will have, you know, more angry, you know-you will become more angry because you are not just you. That is, you know, that is why we say you cannot just to sit when you're angry. Anger is something-or delusion or anger or greediness is-means-or appears when you are not just you.

Student B: Isn't it possible to become so angry you forget about all that? Or just to become so foolish or so stupid or so ignorant you don't think about anything else?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't think so for human being. If you are animal, you know, they may-they may be able to do it. But for us, that is not possible.

Student D: Well what about loving?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: Loving has also this feeling of not letting go.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Loving.

Student D: Loving, yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Loving, yeah, also, you know, according to our understanding, just love is not, you know-love usually is very ego-centered idea. And we know it. But we make some excuse [laughs, laughter] for it. But we know pretty well, you know, why I love her, you know. There is many "because, because, because" [laughs, laughter], and you don't "just love" anyone.

Student E: What does "form is form" mean, then?

Suzuki-roshi: "Form is form"-form is form means, you know, form is emptiness, emptiness is form, and form is form, and emptiness is emptiness. There is four, you know, meaning in it. Before you say, in its true sense, "form is form," you should get through "form is emptiness" and "emptiness form." Or else, that "form is form" is just-doesn't mean anything.

Student E: Well how about-how about Dogen-how he cut his finger and got angry at the knife after he understood that form is form. Would that anger be anger and nothing else-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh-oh-who did you say?

Student E: -and make him forget that his finger is cut and that's it?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Not Dogen but [laughter]-

Student E: Keizan?

Suzuki-roshi: No. No. Gutei. What do you mean?

Student E: No, I mean anybody. Doesn't-not the-not the koan. But suppose-couldn't somebody under-who understands what-does understand what "form is form" means-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -couldn't that include anger?

Suzuki-roshi: I-

Student F [David Chadwick]: You said your master always used to get angry at you, right? Something like that.

Suzuki-roshi: The, you know-anger-when anger-we don't say anger is not good, you know. But anger-when anger is just anger, that is-we cannot say that is bad, you know. But anger-if anger find out some excuse, you know-if you find out some excuse for being angry, for yourself or for some purpose, that is not just anger. So anger should be just anger, but that is-unless you practice, you know, our way or unless you understand what does it mean, "form is form" or "emptiness is emptiness," it is rather hard, you know, to be just angry like a thunderstorm [makes sound like thunder] [laughs]. Next moment nothing [laughs]. That is beautiful, you know. [Makes loud sound like thunder.] [Laughs, laughter.] That's all. This is very good for-for himself and for others too, you know. If you could do so-I wish I can do so, but [makes sound like thunder] [laughs, laughter]. I think you have more possibility, you know, in this kind of anger [makes sound like thunder] [laughs, laughter]. And I think you will be a good student, you know, better than Japanese people.

You know, Japanese people think anger is [laughs, laughter] [probably gestures]. Here is, you know-his heart is boiling [laughs, laughter]. And his face is, you know, as calm as water [laughs, laughter]. And this is not so good, you know [laughter]. But if-if that is for sake of some- [partial word]-for to be more kind to others or something, it may be all right, but, you know, because-if that is because to keep his own prestige or something, it is no good [laughs, laughter]. It's much better to be natural. And to be natural is very, you know-some effort is necessary, you know, some special kind of effort like you "just to sit" without leaning like this or, you know, too much tension.

Student E: So it is all right if the most famous of all samurai masters goes [makes two swift, cutting sounds] all the time?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student E: Is it all right if the most famous-I mean, if a samurai master-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -knows-knows Buddhism-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. After.

Student E: -through and through, is it all right for him to kill?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe [laughs]-maybe, but that kind of thing will not happen to him [laughter]. He should have complete freedom, but he- there will be no need to, you know, to use all the-all his ability. In all of

his ability, you know-one phrase is enough, you know, for-that is one of the ten powers. To save people just by one phrase or one blink of eye is enough. And here again, I must talk about-oh [laughter]-our-

Student E: Did you kill something in the [1 word]?

Suzuki-roshi: -you know-as I said, you know, it is-as-even though we are all Buddha, you know, but there is someone who ac- [partial word]-actually [is] aware of being Buddha and who are not aware of it. So for the enlightened person, everyone is Buddha. But for those who are not aware of it, you know, he is not Buddhist.

So for Buddhist it is necessary to make some special effort to lead-to help people. That is, you know, our-that is a duty for the enlightened one. But enlightened one has some ability or some-to save-to help people in various way-various ways of-he-whether they mistake him or not, he is actually helping people. In this way, you know, our religion exist in social framework. This is, you know-Soto school has been developed in Japan. All the Soto students or believers are not, you know, Zen student. But they know somehow who is good teacher and who is not. And they rather believe in-believe in him rather than believe in his teaching, or Buddha's teaching, or teaching of Dogen, or Shobogenzo. He-they just believe in his way or his character. In this way, you know, Soto developed. And among the people we had many good teachers-good teacher appears from believers or supporters. In this way Soto developed. And this is the characteristic of Soto school.

So in comparison to Soto, Rinzai, you know, teachers has not much students or not much followers, or their organization is divided in many-I don't know how many. If one temple has a branch-five- or ten-branch temple, that is, you know, head temple-independent temple. But most of Rinzai students are people who actually practice zazen. This is very good for it, you know. Even though they have-they do not have many followers, the followers they have is sincere students who practice zazen. But the practice itself, you know, is very narrow. You know, it is a kind of, you know, practice special to some special people, you know. So that is why Rinzai school does not develop among the-do not have many supporters. That is bad points-bad point of Rinzai school.

So we cannot compare actually-we cannot say Soto is good or Rinzai is good. It is difficult to say which is better. I think both is-both should, Rinzai and Soto, should exist.

Suzuki-roshi: What is your question?

Student F: In The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk, [12] D. T. Suzuki says that there was the invention of the koan that made-that enabled Zen to survive in China because it made it more available-because it was a simpler thing that the m- [partial word]-that you could use-a simpler thing, in a way.



Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: What is your feeling about that statement?

Suzuki-roshi: You know, if, you know, if to practice zazen is only way to propagate Buddhist teaching, you know, koan Zen is better than just to sit. You see? That is better. Because more people will be interested in [it] because that is a kind of candy. So it is better to have candy than to have nothing else. You see? So if, you know, Zen is something-just to sit in cross-legged position, like this all day long, or to behave [laughs] like a Zen master always-uuuh [serious-sounding grunt]-[laughs, laughter], if that is Zen, you know, the koan Zen is better than shikantaza [laughs]. That is better, much better [laughs]. But I don't think Zen is just to sit like this, or Zen master should be always like this, you know, like a general [laughs, laughter]. What do you think [laughs]? Even Zen master, you know, as a descendent of a buddha, you know, he should not be like always general or samurai [laughs]. He should be Buddha, you know-as a descendent of Buddha.

So if you understand in this way, first of all you should, you know, have-you should be able to accept things as it is, and you should be able to help others in various way, not just by sitting. So although we have no koan, we have various kinds of way of helping people, not just by sitting. Ahh. Do you understand?

Student F: A little.

Suzuki-roshi: Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/2/01). An edited version appeared in *Wind Bell*, Fall 1968, Vol. VII (No. 3-4), pp. 26-31.

[1] *Buddhavatamsaka-sutra* (Jap. *Kegon-kyo*).

[2] *Kyoso-hanjaku*: Classification of Buddhist tenets according to a sectarian standpoint. The founders of Chinese and Japanese sects adopted the classifications as their respective doctrines.

[3] *shin*: mind. *kyo*: object. *shinkyō*: subject and object. *shinji*: "mind-ground"; the mind or mental state.

[4] The period between 794 and 1185, named after the location of the imperial capital, which was moved from Nara to Heian-kyō (Kyoto) in 794.

[5] The period from 1192 to 1333, during which the Kamakura shogunate reigned.

[6] daimyo: (Jap. literally "great name") a feudal lord of a province or castle.

[7] Go-Daigo-tenno: 1319-1338. 96th Emperor of Japan. He was exiled to Chiburi island in 1331.

[8] Gakudo-yojin-shu (1234): A fascicle by Dogen-zenji in which he lists ten rules for the beginning practitioner.

[9] "Reflect on your ordinary mind. ... Is it endowed with the essence and appearance of the three thousand worlds in a single moment of thought? ... No." (Dogen-zenji, Gakudo-yojin-shu, in Yuho Yokoi, Ed., Zen Master Dogen, New York: Weatherhill, 1976, p. 49.)

[10] Case 43 of Hekiganroku (The Blue Cliff Record), "Tozan's 'No Cold or Heat.'" It is also found in Dogen-zenji's Shobogenzo "Shunju."

[11] Perhaps: "By the time I have said something else, it will be eleven past nine."

[12] D. T. Suzuki, The Training of the Zen Buddhism Monk. Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, 1934.

## **1968 augustus (1)**

### **1 - The Bodhisattva's Ten Powers**

Sunday, August 25, 1968

The Bodhisattva's Ten Powers  
San Francisco[1]

This morning I want to continue the explanation of the ten powers. This-those ten powers are that of bodhisattva's ten powers.[2]

One is the devotion to the Buddha's teaching and no attachment to anything else. The second one is increasing one's devotion. The third is expedient ability to instruct people and alter their conduct. The fourth one is understanding what people think. And fifth is satisfying people with what they want. And sixth-unceasing [no cessation] of exertion. The seventh one including all vehicles or all teaching-teachings without abounding-aban- [partial word]-without giving-up Mahayana way-Mahayana way. The eighth one is mysterious power of showing the appearance of the Buddha in every world in each pores of-pores of the body. The ninth-ninth is making people turn towards Buddhism and leading people to perfection. The last one is satisfying all kinds of men

with even a single phrase. Those are ten powers.

I explained last-yesterday the first one and the second one, and the last one-satisfying all kinds of men with even a single phrase. Ninth one-or eighth one, the mysterious power of showing the appearance of the Buddha in each world, in each pores of the body. And second one, yeah-and the first one, devotion to the Buddha's teaching and no attachment to anything. This is our practice, which cannot compare with any other activities we have or any other effort we make.

So-and all that we do or all that we think is not absolute itself, you know. So there is no reason why we should attach to it. The only thing we should observe is as a absolute is the emptiness, you know, which is the absolute in its true sense, which is quite different from somethingness, you know [laughs]. All what you do is somethingness [laughs], and you cannot understand emptiness. So that is why it is called emptiness.

And emptiness is, in usual activity, is not the goal of practice or purpose of activity or aim of activity. This much I explained. The only way to realize the absolute is through our practice-through-in its true sense.

And I explained the eighth one: the mysterious power of showing the appearance of the Buddha in each world in each pores of body-of the body. That is actually, you know, zazen practice. Another, you know-this is actually the explanation of our shikantaza. When you, you know, practice zazen in its true sense, actually you are Buddha himself, and in each pore of-pores of your body you have so many worlds [laughs]. And in that world each of the world-worlds, there is Shakyamuni Buddha. This is explanation of our shikantaza.

And when you, you know, practice our way as a one unified activity, mind and body, and each parts of your body from the end of your nail to the [laughs] tip of your head-top of your head. And I always explain how you do it, you know: That is to-to have right posture. Having some strength here [probably pointing to hara], and having perfect mudrahere, like this, and you feel as if you are trying to open your arm little bit. This way. And when you do this, on the contrary, you sh-[partial word]-you know-your arm, you know-open your-you open your arm, and on the contrary you pull your neck-pull your chin and stretch your neck as if you are supporting something on your head. And you have strength here, especially when you inhale. In other word, your inhaling comes to the bottom of your tummy. At that time you, you know, you feel as if you are opening your arms. Actually it shouldn't move, but [by?], and you should pull your neck. And when you exhale, without losing your power here in your tummy or putting some more power in your tummy, you exhale.

So your mind pervade all over your body. And all the parts of your body are participating one activity. So we say [one word unclear]-Dogen-zenji

says in his instruction, Gotsu-Gotsugotsu toishite zajo. [3] Gotsugotsu toishite means "like a mountain," you know, which one your body should be, like a one big mountain. And he said "think non-thinking-think non-thinking," you know. When you do this, you cannot think, you know. So-but your mind is pervading every parts of your body. So that is "think non-thinking," not usual thinking in term of good or bad. But your mind is everything and is every parts of your body. When you think in that-when you practice zazen in that way, figuratively speaking, manifesting the Buddha in each world, in every pore of your body, that much I explained yesterday.

[Aside.] Would you bring me that blackboard? The other side.

[Speaking from blackboard. Appears to be writing or drawing on it.] That stage, you know, you are assuming your zazen practice is perfect, you know [laughs, laughter]. That stage is definitely [taps blackboard]. [3-5 words unclear] white-white is relative. Each part of your body or mind-or you say "mind or body." That is relative-relative, and relative unified with absolute-with the absolute-the relative unified with the absolute. Where you have one soul or unity of practice. This is-oh-and-this is-excuse me-this is-this is blackboard [laughs, laughter]. This is black, this is white, as you see [laughs, laughter]. But for me [laughs], this is white and this is black [laughter]. Black, you know, signify the absolute, you know, and white signify the relative. This is nighttime. This is daytime. Nighttime you cannot see anything, you know, but daytime you will see everything in its relative sense. But absolute-you don't see, you don't hear, you don't think. That is the absolute.

So when-when you one with your practice, one is black, or here. When you-when your everyday activity become one with black, then that is the stage [returns from blackboard] when-when manifestation of black or the absolute-this is the realization of bud- [partial word]-black. [Returns to blackboard.] Although there is black and white, those are two sides of the one coin. If you see from front, it may be the black-black, here, you know. It should be all black, but it-to make some distinction from here, we use this symbol. But this actually black, and this is white. And this is the absolute, and this is the relative. And this are-those things is the stage you [returns from blackboard] acquire by the practice of shikantaza. [Returns to blackboard.]

And there is also some difference in the way of practice-in the w- [partial word]-in Rinzai and Soto. Soto puts emphasis on this one [taps blackboard], rather [?], and Rinzai puts emphasis on this one. So Rinzai puts emphasis on enlightenment, you know, black, and we put emphasis on [returns from blackboard] the each part of the body, you know, which participate with the practice of the absolute. So that is why we, you know-we concerned about mudra or posture or every form or manner of your activity.

So we put emphasis on white in everyday activity or each part of your

body or mind. But Rinzai puts emphasis on the black, which is the perfect enlightenment. But perfect enlightenment-realization of perfect enlightenment is possible when each part of your body, you know, work together and attain oneness of each part-each-every parts-every part. But there is actually-there is no difference when you attain it.

And now-here I must explain the third power: the expedient ability to instruct people and alter their conduct. This is, you know, this stage [returns to blackboard and points]-especially this one. [Returns from blackboard.] Expedient ability. In Mahayana Buddhism, expedient is more important, you know, rather than the original way, or black, or the absolute. Without, you know, relative, the absolute does not mean anything [laughs], you know-emptiness, just emptiness. And actually when you say "just emptiness," that is not-that is idea of emptiness, not actual emptiness. When we attain emptiness by all parts of our body, that is real emptiness, you know, actual emptiness. When everything exist in its own way and express-and express the absolute, you know, we call it a true emptiness.

So emptiness-because of somethingness, emptiness makes sense. So we rather put emphasis on somethingness or everyday activity without sticking to some idea of emptiness. But it is, you know, interesting to talk about emptiness, you know [laughs, laughter]. Whatever you say, that is emptiness [laughs], you know. If you have good friend to talk about emptiness, you know, you can talk about the emptiness whatever you like [laughs]. Whatever you say, that is emptiness [laughs, laughter]. And you can enjoy the discussion of emptiness [laughs, laughter]. But-but that is not, you know, the emptiness we mean [laughs, laughter]. But this kind of understanding helps, you know, our study, of course. And we should not say, you know, you should not write anything about Buddhism or talk anything about Buddhism.

Whatever you say, that is not emptiness itself but it is the good expedient or good devices, you know. To instruct people-expedient ability to instruct people and alter their conduct. If someone is too rigid, or someone is too-is person [partial?] to some idea of emptiness, or relative, or some kind of teaching, we can correct their understanding by the expedience. So whatever the teaching are, those teaching are just good devices. And good devices is very important. And to have power of good devices is one of the important point for us. And to-so whatever you do, that activity should be good devices to instruct people [laughs]. You should be good example of-example for the people.

So expedient ability. Why you will-you have expedient ability is because you do not think that what you are doing is the absolute itself. You know this is expedient. But this is something which you should do with kindness-with the same mercy as Buddha's mercy. That is the actual power we have as a Zen student.

So-but this expedient or good devices is not usual devices, you know.

This is the devices-this is old activity. Each activity which we do moment after moment, that is-all what you do is good devices. And to express and realization of the absolute-in this-when you understand the third power in this way, this is nothing different from the ninth one-or-oh, eighth one-mysterious power of showing the appearance of the Buddha in every world in each pores of the-in each pore of the body. You know, the meaning is the same.

And I think I-I explained the fourth one, which is understanding what people think. Or satisfying the fifth one is satisfying people with what they want. When you are doing something with calmness of your mind, with good concentration, without being involved in any prejudice, or without sticking to your own viewpoint, then you know things-you see things as it is. So you know-so you know what people want, like Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. So satisfying people with what they want, this power naturally will appear.

And the sixth one: no cessation of exertion. And this no cessation of exertion take place when the tenth power-when you obtain the tenth power, which is satisfying all kinds of men with even a single phrase. And devotion to the Buddha's teaching, and no-and no attachment to anything-to anything. You know, when-when you devote yourself to your practice, you will have-you will have the power of understanding through everything and through various teaching-verbal teaching and non-verbal teaching.

So you will have incessant practice when you-because you hear-because you see-observe the truth through verbal or-and non-verbal things. You increase your [3-6 words], and because you-in this way, [2-3 words] devotion, you will hear everything as Buddha's teaching. So in this way, back and forth, you will practice our way endlessly and, as Dogen-zenji said, without any trace of it, you know, this kind of practice will continue. This kind of pure practice will continue forever, endlessly. This is the power we obtain through our practice.

The seventh is including all vehicles-all the teachings without abandoning the Mahayana. The Mahayana teaching, in its wide sense-our teaching-our teaching in its wide sense is everything in its wide sense. In its narrow sense, teaching is something which was told by some sage. That is the teaching in its narrow sense. But in its wide sense, everything is the teaching for us: the color of the mountain, the sound of the river, or sound of the motorcar [laughs] even [is] a teaching of Buddha. We understand in this way.

So including all teaching, without abandoning the Mahayana. When we understand our way, and when we practice our way, we cannot, you know-whatever teaching you observe, that is our teaching-our Mahayana teaching. So you cannot, you know [laughs], abandon Mahayana way-our way. When you have true understanding of our practice, that is including all vehicles, without abandoning the Mahayana

vehicle.

Those are the ten powers.

[Transcription was stopped here. Sound quality was too poor to continue without enhancement.]

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/23/01). All text was checked to this point.

[1] This date is probably incorrect. Earlier (July 21, 1968) Suzuki-roshi mentioned that he had already explained the ten powers of a bodhisattva. So this lecture was probably given sometime earlier in July of 1968.

[2] This version of the ten powers follows very closely the Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, Daito Shuppansha, 1965 (p. 153, under juriki).

[3] Gotsu is repeated for emphasis. It means "high and level," "lofty," or "motionless." Its original connotation was to a table mountain-hence, something imposing and balanced (Nishijima and Cross, Shobogenzo, Vol. 2, p. 91). Gotsu is a key term in the exchange between Yakusan and a monk on thinking non-thinking, which Dogen cites in Shobogenzo "Zazenshin" as well as Fukan Zazen-gi.

## **1968 oktober (14)**

### **1 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #8**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #8  
Zen Mountain Center

Buddha's disciples were very good people, generous and honest and sincere, but they were, I think, very tough guys, and his followers were very strong people. For instance, as you know, the Diamond Sutra was recited at the place called, in Japanese, Giju-gi kkodoku-on [Skt.: Jetavananathapindadarama], the park given to Buddha by Prince Jeta. The story is that when Sudatta wanted to provide Buddha with a place to stay, he looked for some lodging place, and at last he found a beautiful place which was the property of Prince Jeta. So he asked the Prince to give it to the Buddha. The Prince didn't say yes, but said, "If

you pay as much money as it takes to pave the land with coins, I will give it to you." Sudatta was also a very wealthy person, so he said, "Okay, I will do that." And he bought a lot of coins and started to pave that land. Prince Jeta was very impressed by him and said, "Okay, okay. I will donate it to your boss."

That was where the Diamond Sutra was told. [Here Suzuki-roshi starts to recite the sutra. It sounded something like this, but I doubt the spelling is right-Brian Fikes.] "Gije reko do ban, yo dai biku shu dai myo \_\_\_\_\_." That is how we recite the Diamond Sutra in Japan. This is Chinese, actually, not Japanese. We are still reciting the old Chinese pronunciation as people did it, maybe, more than one thousand years ago. Anyway, that park was given to him by Prince Jeta.

Not only his followers, but also his students were very tough people. I didn't talk about Aniruddha yet. Aniruddha was famous for his supernatural power [abhijna]. The way he gained that supernatural power is very interesting. Once he slept when Buddha was giving a lecture. He was one of the seven, or more, priests who belonged to the Shakya family. Maybe Buddha was too familiar to him, so he started to sleep. But Buddha blamed him for drowsiness, so he decided not to sleep anymore. Very tough. He didn't go to bed after that. And, at last, he lost his sight. Giba [Jivaka] was a very famous teacher, and Buddha asked him to take care of his eyes. But since he didn't go to bed, he couldn't do anything with him. He lost his physical eyes, but he gained the spiritual eye.

I think Buddha's character was very gentle, but his spirit was very strong. Yesterday morning I told you about the four sufferings or eight sufferings. To come into this world is already suffering, and old age, sickness, death, not to be able to get what we want, not to be able to see who you love most, that you cannot always be with someone you love, and that you will always see someone you don't like. This kind of teaching is very negative, or, at least, it is based on a kind of negative feeling.

But think of why Buddha escaped from the castle. He did not escape because he wanted to seclude himself on a remote mountain. When he saw sick people and poor people and old people having a difficult time in the city around his castle, as their prince, he felt a kind of responsibility for them. His notion was to save them, to find out some way to help them, completely. I think he's a very extraordinary person. Almost all people, even in Buddha's time, must have resigned from the problem of death or sickness. Even though we do not like to die, this comes to everyone. So we think it can't be helped, there is no possibility for us to conquer this kind of problem; there is no possibility of helping people who are going to die. But he didn't give up. He had extraordinary spirit, I think. That was why he gave up his heritage to his father.

So there is no wonder that his disciples were very tough people. They



were not afraid of anything, not even death. And their Way-seeking mind even went beyond the suffering of life and death. Buddha did not talk about the problem of birth and death just to make us unhappy, but because we have this kind of problem, and it will help us to have real strength. When our spirit is limited by this kind of problem, we cannot have perfect composure of life. That is why he talked about this kind of teaching from his own very critical standpoint.

So we must see our life completely, and we have to confront all the problems by all means. To confront those sufferings is to develop our religious spirit. And before our spirit is emancipated from this kind of problem, there is no chance to have perfect enlightenment.

Here is a good example: As you know, India at that time (or maybe even now, I don't know), had very strict ideas of class. The highest class was the Brahmins, the religious people or priests. The second was the Kshatriyas, the kings or rulers of the country. Third were the common people who participated in farming or some other work [Vaisyas], and the lowest class was the slaves [Sudras].

Upali was one of the ten disciples of Buddha. Before he joined Buddha's order, he belonged to the Sudra or servant class and served Shakyamuni Buddha's family. Buddha came back to his castle, after saving the five disciples and having been given Gijjhakosha- I don't know the Sanskrit-that park. [See p.1 for Sanskrit.] And he had more disciples who had belonged to some other teacher or religion, who worshipped fire. There were four brothers who served the god of fire. Their names were the venerable Kasyapa of Uruvilva, the venerable Kasyapa of Nadi, and venerable Kasyapa of Gaya, and there must be one more Kasyapa [the venerable Maha-Kasyapa?]. They joined Buddha's order with one thousand disciples. So he already had quite a few disciples before he came back to his castle.

And after he came back, all seven members of his family joined his order, including his father's prince, Buddha's son, Rahula, and his cousin Anuruddha- I already talked about the blind disciple Anuruddha- and Devadatta. When all those families joined his order, Upali helped them to shave their heads, and at last he wanted to be a priest too. But because he belonged to the Sudra class, he hesitated. But Buddha, knowing that, became very sympathetic with him and let him join. At that time, one more member of his family [Nanda] wanted to join the order, but Buddha said, "Wait. If you join our order, perhaps you will be the last one [from the Shakya clan?]. And if Upali joins our order after you, he should always be seated in the last seat, and he will not be so happy. So wait and let him join my order before you."

So Nanda gave his share to Upali. Upali joined the order, and later Nanda joined the order. When all seven members of his family were seated in their own seats and Nanda came, the six disciples saluted him, and he had to take his seat. But when Upali came to his seat, Nanda hesitated

to bow to him. He knew Buddha was right, we should not discriminate about this or that class, higher or lower. But when Upali actually came next to him, he couldn't bow. He forgot, or he couldn't do this. Upali had always been his barber, his servant, so it was rather difficult to bow to him. Buddha was very angry with Nanda and gave him a long lecture about not discriminating between classes. These are very famous words: "Whatever their class, when people join our order, they are all of the Shakyamuni family. Just as when all the rivers come into the ocean, there is no name for the rivers, so is our order. There is no family name when people join our order."

You may say Buddha was a strange person. In some way he had a very strange spirit, but his spirit is something unusual. That was why he was called "Buddha", I think. His disciples did not know on what kind of occasions they would be scolded. When they expected to be scolded, Buddha was very gentle, but when they didn't fear anything bad, they were scolded terribly. He had, I think, an unusual spirit which goes beyond our world. So for a Buddhist, this world is one of millions, a small, tiny world. There should be many, many worlds besides this small world. The scheme of this sutra is very big, and there is no wonder why this kind of description came from Buddha's talk.

Upali, who belonged to the Sudra class, is famous for his precepts observation. Not many events are told about him, but after Buddha's death, as you know, they had a synod or compiling conference. At that time, Upali decided [recited?] the precepts.

I must tell you one more thing about Aniruddha, who became blind from not sleeping. As you know, in India the summertime is the rainy season. When it was difficult to travel around to different parts of India, the members of the order stayed in a certain place with Buddha and practiced with him. But when there was clear weather, they went for a journey. Usually Buddha told them to make the journey alone. He said, "You should always be quiet, trust people, and treat people as your friends wherever you go." This is Buddha's way.

I don't know Christianity, but someone made a comparison on this point. Jesus told his disciples not to travel alone. He said, "You should go in numbers greater than two, because you will have many difficulties and many enemies." But I don't want to compare Buddhism to Christianity in that kind of way. If you try to compare them in some way, you will have the opposite conclusion. So it is not fair to say Buddhism is a more generous teaching and Christianity is more exclusive. But anyway, this is very interesting.

So Aniruddha, the blind priest went for a journey, and he had to stay at a woman's home where there was nobody but her. That woman started to like him too much. She loved him, but as he was a priest, he said, "You shouldn't do that." [Much laughter throughout this story.] After he came back to Buddha, he told him what had happened to him. So

Buddha set up a precept at that time, that monks should not stay in some woman's home alone. If you want to stay, you should stay with some one else. If there is no one to stay at her home with you, you should always recite the sutra and always think of Buddha. "Buddha, Buddha, Buddha." That is one of the precepts. Aniruddha is famous for helping Buddha to set up one of the precepts.

Do you have some questions?

Q: Roshi, I think I understand what a sravaka is and what a pratyeka buddha is, but I still can't understand what an arhat is. Will you try once more to-

Suzuki-roshi: Arhatship is the goal of the practice of the sravaka or hearer. I don't know historically why, and when, and how we made this kind of technical term. Maybe someone knows, but I don't know. It may be pretty difficult to know when, and how, and why we started using these terms. Perhaps the so-called "Mahayana Buddhists" later used them. Perhaps all of the direct disciples are actually sravakas. All the arhats are listed as disciples of Buddha, but the bodhisattvas, such as the Bodhisattva Manjusri and the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, are not listed as historical people. They may be the people whom Buddha is supposed to have taught, but, for instance, this sutra was not actually spoken by the Buddha. This sutra was composed by someone else long, long after Buddha passed away, maybe in the first or second century A.D.

The earliest Mahayana sutra is supposed to be the small Prajñāparamita Sutra, or Shobo \_\_\_\_\_ [?]. In that sutra they do not say "Mahayana" or "Hinayana". Instead of using the word "Hinayana", they use "Sravakayana" or "people who hear." I don't know Sanskrit, but sravaka means "hearer", or those who studied under Buddha. "Bodhisattva" means one who studied the Bodhisattva way. The so-called "Bodhisattva way," or "Mahayana way," was originated by the assembly who met outside of the cave. The cave was the place where the synod was held to compile Buddha's teaching. In that cave, all the famous disciples assembled and compiled the scriptures.

But there were many disciples who did not join that meeting. They are called daishubu-I don't know the Sanskrit word. [Sanskrit is mahasamghika.] Daishu means "public," a more public assembly. And, of course, they compiled some other sutras. Maybe the small Prajñāparamita Sutra was compiled by those people. But even in that sutra, they do not use sravaka or "Hinayana" or "Mahayana." At that time, "Buddhism" meant that which was taught by Buddha, or which was compiled by those famous disciples. They were the sravakas, but maybe we should call them the original Buddhists instead of Hinayanists.

It looks like there is Hinayana and Mahayana, but it is not so. All those Prajñāparamita Sutras are more like Mahayana, so they are all

attributed to Sariputra, who was a great disciple of Buddha. He was actually both [Hinayana and Mahayana?]. His understanding was wider and deeper than the rest of the disciples, so all the sutras are attributed to him. If we say, "Shariputra told this story," it is more like traditional Buddhism.

But at that time, "original Buddhism" or "true Buddhism" was the Sravakayana. According to the sravakas, Buddha was so great that we cannot be like him, but at least we can be an arhat. Next to Buddha are the arhats. After following diligently Buddha's precepts and observing Buddha's teaching with perfect understanding, annihilating all our evil desires, we will obtain Buddhahood [should be arhatship?]. This is the sravaka understanding and so-called "original Buddhism."

But there is one more thing we have to know. After the Meiji period, or recently, European scholars started to study Buddhism from various materials they found in India. The early scholars thought that the Agama Sutra was spoken by Buddha, but later they found out that it was compiled a long, long time after Buddha lived. So the Sravakayana was not original Buddhism. What was the teaching which Buddha taught? We still have that kind of problem. How to know what was taught by Buddha without much reliable material is our problem.

Mahayana Buddhists also had this kind of problem. They couldn't rely on the Agama Sutra or the Kusha [abhi dharma] or Yuishiki [Vijnapti-matrata = consciousness only] philosophies. So the Mahayana teachers started to think about what is Buddha's real teaching. This was very good discipline for them. I think that what is true with us, really, is true with Buddha too. That is a very strange or mysterious thing. What you think is right is also right for Buddha. Buddha said it in this way, "What is right for me was right for my teachers and will be right for our descendants."

In this way Buddhism developed. So there is the original, more fundamental Buddhism, which was taught by Buddha himself, and the Sravakayana, and the Bodhisattvayana. And true Mahayana Buddhism, which includes every Sravakayana and Bodhisattvayana, is true Buddhist teaching. We cannot say it is true, but it "should be" true Buddhism. That kind of Buddhism was established by Tendai Chigi [T'ien T'ai Chih-I]. According to him, true Mahayana teaching, Buddha's true teaching, should be original Buddhism, the Sravakayana, and the Bodhisattvayana. People say the Bodhisattvayana is the best teaching of all the Buddhist teachings, but that is a mistake. If it is the best teaching it should include Buddha's original teaching, of course, and the Sravakayana. So the arhats belonged to the Sravaka yana, but every morning we recite the sutra for the arhats too, so they are also our Buddha. People call them other names, but they are actually Buddha. But, technically, arhats belong to the Sravakayana.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **2 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #14**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #14  
Zen Mountain Center

Shunryu Suzuki-roshi: We have here ... we had here ... various names of Bodhisattvas, and the next ones were the devas, devas or gods, or supernatural beings. [Begins reading from Lotus Sutra, p. 4, Line 18.]

"... further Sakra, the ruler of the celestials, with twenty thousand ... and others." Sakra, the ruler of the celestials. Sakra in Rig Veda's time is not the name of this god. "Sakra" is the adjective as you say: "the strong." If you say "the strong" sometimes you mean strong one is just strong. Same thing with this god. Indra was the name of the god. "Sakra," the strong one, means Sakra the Indra. But at Buddha's time "Sakra" became the name of indras, and here is the name of the god. Sakra the ruler, deva, devanan [?], Indra ... the strong one, the ruler of the celestials. But here, "Sakra" is name. Celestials means indras, many gods. (Again reading from Lotus Sutra, p. 4 with frequent interjections): "... with twenty thousand gods, his followers, such as the god Kandra (the moon)." God of the moon, deva of the moon; the deva of Surya (the sun); the god of Samantaghanda (the wind); the god of Ratnaprabha. Ratnaprabha I couldn't figure out who he was.

"The god Avabnasaprabha ... ; further, the four great rulers (and so on to) Vaisravana." Those are the rulers or gods who protect Buddhists in the four directions.

The great ruler Virupaksha--in Japanese, Ko Moku Ten No [?]. He is the ruler who lives ... protector who lives in West. The great ruler Dhritarashira lives ... excuse ... namely, the great ruler Virudnaka, the first one lives in the South. The next one, Virupaksha, live in the West, the protector of the West. And the great ruler Dhritarashira [?] is the protector who is on the North. And the great ruler Vaisravana [?] who lives in the East. This is sometimes the order is not the same, but here, in this book, the order is South, East, West, and North. Sometimes East, South, West, North. This is more usual.

"The god Isvara and the god Mahesvara ... Isvara ... Mahesvara ... this is in Japanese, they are: Zisiten [?] or Dai Zisiten [?] Those are the gods who protect also Buddhists. Each followed by thirty thousand gods; further, Brahma Sanampati."

Brahma Sanampati ... Saha means sava ... Sava means, in Japanese or Chinese, Saba. "Sanampati" is the "Lord of ... " or "Ruler of this world." Brahma is god of gods. "Brahma Sanampati" means Brahma, the "Lord

of this world."

"... and his twenty [sutra says twelve] thousand followers," and the Brahma Kayika gods. (and so on to twelve thousand Brahmakayika gods). Brahmakayika ... kakyika means "world." Brahmakayika ... the god which belong to Brahma worlds, Kayika ... "Brahmakayika gods, amongst whom Brahma Sikhin ... " "Sikhin" is the name or a name of the Brahma.

"And Brahma Gyotishprabha, with the other twelve thousand Brahmakayika gods." Those are the gods who belong to Brahma's world. "... together with the eight Naga Kings ..." Naga Kings--eight Naga Kings is pretty famous gods. "And many hundred thousand myriads of Kotis of Nagas in their train." Naga is dragon. "Namely, the Naga King Nanda (and so on to) ... and Utpakala." Those are the eight Nagas, Dragons. "... further, the four Kinnara Kings (and so on to) ... of followers." Kinnara is "kin" is "what," "Nara" is "man." Man or what? (laughs) kinnara, man or what? He was, you know, his legs, it is animal and his body is ... his head is man, with horns, here. So, (laughs) man or what? That is his name, Kinnara. And he is good. He is a kind of musician, and people like him very much, because of his music. Man or what? Is his name, Kinnara.

"... Many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of followers (and so on to) ... the Kinnara King Dharmadhara." The first one, Kind Druma, his name means "King who respects Dharma." Kinnara King Drama. The Canary King Monothermia, "The King of the Great Dharma," Mahadhrama, the King Saddharma Pundarika, you know, "Highest, Greatest Dharma." And the Canary King Dharmadhara. Dharmadhara means to hold, or to protect, or to obtain. The Canary who obtains or who protects the Dharma.

"... Besides, the four divine beings called Gandharvakayikas." Gandharvakayikas is in Chinese or Japanese Kendachiwa [?] (Kendattiwa?). God, Kendachiwa (Kendattiwa?) ... divine being, god Kendachiwa [?]. "With many hundred thousand Gandharvas in their following, namely (and so on to) ... and the Gandharva Madhurasvara." Those are the gods who has ... who is charming, and who likes girls. You know, who loves girls, and who gave (gives) people joy. The first one is ... Manogna is the joy or tenderness, god of Tenderness. And the Gandharva Manognasvara is the god of the Sun. Gandharva Madhura is the god of Sweetness. And the god of ... Madhurasvara, he is also the god of Suns.

"Further, the four chiefs of the demons followed by (and so on to) ... of Kotis of Garudas. Uasha, Asura, he belongs to one of the six reincarnations, reincarnated worlds. You know: celestial world and human worlds and hell and hungry ghost world and animal and Asura world. This is the kind of world where human beings are incarnated. Human beings actually ... we have actually ... we are actually

sometimes celestial, like celestial beings, like human beings, like animals, like Asura. Asura maybe the state of our mind where, because we have two nature: one is animal nature or good nature, the other is bad nature. And within ourselves always fighting ... the good nature is always fighting the bad nature. That is our problem. So before Buddhists, before Buddhism, there were evil natured kings, gods, who were fighting always with the gods ... gods who have good nature.

[End of Side A. Some text lost.]

\_\_\_\_\_ were the god who was fighting. Buddhists understand this god as a reincarnation ... reincarnated world for human beings. So it means that the state of mind we will actually, even in this life.

So those gods is rather more subjective gods than objective beings, which is always fighting with good nature gods. And the four garuda gods follow "garuda chiefs followed by many (and so on to) ... the son of Vaidehi." (Roshi doesn't mention the second garuda chief in the sutra).

The King of Agantasatru, this is an historical person, not a god. Here we have Bodhisattvas and sixteen laymen Bodhisattvas and celestial beings like devas; and many spirits, good and bad. And the last one, as a human being, is Bimbisara's son, or princess, Ajatasattu ... (Bimbisara = Vaidehi [?]). "Ajatasattu, King of Magadha, the son of Vaidehi." I think I told you about him already. Bimbisara who did not have his successor, he didn't have for a long time his princess or successor: so he asked some fortune teller about his prince; and the fortune teller said, "He is in the mountain ... still ... you will have your successor, but he is now a hermit in the mountains, and he will be, after his death, in his future life your successor."

So he kills him, so that he can have his next life earlier, he kills him. (Laughs). Do you remember? But at the same time he is reincarnated as his prince. And he asked again the fortune teller about him. And he said, "You killed him, so I am afraid he will kill you." So he was very much afraid of his \_\_\_\_\_ and he tried to kill him before he ... the boy kill the king. But ... the king threw him or tossed him from the Nion Pagoda, but he couldn't kill him. But he was injured--just his toe was injured. So he now ... the king now, treated him very well so that he will not have any bad feelings with the king. But when he became king he try to killed ... he tried to kill the king. He put the king in prison and his wife protected him in various ways. Sometimes she went ... she saw the king with honey, with honey painted in her body ... whole body. [Laughs] And he \_\_\_\_\_ king to lick the honey from her body. But at last [his?] King passed away in that prison. And Agatasatru became the king of the country, Magadha. And Iitaike [?] or Vaidrehi [?] ... Vaidrehi is the mother of Ajatasattu. And Ajatasattu became Buddha's follower later. He was very ... he became very resentful of what he did and he became Buddha's follower. This is Ajatasattu, the kind of Magadha ... the son of Vaidehi.

[Continues with Lotus Sutra p. 6, Line 9]: "Now at that time ... the exposition of Infinity." And so many human beings and various spirits and gods attended ... came to the castle ... not castle, but Ragagriha, city of Ragagriha ... where Buddha was and he was surrounded by those people. Four people, (classes of hearers?) ... four people means lay Buddhists ... man and woman ... and nuns and monks. Those are the four classes of hearers.

"... Honored, revered, venerated, worshipped by the four classes of hearers." "Worshipped," it says, but means that--"served" is more appropriate. "Venerated and served," "Kuiyo [?]" ... this word is very big word. Worship. In Shobogenzo-only-this term is explained-what is kuiyo. It was very deep and wide in meaning.

"Venerated," worshiped by the four classes of hearers ... after expounding the Dharmaparyaya ... the Supreme teaching ... means Dharmaparyaya ... called the "great exposition." "Dharmaparyaya and great exposition" in Chinese is in apposition: "Dharmaparyaya, the great exposition." But here it says: "Dharmaparyaya called ... the great exposition." I don't know which is correct. The text of great ... this is, you know, adjective for the Supreme Teaching. Or ... great Exposition means Great Vehicle. The Supreme Teaching is called the Great Vehicle or Great Teaching, Great Exposition.

"A test of Great Development," this is an adjective for the Dharmaparyaya or Supreme Teaching. "The Great Development serving to instruct Bodhisattvas ... serving to instruct Bodhisattvas and proper to all Buddhas." Obtained by all Bodhisattvas ... the teaching ... Bodhisattvas obtain--means: teaching which Bodhisattvas have, keep, always in their mind. Proper to all Buddhas.

"... sat cross-legged on the seat of the Law (and so on to) ... exposition of Infinity." The Dhyana [?] of Infinity, Infinite meaning. And "his body was motionless (and so on to) ... tossed ... tossed along." This is how it was moved.

"... as soon as the Lord had entered upon his meditation; there fell a great rain of divine flowers." This is ... some ... you know, important event happened, when he ... before he started to give this sutra. "As soon as (and so on to) ... great Mangushakas ...." "I don't know what flowers actually they are. But in Japan, Mangushaka means, you know, a kind of flower which comes out in Spring and Autumn. It is, you know, you don't have that flower in ... I haven't see Mangushaka in America. It is something like Daffodils, but it is red. A kind of bulb [?], you know, which comes out in Spring and it comes out twice, Spring and Autumn.

Those flowers fell and covered the Lord and the four classes of hearers who were at ... who where there. "And the whole Buddha field shook in six ways." There are many interpretations for what the six ways of



shaking (means). This is one of the interpretations: "It moved ... removed, trembled from one end to the other ... tossed along." This is a mixture of many kinds of interpretations of how it trembles. But, it means, anyway: "how it shook." Some explanation is to shook, you know, if this is "world" (gesturing with hands) ... middle part comes up and four corners come out, later, this way (gesture) and some explanation ... and this one ... and four corners of it, you know, move. But this is four ... four ways. And some explained: Here ... removed ... trembled ... removed ... (some false starts on a new explanation [?]) "... moved ... moved strongly and ... moved ... and moved strongly ... and removed ... and removed strongly ... trembles ... trembled strongly. It will make six. "From one end to the other, tossed ... tossed along."

There is many interpretations, anyway, page after page. But it means to ... "something extraordinary." The people who attended there had some extraordinary feeling when he was expected, Buddha ... to tell some important teaching.

Student A: Roshi, I don't understand reincarnation at all. Are people really reborn" And if they are, who or what is reborn? And how does that happen?

Suzuki-roshi: Reincarnation? Actually, Buddhists ... most Buddhists believe in reincarnation. Actually, you know, it means reincarnated ... means ... next life. Some other being, like animals, if you do not behave. [Laughs.]

Student \_\_\_\_: If what?

Student B: If you don't "behave."

Student A: If you don't behave ... what if you do behave?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: What if you do behave?

Suzuki-roshi: If you behave like an animal, next life you will be animal.

Student A: Well now?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: Yeah, I mean ... what is it that is reborn?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know. [Laughter]

Student A: Is there something, you know, something about you that continues? Or ...

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: Is there something, you know, something inside of me, say, that continues ... and gets reborn somehow? I read a book ... a thing that Yasutani-roshi wrote about this little thing that kind of floats around. You know, has ... eats perfume and ... and it finds appropriate parents for it ... and then it is reborn. But it ... it was like a thing. Something. I don't know what to call it. Is that what it is like? [Laughter throughout much of this.]

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know. I am not so sure.

Student B: Roshi, I don't know about reincarnation, but I have read Buddhist things on reincarnation that say there is no person reborn, but there are no actor reborn, but the acts continue ... and it seems to me that you could just as easily say as "Who is being reborn now?" As you can say "Who will be reborn later?" We don't understand. What is happening now is no more miraculous, I think, than some continuation of whatever is happening. But do you see what I mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. [Laughter] I am not ... I cannot explain it, you know, satisfactorily. I studied from many teachers, but it was pretty difficult to understand.

Student B: You have no opinion?

Suzuki-roshi: No. I have many opinions. [Laughter.]

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

### **3 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #7**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #7

Zen Mountain Center

Not edited yet

Yesterday I told you about Ajñata-Kaundinya, one of the five earliest disciples[1] of Buddha. As I told you, when Buddha gave up the practice of asceticism, they continued practicing asceticism at the Deer Park. After Buddha attained enlightenment, he came to the Deer Park. At that time he told them about the four noble truths, dana-prajña-paramita, and shila-prajña-paramita. Instead of saying you will attain enlightenment if you practice shila-paramita, he said you will have a good future life. This means that, at that time, he applied some religious understanding of the common people of India when he taught his own teaching. According to Buddhism, you practice precepts, not to have a

good future life, but because we attain enlightenment in this life. This is actually Buddha's teaching.

I think it is better for us to study more about what Buddha taught here about the four noble truths and eight holy paths. The four noble truths are suffering, the cause of suffering, the way to attain liberation from suffering, and nirvana. According to Buddha's teaching, this world is full of suffering. But in the Mahayana teaching which developed from these four noble truths and eight holy paths, this world is the world where we find realization or nirvana within each self. According to the Mahayana, this world is not the world of suffering, but according to the Hinayana, or according to the teaching which Buddha told for the first time to the five disciples, this world is full of suffering.

Actually, this world is full of suffering. Suffering and our life coexist. Where there's life, there's suffering. Suffering and life are synonymous. This teaching is very important, because when you think you have no problem, that is the biggest problem. You know, at first you will have a stomachache, but when your stomach is worse, you have no ache. So having suffering is good, but having no suffering is more serious. As long as you have problems, you have a pretty good stomach, a promising stomach. If you have no suffering, you are hopeless. You say you have no suffering, but that is suffering which is the great problem. In this way, Buddha started his teachings.

Student A: Excuse me, Roshi, what do you mean by suffering?

Suzuki-roshi: Suffering is various problems. He explains more about it: When you came to this world for the first time, that was suffering; when you came out from the narrow place, you had great suffering. That is one type. And you will become older and older, like me-that is suffering too. And you will have sickness-that is suffering. And you die-that is suffering. When you came to this world, you already had a very good future opportunity to die, to be sick, and to become old. So he said human life is a life of suffering.

Student B: Roshi, if we have suffering and problems and are able to feel some confidence that we can take it, is that still hopeless? Then it doesn't seem to be quite so much of a problem anymore. When it seems that I can't take it, then it seems like an insurmountable problem.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That was the four sufferings, and there are four more: [1] You will meet someone or have to live with someone who you do not like. [2] You will be separated from someone who you like very much, who you love. It looks like this is very true. You cannot leave someone who you love the most, or you will have to live with someone who you do not like. [3] That you have the five skandhas is already suffering. That you have eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, that you can think, feel, and have some idea, that you can know who Buddha is, is already suffering. What do you think? And [4] you cannot get what you

want. This is also true. This is, maybe, a more developed, or advanced, or conclusive understanding, but, in short, we prefer substantial, concrete things rather than for everything to be changing. Everything is changing, but we do not like everything to be changing; we want things to be more substantial and concrete. That is the cause of suffering. So suffering is coexistent with our human life.

That is the first teaching he told the five disciples. It could be a strong teaching. And you cannot deny it, it is very true. And no one can help you, as long as we care for something concrete, something substantial, something more materialistic, when in reality everything is changing, including ourselves. So in this sense we cannot rely on even ourselves. But still he says the only thing you can rely on is you. You exist right now-this is a more advanced way of explaining it. But Buddha says you should rely on yourself because that is the only thing you can rely on. Anyway, the first teaching is that this world is full of suffering.

The next teaching is the cause of suffering. What is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering is self-centered ideas, the self which thinks everything is constant, including ourselves, and everything is enjoyable, and everything has self-nature, and everything is substantial. Because of this kind of understanding, which has those four elements, we suffer. The way to get out of suffering is the way to attain realization, which is the third truth.

The relationship between the teaching of the cause of suffering and the teaching that we have suffering is that one is cause and the other is effect. That we have suffering here is the effect, and the cause, or reason, we suffer is that we have in our minds the four elements of eternity, enjoyment, self, and substantiality. So here Buddha has given the teaching of cause and effect.

And what is nirvana? Nirvana is well attained when we know this cause and effect. When we know what the reason for suffering is, then we will be free from suffering. That is the Buddha's teaching of the four noble truths.

Student \_\_: Roshi, which one of these is the eight-fold path?

Suzuki-roshi: The eight-fold noble path is the way to attain nirvana. The first truth is suffering, then the cause of suffering, the way to attain renunciation, and nirvana. So the eight holy paths is the third truth.

The first of the eight holy paths is right view. Right view is to know cause and effect, to have perfect understanding of cause and effect-how suffering is caused. That is right view-to see "things as it is." When we see things as it is, we will know how we create suffering for ourselves. If you see things as it is, nothing is constant, everything is changing, so everything has no self-nature. So you cannot enjoy your life as you expected. You expected your life to be very enjoyable. But actually,

everything's changing. "Oh my, that was not true," you may say.

So when you see things as it is, you have to change your understanding of this life completely. When you change your understanding of life completely, that is nirvana. There's no problem. The way to attain nirvana is by the eight holy paths, starting from right view, right understanding of our life. To have right understanding is to know cause and effect-what is the cause of suffering, and what is suffering. So starting from right view, we should see things as it is.

In Mahayana dharma practice, bodhisattvas have six practices. One is dana-prajña-paramita, to give things, material things and teaching, or to help people. The second is precepts, [shila]-prajña-paramita. The third is to be patient [kshanti-paramita], to wait, not limiting ourselves, but extending our practice in two directions, past and future. That is why we say sentient beings are in us (endless?), and our desires are inexhaustible. When we extend our practice, that is the practice of patience. Fourth is the practice of constant effort [virya-paramita]. This practice should [also] be extended in two ways. The fifth is to have good meditation [dhyana-paramita], and the sixth is to have wisdom [prajña-paramita]. Those are the bodhisattva's six practices.

In Buddha's first teaching, the first of the eight holy paths, right view, is equivalent to right giving. If you want to help people by giving some teaching or material, you should know whether they want it or not, and you should know what is the most appropriate thing to give and what is the right time to give. This is also right view. If you want to give something, you should not just give as you give some candy to a dog. Even a dog will not take it if he does not want it.

This teaching looks more negative, but what Buddha really meant was more difficult. The other side is the Mahayana-like side. And when Mahayana teachers become proud of their way of understanding, discriminating it from the Hinayana, saying, "That is Hinayana," that attitude is not, according to the great teachers, true Buddhism either. True Buddhism should understand in two ways: right view, which was taught by Buddha or understood by the direct disciples of Buddha, and the Mahayana practice of giving and helping others. They have the same quality, they are not different teachings at all. When we understand Buddha's teaching as Buddha's disciples understood, and as Mahayana teachers understood, that is the true teaching of Buddha. If Mahayana is the very best teaching, it should be that kind of teaching, not the kind which discriminates Hinayana and Mahayana. So actually, those teachings are not only Hinayana, but also Mahayana.

In other scriptures which describe when Buddha told his teaching for the first time to the five disciples, the one called Ashvajit here in the Lotus Sutra is usually called Assaji.

Yesterday I told you that Shariputra was born near Rajagrha-Oshajo in

Japanese. When Buddha came to Rajagrha with his disciples. Perhaps he had more than five disciples. His son, wife, mother-in-law, and his aunt were all converted to become Buddha's disciples. And some famous teachers converted and joined his order. When Shariputra saw him, he thought he was a quite different person, not a usual one. And Shariputra was wise enough to see that he must have a good teacher if he behaved like that while quite a young man. So he asked him, "Who is your teacher?" And the disciple answered, "My teacher is Shakyamuni Buddha." Shariputra asked, "What, in short, is his teaching?" One version of it is, "Every being comes from its own cause, and when the cause is empty, every being is empty." When the cause is understood to be empty, that is Tao, that is the way. (That is another of the eight holy paths.) My teacher told it to us this way: "Although I am not quite young and I haven't studied Soto, in short, his teaching is like this ...." This is one version.

Another version is cause and effect, or causality, is the source of various beings. Therefore everything has no self-nature and is empty. So everything comes from its proper cause, and Buddha told us how to destroy the cause of suffering. This version is very similar to the four noble truths and to Mahayana teaching, which is the teaching of emptiness. Shariputra understood Buddha's teaching in a more philosophical and profound way. So this rendering is something like the four noble truths, and at the same time something like the formal teaching of form is emptiness, emptiness is form. It should be like this. Hinayana and Mahayana should not be two different teachings. Some people think, "This is Hinayana teaching, and this is Mahayana teaching," but that is a great mistake. Anyway, he told Ajñata-Kaundinya and Ashvajit and the other three disciples this kind of teaching.

Q: Maybe this is a problem, maybe not, but if one of the causes of suffering is seeking permanence, not changing, and not accepting the changing world and our changing self, yet isn't there an element of this in the teaching of the way out also, in saying, "Look, here are the four noble truths, unchanging, true, permanent. This is the way it is, you must accept these"?

Suzuki-roshi: When you discover that kind of teaching which cannot be changed, which is always true, your desires will be at peace by finding something which is true, universal, and eternal. In this sense we say Buddha's teaching is eternal teaching. But it does not mean that something which was said is eternal in the sense that the way he understands things is always true. Buddha himself did not say, "What I said is always true." The other day, Claude [Dalenberg] said that Buddha said, "If you go to the mountain and find some good place to build a building, like Church Creek or the Horse Pasture, after you come back to your monastery, you will tell your teacher, 'Here is a good place to practice our way. Let's build a monastery there.' Then many people will go. That is my way. I didn't provide any land or holy place like that.

It was there, I just found it accidentally. People are very interested in that place, and that is why I have so many students." He understood in that way. He did not do anything; the teaching was there before he taught it or before he discovered it. That is his understanding of the teaching. So he didn't stick to his teaching or his being. If he died, he said, there is no need to have a big ceremony. That is why Buddha had eternal life. He didn't stick to anything, but he stuck to one eternal teaching which gave birth to Buddha. Buddha's disciples understood him in this way. That is why Buddhism has perpetual life. So what you mean is very true.

Q: Although the paths to this place are changing and are different, to use that metaphor, the place is unchanging.

Suzuki-roshi: The metaphor is that he is not the one who provided the place.

Q: But then there is still this element of satisfying our need or desire for something, some "thing," not a concrete material thing, but something.

Suzuki-roshi : Something, yes, that is our nature, which is not good or bad. You cannot even say it is good. If you say, "It is good," it is almost dying already because you may stick to it. If it is not good or bad, you may not stick to it. This is Buddhist understanding.

Q: After you spoke about the four noble truths, you said that there were four other kinds of suffering: when you are separated from someone you loved, and when you had to live with someone you didn't like. Where did those teachings come from?

Suzuki-roshi: From what sutra?

Q: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: These are stock words, you may say. The teaching is repeated in this form in various sutras.

Q: It says here, talking about the four noble truths, that, "When the creatures in this world delight in low and contemptible pleasure, then the Buddha who always speaks the truth indicates pain is the first truth, and desire is the origin of pain, and the third truth is the path, to always try, unattached, to suppress desire." Do you think that is a good teaching for us at this time, "always try, unattached, to suppress desires?"

Suzuki-roshi: That may not be possible. When they encourage us to control our desires, and to have a good understanding of our nature, or suffering, they put it in that way. We call it to "suppress" or "annihilate." When you are completely annihilated, that is empty, but that emptiness is not empty. Because everything is changing and has no self-nature, we

call it "empty." Desires are here, but they are not dead, they are working. So as long as a desire has some past and future and is always acting, it doesn't exist in the same way. If you see things as it is, as it goes, the desires you have will not exist in the same way. Because you think, "What shall I do with my desire?"-that is desire which is not empty, which is not changing. But even though you pass before it like this, it is changing. So in one or two years, it will disappear. If you understand in that way, that is the true meaning of emptiness. Without getting rid of it, to have proper understanding of it is the way to attain emptiness. That is the teaching of emptiness. To completely cut out, or to annihilate, is a more substantial, or narrative, way of expressing emptiness, and a more objective, calm understanding is called "to see things as it is."

So if you read this sutra literally, you will not understand it properly. This sutra is told in various ways, back and forth; it's sometimes this way and sometimes the other way. That is why this sutra is valuable. It is not a simple sutra. So after all, this sutra could be very artistic or poetic. Some parts are not so, but it ends in a big, artistic work.

-----  
Formatted 8/28/00 and 9/14/00.

[1] Ajñata-Kaundinya, Ashvajit (Assaji), Bhadrīka, Mahanama, and Vaspa.

#### **4 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #13**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #13  
Zen Mountain Center

... bodhisattvas and arhats. Subhuti, the Venerable Rahula." Rahula is, as you know, Buddha's son. "With them yet other great disciples, as Venerable Ananda, still under training, and two thousand other monks, some of whom still under training with the other masters; with six thousand nuns having at their head Mahapragapati-" Mahapragapati is Buddha's aunt. "-and the nun Yasodhara." Of course she is Buddha's wife, the mother of Rahula. Rahula is Yasodhara's son and Buddha's son.

"Along with them, along with her train; further, with eighty thousand Bodhisattvas, all unable to slide back, endowed with the spells of supreme, perfect enlightenment, firmly standing in the ... in wisdom; who moved onward the never deviating wheel of law; who had propitiated many hundred thousands of Buddhas; who under many many hundred thousands Buddhas had planted the roots of goodness,



had been intimate with many hundred thousands of Buddhas, were in body and mind fully penetrated with the feeling of charity;" and so on.

Devadatta. Devadatta is, you know, famous because he tried to kill Buddha. There were also famous King Ajatasattu. His father was King Bimbisara. But his son, he, because he have for a long time no son, a prince; so he asked an old fortune teller-what do you say, "fortune teller"? Not fortune cookie, fortune teller, okay? Asked about his prince. He says, "Yes, you may have prince but he is now in the mountain but soon he may come."

So the king sent someone to kill him, you know, he was so eager to have prince if he is going ... his future life ... next life will ... is ... his prince, it maybe better to kill him. So that he can have his prince earlier. He sent someone to kill him. And he got beautiful boy. And he ... but ... again, the king asked his old fortune teller what will be his next life. And he said, "You killed him, you know, so, he maybe; he may kill you. Because you will him, he is very dangerous." So he wanted to kill him again, and he wanted to throw him from the high tower. But he couldn't kill him so he treated him very well so that he may not have any notion of killing him or he may not give him a chance to kill him. And so another name for him was Michorin. I don't know. A man who has in his mind bad feeling or, not revenge, but what you say ... "grudge?" Yeah. So, as the fortune, the old fortune teller said, when he became quite ... a good use ... he put his father in prison, and made him starve to death. And he took over his father's throne, and became a king.

And Devadatta, the Buddha's disciple, also wanted to take over Buddha's seat. Devadatta was also from the family of Shakyamuni Buddha's family. So he wanted to take over Buddha's seat. And Devadatta helped Bimbisara to kill his father, and ... not Bimbisara, Ajatasattu kill Bimbisara, and Bimbisara, after he became king, helped Devadatta to kill Shakyamuni Buddha. But he couldn't do so. Anyway, there is many stories, but he, Buddha get injured, his toe only, when Devadatta and his men throw a stone on the street when Buddha was passing the path. He is anyway famous for his, you know atrociously bad notion to kill Buddha. That is one of the worst violations of the precepts.

Ananda is Buddha's jisha-jisha for more, maybe 20 or more years. Twenty five. Some say twenty five, some say twenty. Anyway, for a long time. One day Buddha asked him-asked jisha, only one jisha without changing, because he was, became so old that he wanted to have someone always help him. And Ananda was-became a jisha at that time when he said, "I will take care of various people who come from remote countries to meet Buddha. I will introduce them without fail if they come from remote country. And I will remember all what Buddha say. If Buddha say something when I was not with him, I will ask him to tell it again."

Buddha was very pleased and he became his jisha. And there were some more things which he told him. "What I get from people is yours; and I will not take anything which was given to Buddha," or something like that. But the most impressive, most important point, maybe two points: he will remember what he said, and that he will be very good for the people who want to meet Buddha.

And Mahaprajñapati, Buddha's aunt and who after his mother passed away, raised Buddha. Mahaprajñapati and Yasodhara, Rahula's mother, along with her train. And this sutra is described as if Buddha himself told this story, but actually it is not so. And this, as I said before, this sutra is told in such a form as Buddha himself told it, but actually two, maybe two, three hundred after Buddha passed away, this scripture was told by someone, we don't know who. But the thought is based on Mahayana teaching. And Buddha who is telling this story is actually Sambhogakaya Buddha, not Nirmanakaya Buddha. But here it says they are still under training; "along with her train; further, with eighty thousand Bodhisattvas." Bodhisattva is Mahayana, who practice Buddhism with Mahayana spirit, to help others rather than to help themselves. "Bodhisattvas are unable to slide back." Unable to slide back means if you really understand something, you know, you cannot forget it. What you attain, in its true sense, you know, you cannot lose it. Real attainment cannot be lost. So we say, "no slide back." "All unable to slide back, endowed with the spells of supreme, perfect enlightenment." This is so called Dharani. Do you know mantra? Dharani. A kind of spell-holy word which has mystic power. Or it means essence of the teaching, essential, you know-essential teaching. Chinese translation of it is so gi. So means "good merit," and gi means "to observe precepts." It means, anyway, the essence: essential teaching.

"Endowed with the spells of supreme, perfect enlightenment," it is translated in this way. Spells, you know, some words which has some important, essential words. "Spells of supreme, perfect enlightenment, firmly standing in wisdom." Wisdom is not knowledge, but more intuitive knowledge, which is his own. Wisdom which is not learned, which should be, could be learned from others but which comes out from himself. "Who moved onward never deviating wheel of the law." Wheel of the law, this idea came from the wheel of the, when the battlefield king, you know, when king turn the wheel of \_\_\_\_\_? It doesn't ... which is very strong and which never be pushed back. It will go always on and on. Buddha's teaching like a wheel of the \_\_\_\_\_?, or wheel of the horse? So it never deviating wheel of the law; who had propitiated many hundred thousands of Buddhas." Propitiate ... propitiation ... this is a kind of technical term. In Japanese, ku yo. If you consult with dictionary, you will find out the meaning of it. There are three ways of ku yo. One is to give teaching, to offer teaching. Like to recite sutra. One. And to pay respect is the second one. And to offer some materials: food or flowers or incense. Those are the three ways of making propitiation. "Who have propitiated many hundred thousands of

Buddhas have planted the roots of goodness." This is Chinese also ... we have technical term. Zenmon. Zenmon-"good root." Zen is "good." Mon is "root." "Who have planted the root of goodness. Had been intimate with many hundred thousands of Buddhas." This is also, you know, technical term.

"Were in body and mind fully penetrated with the feeling of charity." And this is, you know: body and mind, this is ... one is missing here. Body, mind. You know, we say ... when we say body and mind, we usually say body and mind and mouth, you know. Talk. This is also important. Body. Mind ... even though you think something is good, it will be a merit-if you say something, that will also give you merit. And actually by body ... in Japanese or Chinese this is also technical term. Three karmic actions. Good karma or bad karma. Bad karma or good karma will be created by mouth and mind. So here one is missing but in some other translation ... some other origin text, the "word" is also here. "Were in body and mind fully penetrated with the feeling of charity; able in communicating the wisdom of the Tathagatas." Tathagata. Tathagatas is synonymous with Buddha, but this is ... I don't know what. Tathagata is the third person. Buddha himself do not call Tathagata. Tathagata is, you know, the third person. Someone is Tathagata. Or second person ... you maybe Tathagata ... to myself. But anyway, Tathagata. Wisdom of Tathagata.

"Very wise, having reached the perfection of wisdom." This is also technical term, "perfection of wisdom." This is also technical term. "Perfection of wisdom." Anata samya sambhodai in Japanese. "Renowned in many hundred thousands of worlds; having saved many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of beings; such as the Bodhisattva Mahasattva." No we have many names again. This is the ... it means that, you know, Sambhogakaya Buddha, within himself, he includes many things, you know. As he is one with every being. So there should be various names. This is many, those are not enough, but anyway we have here many names such as Bodhisattva Mahasattva Mañjushri. Mañjushri and Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva are the most important Bodhisattvas. Those Bodhisattvas like Mañjushri appeared two, three thousand ... tow, three hundred years after Buddha passed away, like Mañjushri. " Mañjushri as a royal prince is: in scripture, he told various teaching for Buddha instead of Buddha. Or, he discussed the holy teaching with Buddha, you know. So he is like a prince for Buddha. So we say prince. Royal prince, Mañjushri. And there are many stories how he ... who was his father or mother, where he was born; but so many stories were told about him so we don't know which is right or which is wrong. You know. We don't know whether he is historical person or not. We don't know. But anyway, his character represents the Buddha, one of the Buddha's character. Wisdom. He is very much like Shariputra. And he is sitting on his right, Buddha's right. Here, Mañjushri is sitting. And the other side, Fugen Bosatsu is sitting. Mañjushri is the symbol of wisdom, and Fugen is the symbol of practice.

"The Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokiteshvara." This is the Bodhisattva of Mercy. There is a special chapter for him. [Tape is ruffled here, but S.R. goes on with sutra.] "Mahasthamaprapta." [He says this name in Japanese.] The Bodhisattva who is always making a great effort. And next one, Nityodyukta. "Nityodyukta." This is Bodhisattva who does not rest. Who make constant effort. "Anikshiptadhura." This is Bodhisattva who make ... treasure in his hands. "Ratnapani." This is seventh one. Oh, excuse me. Ratnapani is the Bodhisattva who always [has?] treasure in his hands. And this is seventh one. By the way, there is, according to the translation of the original text ... they translated, there is some difference in number and order too. Here we have maybe twenty two, twenty three. Should be twenty four. Next one is Pradanasura. Pranadasura is Bodhisattva of to give you courage. Bodhisattva who gives you, who give us courage, or faith, or strong way-seeking mind. And next one, tenth, is Ratchanandra. Ratchanandra means the moon. The round, beautiful moon, Bodhisattva. Ratchanandra Bodhisattva, who gives everything, who is giving always beautiful light. Anantavikramin. Anantavikramin who gives us endless, limitless power. And next one is missing in Chinese translation. Both old translation and new translation ... the original text look like different. But anyway this one is missing in Chinese translation. But his translation very similar to Chinese translation so it is ... for me it is easier. Fifteenth. The next one is Mahapratibhana. This is missing in Chinese translation. And I must find out ... I haven't found out what does it mean. Satanamasuri. [Sounds like "... is not in our translation."] He is also missing in Chinese translation. He is translated in other scripture-oh, in other scriptures translated as Bodhisattva who has virtue of flower, lotus. "Nakshatraga." Twenty five. This is also missing in Chinese translation. "Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya." This is Miraku who appears after Buddha fade away. "The Bodhisattva Mahasattva Simha," it says. Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya. And that ... for the first one, Bodhisattva Mahasattva Manjusri. And for the next one there is no [respect?]. But, the escaped, you know, to repeat same title over and over again, instead of giving same title for the first one and the last one. So some people say Bodhisattva Mahasattva Simha was added later. It may be so; I don't know. Simha means, anyway, "lion," so, but- Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya looks like the last one. And Bodhisattva Mahasattva-it maybe same title again, here. I don't know. Anyway, this kind of study is very complicated study, still. But they are studying. They do not feel so good until they have some definite conclusion.

"With them were also the sixteen virtuous men to begin with Bhadrupala." Bhadrupala is the Bodhisattva who we bow, you know. Each time when we take a bath. We have sixteen ... fifteen of his friends all were enlightened in bathroom. I don't say enlightenment but in their previous lives they were good friends. And they took bath together. And this Bodhisattva-Badabara in Japanese-in Sanskrit, Bhadrupala-attained enlightenment in his former life. And under Shakyamuni Buddha they also appeared as good friend and studied under him, under Shakyamuni

Buddha, and attained enlightenment.

There is in Blue Cliff Records, then is koan about him. When this Bodhisattva attained enlightenment he said: "Myo jyako zen myo." "Myo jyako zen myo" means: "myo" his mind and body became clear and felt so good. And he realized the water ... he realized that water as well as various beings, has no self-nature. The koan is "What does it mean by "myo jyako zen myo?" How he, this Bodhisattva attained enlightenment? This is the koan in the Blue Cliff Records.

Water has, you know, a boat. Reverend Katagiri's father-teacher or master. I think he is-must be a very good teacher because people in that village-when-I don't remember exactly what Reverend Katagiri said, but, anyway, at that temple, he get water by pipe-by bamboo pipe from a spring pretty far away from the temple, you know. Bamboo pipe. And for that they have a wooden pail. And they sent that pail to get mended. And when they get it back to the temple the pail was still leaking. Still-it was still leaking. And so Reverend Katagiri took it to the store or shop to make it perfect. And the old man who is working on it said, "Maybe water in the temple, in your temple, should be very different if that water-from the water we have in the village. [Roshi can't stop laughing, but nobody gets the joke so far.] I think if you see Reverend Katagiri-the way he does it is very special, you know. The way he hit mokugyo, the way he recites sutra. His manner is anyway very gentle and precise and gives us good feeling-special, I think, his teacher, in that way. So I think his father, his master should be like him, or must be like him. "So water you use is quite different, must be quite different, from the water we have in our village. That is why it leaks."

Anyway, I think that that kind of enlightenment he may have when he took bath. When Yasutani-roshi came and took his bath, he enjoyed completely the hot spring bath. And he wrote some poem about myo jyko zen myo-about this koan. You know, water penetrate, you know, everything with-with hole or without hole, it doesn't matter. Even through the stone-penetrate into even the hard stone.

Still, why water penetrates to everything is: it has not self-nature. You know. If you have self-nature you cannot penetrate into everything. That is, you know, the koan study about this Bodhisattva.

"Sixteen virtuous men." This is also technical term. Sixteen virtuous men we call, we have to several renderings. Kai shi juroku. When we say, juroku, sixteen men means sixteen men-fifteen friends of Bhadrápala. And here we have also many names which I don't know, of which I am not so familiar. But Bhadrápala is the Bodhisattva who is enshrined in our bathroom.

Thank you very much.

## 5 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #15

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #15  
Zen Mountain Center

Page eight. "Then rose in the mind of the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya this thought: Oh, how great a wonder does the Tathagata display! What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this? And such astonishing, prodigious, inconceivable, powerful miracles now appear, although the Lord is absorbed in meditation! Why, let me inquire about this matter; who would be able here to explain it to me? He then thought: Here is Manjushri, the royal prince, who has plied his office under former Ginas and planted the roots of goodness, while worshipping many Buddhas."

Ginas is another ... one of the names for Buddha. And here ... "worshipping." Worshipping it is not just worship, this is ... it means, in Sanskrit, pradikara. It means alms-giving and offer of business [?] care. To prepare food for him; or to make a robe for him; or to mend his roof or room; and to take care of the people who may come; or to prepare medicine for him, or bed or [sounds like dress or breath]. Those are, you know, not just worshipping, but to take complete care of. So original meaning is some ... to take some authority. Not authority but to take care of him. Or to take care of business or service. And those words are important ones. Here, there is some ...

"Then rose in the mind of the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya this thought: Oh, how great a wonder does the Tathagata displays! What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this?"

You know here is sitting meditation. And those descriptions describe his self-rejoicing meditation. In his meditation ... his meditation has this kind of quality. Even though he is ... he may not be aware of it, he is absorbed in ... even though he is absorbed in deep meditation, his meditation has various quality as this. And Maitreya and some Buddhas who has six powers or five powers. When we attain arhatship we have six ... we are supposed to have six powers. Every morning we recite, we say Samyo-rokuso. Samyo-rokuso is arhat's various powers. The power of thinking and remembering the former state of existence. This is ... you may think rather mysterious but mysteriously speaking, it is [laughing] former being exists, former being. But moment after moment, we reincarnate from one state to the other. Sometimes you will be demon [laughing so much as to unable to speak clearly] exists with horn on your head. Sometimes you will be asura, in anger. Or sometimes you will be garuda, with big wings, you know, covering whole world. Beautiful golden wing. Sometimes we will be hungry ghosts. If I do not have not much ... not much food we will be hungry

ghosts. We reincarnate one state to the other, always.

A man of, you know, powerful ... power of sitting will realize our nature through and through. Then it means thinking and remembering former state of existence, not former but actual state of existence, which transform one state to the other. And capable of seeing everything. Capable of seeing everything. And capable of hearing everything. And insight to the others. And to attain perfect enlightenment ... this is supposed to be Arhat. To attain arhatship. And the power of free activity. It is ... sometimes understood as supernatural ... or mostly maybe. Arhats, for Arhats this is supernatural activity. But for Mahayana Buddhists or Zen Buddhists as you must have studied by various koan or Shobogenzo, those are, you know, our usual ... these kinds of powers of free activity should be always within our life. If your friend wants water, you give him water. "Do you want this?" You know, that is that kind of free activity. That kind of more natural activities. If you have ... if your mind is rigid and stubborn, you cannot have this kind of freedom. You cannot see what is happening around you. Anyway, those are the powers.

And Maitreya see through ... had perfect in Buddha's mediation. "What maybe the cause, what the reason of the Lord producing so great a wonder as this? And such astonishing, prodigious, inconceivable, powerful miracles now appear, although the Lord is absorbed in meditation!" He could see it, but he couldn't figure out what it was . Why such a magnificent event happens.

"Why, let me inquire about this matter; who would be able here to explain it to me? He then thought: Here is Manjusri, the royal prince, who has plied his office under former Ginas and planted the roots of goodness ... Manjusri who has plied his office." This is a kind of, you know, not worship, but kind of, we say "kuyo." "To make office." To give him some office work. And under various, not only Shakyamuni Buddha but various Buddhas, Ginas, "... and planted the roots of goodness, while worshipping many Buddhas. This Manjusri, the royal prince, must have witnessed before such signs of the former Tathagatas." Such omens, you know; good omens of the Tathagatas. "Those Arhats, those perfectly enlightened Buddhas; must have enjoyed the grand conversations on the law. Therefore will I inquire about this matter with Manjusri, the royal prince." And in this, and in this place, important words maybe "the perfectly enlightened Buddhas," Samya sam Buddhas ... perfectly enlightened Buddhas. Those who attained under Samya sam Bodhi. Supreme enlightenment. And "Arhats," you know Arhats. Here it says "grand conversations on the Law." "On the Law," means on the first principle or on the teaching. And the "grand conversations." Grand ... not only just conversations, it means also, it means sermons, you know. Not, in its ... I don't know Sanskrit so well, but "conversations" in its widest sense, the original word means conversations. But it means sermons. Here it maybe better to say sermons. Grand sermons. He must have listened to or enjoyed the grand "sermons" on the Law.

Those are the important words. Perfectly enlightened one. Supremely enlightened one. Sambhodi. Samya sam bhodi.

Now, this Manjusri, the royal prince. Royal prince means, Buddha's, you know, maybe Buddha's successor. He passed away, not ... this is not Manjusri but Sariputra passed away before Buddha. And most likely this Manjusri Bodhisattva is characterized by Sariputra. "This Manjusri, the royal prince, must have witnessed before such signs of the former Tathagatas." You see, here, this sutra was told by, supposed to be told or written as if this sutra was told by Buddha himself but actually there is no doubt that this sutra was not told by him. But if we understand Buddha ... if we understand Buddha, not only as Nirmanakaya Buddha, or one Buddha based on the idea on the three bodies of Buddha, then, you know, this sutra again and again was taught by many Buddhas before. So Manjusri Bodhisattva must have been it when he attended so many Buddhas in his former life. Do you understand this kind of idea of describing the truth. Truth is truth because it exists forever whether Buddha tells about it or not. It exists. But someone must have seen or realized Buddha. So someone like Manjusri. I don't know why, exactly; who exactly; we don't know who, but someone must have, some unknown person before Buddha must have seen those things. Must have attended real Buddha. And Manjusri must be one of them. And he must have seen it before. And he must have, actually, you know, not only seen those six good omens, but also must have listened to, must have heard of those teachings which existed, which appeared before Buddha. And in this way, after those miraculous mysterious omens, Buddha will start his sermon called Lotus Sutra.

So Manjusri, you know, Bodhisattva Maitreya, inquired about this with Manjusri. And next paragraph is the last paragraph, page eight.

"And the four classes of the audience; monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, numerous gods, nagas, goblins, gandharvas, demons, garudas, kinnaras, great serpents, men, and beings not human, on seeing the magnificence of this great miracle of the Lord, were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity, and thought: Let us inquire why this magnificent miracle has been produced by the great power of the Lord."

The four classes of the audience, namely: monks, nuns, and male and female lay devotees; numerous gods; numerous devas, you know, devas-various, they have various devas since of old. Nagas, dragons-like eight kinds of dragons. Goblins, as I said, goblins means yakshas. There will be evil natured ones and good nature ones. Anyway, they are various spirits. And Gandharvas. Demons. Demons is asuras. To fight like Asura, you know, with many hands. And mostly painted in his body. Whole his body, red. And his eyes is maybe blue. Mostly Buddha ... Indian gods and Buddhas are blue-eyed. So in all his hands he has arms ... bows and arrows and many arms. And, not arms but he has many arms. He is mostly naked. Asuras. And Gandharvas are a group of



deities since of old. Since the time of the Rig Veda, maybe one thousand years or more before the Lord Buddha. And gandaras is big, big winged bird which is Nagas. Nagas, dragons. Kinnaras as you know, whether he is a man or animal is Kinnara. Man or animal. Great serpents. This is Mangora. Mahora. We say Mangora, but Mahora ... great serpent. This is mystified ... mythological being, of serpent. Men include, to our great astonishment include, hell and celestial beings. Men includes the six states of ... all the beings which exist in six states of world. We will be incarnated in those states. Men includes the six worlds, heaven, and mankind, and Asura. Asura is, you know, Asura here we name Asura, but Asura is included in the men. And some demons too. We will be sometimes demons, like Asura. And animals. Animals is not men you say, but so far as we are, we will be incarnated into men, we count them as men. And those Hungry Ghosts and those who live in hell, too. But this is one interpretation of the six worlds. But there are many interpretations for, about, what is men, and what is not human. But I think it maybe proper to understand men as human being, includes this kind of six states. Which is supposed to be our various states of human existence.

"Men, and beings not human, on seeing the magnificence of this great miracle of the Lord, were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity, and thought." This is, you know, why we repeat those words, "were struck with astonishment, amazement and curiosity." This is, you know, gives you some rhythm and make you remember better. And this is the purpose of repeating various synonymous words, one after another. As you will find in the part of verse or poem about this description. In Sanskrit there are, you know, their literature is very rhythmical and a half of it maybe poem style. This sutra also, by the way, has two parts: the gatha parts and what you call ordinary description. Prose. Prose parts and gatha parts. And gatha parts and prose parts do not accord with--there is some difference. And which is first and which was prose part was first, is older or gatha parts is older. No one knows maybe. Maybe they are studying very hard which is older, or they are written at the same time. But it doesn't--they say it does not look like written in the same person at the same time. Because sometimes the content is no the same.

"At the same time," page nine, the second paragraph. "At the same moment, at that very instant, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya knew in his mind the thoughts arising in the minds of the four classes of hearers and he spoke to Manjushri, the royal prince: "What. Oh Manjushri, is the cause, what is the reason of this wonderful, prodigious, miraculous shine having being produced by the Lord? Look, how these eighteen thousand Buddha-fields appear variegated, extremely beautiful, directed by Tathagatas and superintended by Tathagatas."

Here I must point out some points. Here it says, "... the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya knew in his mind the thoughts arising in the minds of the four classes of hearers and he spoke to Manjusri." Here, he knew,

but this is also one of the six powers of Arhat or maybe Bodhisattva. And in some version, those names are repeated twice, you know. Those names like "four classes of hearers, and hearers." Not only "four classes of hearers," but also the names of goblins, gods and devas and Nagas and Yakshas ... those various spiritual beings, names of eight spiritual beings again are repeated here. But in this translation, or in the original text, maybe, there is no ... those names are not repeated here. And here again, the third line or second ... third and second from the end of this paragraph:

"Look, how these eighteen thousand Buddha-fields appear variegated and variegated, beautiful ...." One more word is here, was here, but translator skipped one word here. And the translator translated this sutra from, of course, from Sanskrit, it says here. Original text was the text written on, I don't know where, but old text which is in some museum, you know, in London. So in ... that ... there must be the word "beautiful" here. Why we ... they repeat same word like this, as I said, to give some rhythm to the sentence. But in English it maybe not be so good to repeat so many times. "Variegated, beautiful, extremely beautiful" ... same thing ... same thing happen already six, the earth, whole earth shake in six ways.

Six ways: this way, stronger, this way and more stronger, this way. And this way, trembling, it maybe this way. Don't you think? This way "shake" maybe. This way is to tremble or toss. Toss and toss more harder. [Laughing.] This is a repetition of same thing. And here it again ... appeared again--translator skipped. "Beautiful and extremely beautiful, directed by Tathagatas and superintended by Tathagatas. This is also repetition. "Directed by Tathagatas" maybe enough, you know.

This is the end of the prose part of the first introduction chapter. Do you have some question? About those names, you know; hopefully, Louise will, you know, make you some copy of those names. Not all of them but important ones.

Student A: In the book we hear again and again about different spiritual beings such as devas, nagas, goblins, gandharvas, demons, garudas, kinnaras, and great serpents. And in Milaropa almost half of the book is talks about the subjugation and conversion of these different kinds of beings. And I really don't have any idea of what, you know, they are talking about. If they are talking about something that has, an actual existence which we are able to perceive at a certain point. Or whether these are some type of ... something within our consciousness? Or what it means when it says later on in the sutra that the earth opens up and out of the cracks in the earth come all of these different types of beings. It is very difficult for me to imagine what they are.

Suzuki-roshi: Well. You are still turned by sutra, maybe. This is our way of understanding. The difference between people stick to the sutra and people understand the meaning of the sutra. And for the people who

understand the meaning of the sutra, this description is not good enough, even. Must be more fancy. Should be endlessly fancy! One group or two group is not good enough. We understand in that way. Whatever you say, whatever you think, it is already understood by us. Before we understand it. Before we know it, we know it. If you say something, "Yeah. It may be so." [Laughter] It ... some miracles... "Don't you know something? Don't ... could you tell me something more miracles?" [Laughing.] Maybe. We understand in that way. That is rather ... Dogen Zenji's way. He did not say ... he did not ridicule those sutras. He is very serious. Maybe he respected this sutra best. Most. But it is very serious matter. That point is very serious matter.

Student: Roshi, why does the sutra say-describe the horrible things that will happen to you if you don't listen to the sutra and you know, it talks about how your body will be covered with thorns and all kinds of horrible things? It sounded to me like hellfire and brimstone Christianity when we are condemned to eternal hell. Is that what it is supposed to be or does it have some other meaning?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe. [Everyone laughing.] We say, result is-will result immediately, not later punishment. To do something is already punishment. That you do something is already punishment. Not later. Do you understand? [No, says student.] Good! [Laughter.]

Student: Why does the sutra say so many awful things about women? About why if you are lucky you will be born a man? [Everyone laughing.]

Suzuki-roshi: Why do you think? There are some great difference between nature of man and woman. If you take it ... it is up to the viewpoint, not ... there is no need to stick to the criticism or evaluation, but ... there is some truth, you know. Not in term of it is good or bad. But sometimes, when we talk about buddha-mind. We say ... kind mind ... we say ... "old lady's mind." We do not say "old man's mind." When we say Buddha mind is parent's mind, but we say parent's but ... "father" and "mother" we say, but "father" is suffix. It means actually "mother." So in this sense, when you acquire ....

But quality you have is, maybe deeper, and wider, and heavier. Heavy material. So sometimes it maybe difficult to sew, because material is so thick. But after you make your wear, your wearing, it is very warm and strong. So before you make it, it maybe criticized. But after you have made it, we will appreciate the quality. But when we are involved in the practice to attain something; in other words, to make wearing, you know, we tend to be critical with the thickness of the material. But like Mahayana teaching, when we put more emphasis on our practice as a man ... as a being who has Buddha nature; we put emphasis more on the equality of the material. So that is why Mahayana Buddhism ... when we talk about mercy or buddha mercy, we refer to mercy of parents, especially mother's mind. Some more time? One more

question.

Student: I have two questions. First of all from what you just said about repetition ... then this sutra was probably memorized in its originality. And that accounts for part of the form of it--repetitious, rhythmic form. Is that true?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. It is said so. That to memorize sometime when memorize it is convenient to put it in some form so we can recite it easily. We can ... the sentence comes one after another. And sometimes they memorized by number: Number one, number two, number three; or various simple statements.

Student: My second question is from yesterday's or day before yesterday's lecture. It seemed to me that there is a connection between Buddha fields and Sambhogakaya Buddha.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Buddha fields ... Buddha fields, yeah. Yeah. Sambhogakaya Buddha include all the Buddha field.

Student: Is more than that ...

Suzuki-roshi: More than one Buddha field ...

Student: No but more than all Buddha fields. Can we think of ... well, can I think in this way? If I think of reincarnation past and future of all beings. Some. There must be some connecting something. This is what we were talking about last time ... between ... that makes it reincarnation, my past lives, my future life. The fact that I can say "my" means that there must be some connection between the past, present, and the future. It is not a physical thing but there is some connection. No if I take the past back infinitely, if I can just say that ... and the future forward infinitely, then I have a Buddha field. If you apply this to everyone then you have some vast number of Buddha fields. And then we have the body of Sambhogakaya Buddha.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Buddha fields. There are many Buddha fields, you know. We say. But many Buddha fields maybe actually one Buddha field.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **6 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #10**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #10  
Zen Mountain Center

As Zen Buddhists, it is necessary for us to understand the second patriarch Mahakashyapa. He is famous for his zudagyo, or in Sanskrit, dvadasa dhutagunah. We count twelve zudagyo [juni-zuda = twelve zuda; gyo = practice], which are mostly important ways of organizing one's life as a person and as a member of the sangha.

The first zudagyo is to live in a calm place, such as the forest or woods, aranyaka ["forest dweller"]. In India, everyone, after finishing their household or family life, would join the religious life with other people. So to enter the aranya or forest means to start the religious life, not only for priests, but for everyone. That was the Indian custom. Here, to live in aranya means to live like religious people do.

The second zudagyo is to support one's life by begging, yathasam-strarika ["taking any seat which may be offered"]. This is mostly about food, and there are two more about food.

One is that when you beg, you have to visit houses in order [3rd: paidapatika = "living on alms"]. We should not choose houses. You should not choose someone you know or someone who is wealthy. Whether they are poor or wealthy or you don't know them, you should not change the order. This is the next one.

The fourth one is aikasanika ["using only one seat for meditation and eating"], which means to eat at certain times, not to eat many times. They did not eat supper, just breakfast and lunch.

And you should know how much you should eat, you shouldn't eat too much. That is the fifth one, namatika ["wearing coarse garments"]. This is also important. We should not be greedy.

The next one [6th] is also about food [khalu-pascadbhaktika = "not eating after the time when one should cease eating"]. We should not eat or drink except at mealtime. To have tea is our rule; that may be alright. This is a very difficult excuse. Anyway, we should not be greedy, especially when we eat.

The seventh one is about the clothes we wear [pamsukulika = "wearing clothes made of rags taken from a dust heap"]. We should wear Buddha's robe, which is made from the material people throw away. I think not only clothes, but also furniture and everything should be like this. In America, if you go to a second hand store, you can buy something which you want quite cheaply. So I thought there's no need for us to buy brand new furniture, paying a lot of money, if you can get it for two or three dollars.

This is, I think, a kind of attitude we take for our living.

And [8th: traicivarika] we should wear only three robes. When we have

ordination ceremony, we receive three robes: rakusu, which is made of five pieces, and okesa, which is made of seven pieces, and the third one, which is made of nine pieces. There may be many reasons why they named three kinds. In some scripture it says they wear the simplest kind when it is warm or hot. When it is cold they wear the robe made of nine pieces of material, and in the spring or fall, they wear the robe made of five pieces.

Nowadays we have robes for everyday practice and robes for ceremonies. I think that we should not use as gorgeous robes as we do now, never wore such gorgeous robes. When I gave a funeral service for the first time for a very rich old person, I just wore a black robe with a brown okesa. They were very angry with me. At the time they didn't say anything, but later they said, "Why didn't you wear a more beautiful one like your master had?" They knew what my master wore, so they asked why I didn't wear it that time. But now I think we should not be attached to the material or the outlook of the robes. A gorgeous one is alright, a shabby one is alright. Now that is my attitude, but at that time I was very concerned about what I wore.

Perhaps no one likes to wear robes that are too gorgeous, like an actor or actress on the stage. In Japan we have \_\_\_\_\_ [sounds like "agratory"] actresses. In the winter, when they don't have much to do, or during their lunch, they would come out to the city with some gorgeous clothes, hitting drums and bells, and entertaining people with music or a play. So I thought, "We shouldn't be like that. We are not \_\_\_\_\_ [this time sounds like "andratory"] actors." But, I think, this kind of attitude is very important, and we should not forget this point.

So far, all of the zudagyo have been about food and clothing, except the first one, which is about where we should live. And the next three are also about where we should live. We should live someplace where it is appropriate to practice zazen.

One [9th = smasanika] is to live near a cemetery. How about it? An American cemetery is very beautiful, but a Japanese cemetery is not so beautiful. It is supposed to be a very gloomy, monotonous place. A place where there is a shrine or temple or cemetery is supposed to be a very lonely, monotonous place. They live near a cemetery because they will feel more deeply the evanescence of life, and maybe they can eliminate various desires.

The next one [10th: vrksamulika] is to live under a big tree. Maybe this is because it is cool, especially in India.

But at the same time, we should not be attached to the coolness of the place. So the next one [11th: abhyavakasika = "living in the open air"] is to live where there are no trees, where everyone can see you, like a common place or square, where nothing will protect you. This is a pretty strict practice.

And the last one [12th: naisadika = "using the sitting posture for sleeping"] is not to sleep in bed, to always sleep in a sitting position. Those are the twelve zudagyo.

You will have various questions, and there are many things to think about in this area. If you see those rules just as rules, in a rigid way, that will not give you right understanding. But if you think about the underlying thought, there are many things to think about.

This is, actually, how to protect people, how to maintain our order, and how to maintain our system of society. If our human life is supported with this kind of spirit, a perfect, peaceful world will be acquired by human beings. It may look rigid and strict, but the underlying thought is very warm and full of mercy. Practicing in those ways, they try to make people happy. Just to have a bare and simple life and to have joy in our life will give a limitless source of spirit to the people. Only when we practice our way, when we live in this way and maintain our order and maintain our joy of life will people be able to know it is possible to have complete joy in various kinds of life. Even in adversity, they may feel, it is possible to have complete composure, and they will have a strong spirit or strong faith in our human life.

[Text missing here?-WKR]

Buddha's nirvana day. At various temples they hang a picture of Buddha lying down on a bed surrounded by many disciples who are very sad. Even various animals and birds came to see how he was. And when they saw that he was critically ill, they all cried. But we cannot find a cat in the picture.

No one explained why there is no cat, but I thought, "Where is the cat?" When I asked them, they said, "I don't know why the cat didn't come."

When I was sixteen or seventeen years old, I found some words expressing a superficial good manner. At that time I didn't like the monk's way or priest's way. They always went like this [presumably making some gesture], and it seemed to me they didn't mean it, they just did it superficially without any feeling. And that kind of way is called a "cat-like manner." Cats look very lovely, and their manner is very gentle, but it is not so deep. There is no strong feeling in it. If we say, "Go away," they will go away. [I'm not sure about my interpretation of this. What he actually said was, "There is no strong feeling in it, they're just [laughs] go-we say go away, they will go away."] If they think it is all right, they may easily approach you. When we are busy or are observing something else, a cat may come. They are supposed to be very sneaky in some way. In some literature, someone called that "cat-like manner". So I thought that is why the cat did not come to Buddha's last hour.

Why did I start to talk about this? To just do this [making some gesture] is not a true expression of respect. To live a humble, bare, and simple life is already an expression of respect. It is the best way to express respect to ourselves and others. Even though we lead a bare life, inside, spiritually, we are rich. Even living the simplest way, we have the possibility of giving good feeling to others.

So I am not concerned about the beatnik style or hippie-like style, but only when they can express respect to others even in those costumes. There is a possibility to express respect to others in the simplest way, even though they may wear rags. But this point is missing in hippie-like living. Of course, I think they have that kind of costume to express some resistance to the old cat-like manner. I can understand their feeling. But instead of being antagonistic or feeling resistance to the cat-like manner, they should express some respect to the truth or to the real religious life. The essential element of religious life is respect. And respect could be expressed in various ways.

Exposing various parts of the body may be an expression of resistance to the cat-like manner. But in that manner, something is missing. Buddhists emphasize being ashamed of our bare, natural, primitive, naive, undefined manner. So to respect Buddha means to be ashamed of not being what we should be when we see how perfect Buddha was or when we see someone who has a very respectable character. Naturally, we become ashamed of our want of practice, want of attainment or acquisition. So to become ashamed of ourselves means to respect Buddha. When we have no idea of religion or Buddha or perfect character, we are not ashamed of anything. So we may enter the Buddha Hall with dirty sandals. When we know who Buddha is, we cannot do that, we will be ashamed of our dirty feet. Naturally, when you want to enter a practice hall or Buddha Hall, you will clean up your clothing and body. That may not be enough, but at least that much we can do. That is an expression of respect.

This kind of attitude maintains our order and supports a warm feeling for our sangha and society. Right now what we have is a cat-like culture and antagonism towards the cat. "Cat, go away. I don't like you at all. Go away." It is so noisy, you know. "Go away, go away, go away," so society. If you go to San Francisco, young people express their antagonism towards the cats. They hit drums and dance with long hair, and, "Go away! Go away, cats!" That is a kind of good feeling, you know. If there are one or two cats, we will feel sorry for them, but nowadays there are too many cats. Even though you use electric sound, they don't go away. The sound is not strong enough, but they have to make as strong a sound as possible. "Go away! Go away! Go away!" I can understand that, but that is too noisy.

So there must be some way to maintain our order, to have some warm feeling in our society. That is why this practice of the twelve zudagyo, in Japanese, or dvadasa dhutagunah in Sanskrit, could maintain our order.



When we really make this kind of effort, we will have complete freedom in our society. We should make our effort towards this point.

So instead of being enslaved by antagonism, we should make our effort in right order, with right spirit. This kind of spirit should be established in some place like Tassajara. Someone must do that, or else we have no place to live. And this is why we practice zazen, and in explanation of those twelve zudagyo or zuda practices.

There are many words for zazen, Zen or sitting: eight characters. Two tenths of the characters are sitting. You may understand how the practice of just sitting is so important. We say zazen practice, simple as it is, its meaning is very deep, and spiritual zazen will support, will maintain our order.

Mahakashyapa is famous for his zudagyo, his kind of twelve practices. But he is not famous for his understanding of shunyata or emptiness. Subhuti is the one who is famous for his understanding of emptiness, and Shariputra is the most famous one. Nevertheless, Mahakashyapa is supposed to be a successor to Buddha himself. He devoted himself to Buddha's practice, not only zazen practice, but also the zazen practice which includes everyday life, and to spiritually maintaining the order of our life as a sangha and as human beings. And he became a successor to Buddha. This point should be remembered, I think. We say, "Zen and everyday life," but it does not mean

to extend zazen practice to everyday life, but that to have deep understanding of the teaching, of Buddha's spirit, we practice zazen. That is the true way. Actually, there is no Zen or everyday life; Zen or everyday life is the expression of the true spirit of Buddha, the true spirit to help others or to maintain our order or to support this society, this human world. I think this is the reason why Mahakashyapa became the successor of Buddha.

[Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes.]

All definitions in brackets are from the Japanese Buddhist Dictionary.]

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **7 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #3**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #3  
Zen Mountain Center

I already explained the nature of the Nirmanakaya Buddha and

Sambhoga kaya Buddha. The Nirmanakaya Buddha comes into this world with the vow that he will save all sentient beings. Not by karma, but by vow, he appears in this world, practices the Bodhisattva's way, attains enlightenment as Buddha did, and saves all human beings. So he is called an incarnated body. He changes his form in various ways, sometimes to a bodhisattva, sometimes to a buddha. He takes on various forms to help people, so in the widest sense of the word, everything is Nirmanakaya Buddha. But in the narrow sense, those who appear in this world by vow instead of by karma are called Nirmanakaya Buddhas. The Sambhoga kaya Buddha is the original source of the Nirmanakaya Buddha: it gives birth to the Nirmanakaya Buddha. In order to explain the Dharma kaya Buddha, it is necessary to explain the Sambhoga kaya Buddha more. Then you will understand what the Dharma kaya Buddha is naturally.

The Dharma kaya Buddha is called the fundamental, undeveloped Buddhakaya. In Buddhism, when we say the undeveloped, or fundamental, body, it means that it is the original source itself. But there are two interpretations for one reality. When we understand it as something which is very calm, which is not in activity, we call it the Dharma Body. But the Dharma Body does not actually remain calm and inactive-it is always active. When we understand it as activity, we call it Dharma Nature. "Dharma Nature" means something in action, and "Dharma Body" means something which is not in activity, or which is not developed. But the whole Nature exists in the Dharma Body as a potentiality. So we have two understandings of one reality: Dharma kaya [kaya=body] and dharma nature.

The Sambhoga kaya Buddha is the Buddha who realized this dharma nature in activity, or as something which has a nature. And when we understand the reality which has various potentialities to act or to develop, that is called Dharma kaya Buddha.

Figuratively speaking, the Sambhogakaya Buddha may be like the sun. Instead of observing things objectively, he understands his Buddha Nature, which is always in activity within himself, figuratively speaking of course. So, like the sun, although he is not trying to illuminate everything objectively, he is actually illuminating every thing. He is actually helping others without trying to help. He can illuminate everything because originally he has that kind of power or potentiality. But the most important thing for the Sambhoga kaya Buddha is to attain enlightenment inwardly, or to illuminate himself, instead of illuminating the objective world. Instead of observing each thing respectively, one by one, he observes his nature within himself. When he observes his inside world, as the sun does, he finds himself as earth. That earth nature is universal. This earth is also earth, and the sun is also earth. Everything is earth, so there is no difference between the objective world and the subjective world. To be enlightened in his inward nature is to be enlightened outside in the objective world. So for him the whole world is his inside or subjective world. When he reaches this kind of world, we

call him Sambhoga kaya Buddha.

His world is limitless. It includes the sun and stars and everything. So his virtue and wisdom are also limitless. He is the Omniscient One, who knows every thing as being within himself. For him there is nothing outside his being. That is the Sambhoga kaya Buddha. When we understand reality in this way, our understanding includes everything. And the reality which includes everything as an undeveloped reality is the Dharma kaya Buddha itself, Dharma itself, Being itself.

Our way of understanding things is exactly the same as our zazen. We say, "Just sit!" What does this mean? When we say, "Just sit," it includes all the potential activity which we have. We remain in an inactive state, but we have potentiality. So in this sense, our practice includes everything. When we sit, we are just sitting. Each one of us is sitting, and each one of us is Dharma kaya Buddha. But within ourselves, even though we are sitting, we take breaths and our heart is beating, so we are also Sambhoga kaya Buddha. We understand reality in this way.

So the Sambhoga kaya Buddha or the Dharma kaya Buddha is the source of all bud dhas, which exists before Buddha. In this sense, Buddha is eternal, perpetual being. So we call it tathata in Sanskrit ["suchness," "thusness"], or shinnyo in Japanese. And the Lotus Sutra is the sutra which describes this kind of reality, the world of tathata. That is why it is told on a big, cosmic scale. We say in Japanese jisso, the way everything exists in the realm of reality or the realm of tathata. In this sutra, everything presumes this world of tathata. Of course, it is described in a very dramatic way, but what it means to show is how things exist in this world, in this dharma world or world of tathata. The purpose of this sutra is to give a dramatic version of tathata This is an important point.

This sutra was told by the Sambhoga kaya Buddha, with his wisdom, to save all sentient beings. It verbally tells us what dharma nature is, not with a substantial idea, but rather in a dramatic, figurative way.

And this sutra especially puts emphasis on dharma nature instead of on the dharma body, because the dharma body is inexplicable. You cannot talk about the dharma body because it is something beyond our world, beyond our wisdom, beyond our understanding. That is why we say the dharma body does not talk. My mouth talks, but my body doesn't talk. When we say "body," it is a source of activity, but not activity itself. But without the source, there is no activity. So when there is activity, there should be a source. But the source does not always have any activity. You can have the idea of source or body without activity.

There is something which is not in activity. That is the Body. But actually, there is no such thing. Whatever it is, it has some activity. Even a stone has some activity. So there is no such thing. We cannot

talk about the Body itself, so what shall I do? If I talk about something, that is already the dharma nature, how dharma goes, what it is like. When I say what it is like, that is the Nirmanakaya Buddha. Objectively speaking, that is form. More subjectively speaking, it is its nature. But what the source of that Nature is, no one knows. We know it, but we cannot say anything about it. If you say something, it is not the Body, it is the Nature, or it is an attribute of the Body. So we do not talk about what the Dharma Body is, but we understand that there must be some source.

That is the dharma body, the dharma nature, and the dharma attribute, or form and color. That is [reversing the order] the outlook of dharma, nature of dharma, and dharma itself. And the Nirmanakaya Buddha, the Sambhoga kaya Buddha, and the Dharmakaya Buddha. Did you understand? The Nirmanakaya Buddha is the form of dharma, the Sambhoga kaya Buddha is the nature of dharma, and the Dharma kaya Buddha is the dharma body, which is beyond words, which we cannot describe. So this sutra tells what the Dharma Nature is, and when we listen to it, we will understand what the Dharma kaya Buddha is and who the Nirmanakaya Buddha Shakyamuni was.

I say there is no way to talk about the Dharma Body, but if you will allow me to say something about it, we can call it "Truth Itself." Truth is something which you cannot see. You can see the apple, but you cannot see the theory of gravity. But there is some theory, some truth. So nothing happens just by accident. When something happens, there should be some reason. It is caused by Dharma. In this sense, truth is close to the Dharma Nature. But we can understand it in some way, we can figure out some rules. In Buddhism, those rules, or that truth, is sometimes called the Dharma itself. That is the way in which we call it the Dharma Body. It is the source of all truth.

When we say "nature" it is, of course, truth. But nature is something which includes what we see. In its strict sense, truth is not something which we can see. Buddhists figure it out in this way: because many people ask us, "What is Dharma Body?" we must say something about it, so we try to figure out what we should say. In this case, we give a very difficult explanation. If I don't say anything, you may say, "He doesn't know anything about the Dharma Body. He is not such a good teacher." So I must make a narrow escape. The way to do it is to talk about some truth. Nature and truth are not exactly the same. Truth is nearer to the Dharma Body. The idea is also pretty close to the Dharma Nature, but it exists just in between the Dharma Nature and the Dharma Body.

So sometimes "Dharma" means "teaching," sometimes "reality," and sometimes "being," just "something," just "there." Ri means "truth," and ji means "event" or "being", something which exists, like a stone or like water. Ri means, not "water nature," but how it becomes water from air. [There is some theory of how air becomes water.] So another

side of water is truth, and that truth is not something which we can see. You can see the nature of water: it flows from a higher place to a lower place.

The Japanese term for truth is ri, and the Japanese term for various beings is ji. Ji and ri are very important, key technical words in Buddhism. When we realize ri in its true sense, we are Sambhogakaya Buddha. When we observe things as we observe the objective world, and when we want to help people involved in the objective or materialistic world, we are Nirmanakaya Buddha. The way to help others as Nirmanakaya Buddha is to take various forms and give them some handy [appropriate] help. But as the Sambhoga kaya Buddha we should realize that there is no "I" or "you"-it is all one being. When we realize this nature, which is universal, we can help others without trying to help them, because whatever we do, that is our activity.

You are a part of me, you know. When we reach this kind of understanding, when we become Sambhoga kaya Buddha, then when you practice zazen you have no "you" and no "others"; your practice includes everything. So everything will take place within yourself. There is no objective world anymore. Without trying to help others, you will help them anyway. That is the Sambhoga kaya Buddha.

But when we realize that our practice includes everything, why don't we include the Nirmanakaya Buddha? Shakyamuni Buddha is included in our practice. So all the Shakyamuni buddhas, and all the Nirmanakaya buddhas which were spoken of by Shakyamuni Buddha will attain enlightenment all at once when we practice zazen. Do you understand? The Nirmanakaya Buddha is within ourselves.

Before we reach this kind of understanding, the Nirmanakaya Buddha is just a hero. He has no eternal life. He is one of the great heroes of our history. But when we understand Shakyamuni Buddha as the Sambhoga kaya Buddha or the Dharma kaya Buddha, for the first time, he has perpetual life. This is a more traditional understanding of Buddha. And actually, this kind of understanding was supported by Buddha when he was alive, although it took several hundred years before we understood who Shakyamuni Buddha was in reality. This kind of understanding, which was accomplished by his disciples, gave Buddha new life, made him a perpetual buddha. In this sense, he

is called the Tathagata.

This is a history of the development of the understanding of Buddha, and at the same time, the true understanding of his teaching. He did not stick to the words he said. He was like a doctor who gives his patients prescriptions. According to the people, he gave various prescriptions. He didn't have any idea of giving the same prescription to various patients. What he said was for him like a paper. [Suzuki-roshi makes motions of writing various prescriptions out on paper, saying, "Hai, hai, hai," as he

gives them out.] That is actually what he did and how he understood that he should help people. But the reason he was Buddha is that he was the Enlightened One. He was illuminated in his own nature, Dharma Nature, and everyone's nature, so he knew who he was. For him there was no disciple and no objective world. So he said all sentient beings are his sons, are part of him. That was Buddha. So only when we understand Buddha as the Sambhoga kaya Buddha or the Dharma kaya Buddha does he become real.

Since we have arrived at this kind of understanding, there is no need to talk about what Theravada or Mahayana Buddhism is. All Buddhism, whether it is Theravada or Mahayana is one whole Buddhism. This is how we have transmitted his teaching from Buddha to us. And the purpose of this sutra is to describe our Dharma Nature.

Student A: I have two questions. We read about certain masters who, upon attaining complete enlightenment, are able to direct their future rebirths, in other words, to return to help all sentient beings, coming back through a vow rather than through karma. Would a master, say in this century, who could do that, be a Nirmanakaya buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Do you mean someone who actually knows his former and future lives? Since I don't know my former and future lives, I cannot say for sure that he is or is not. If I really knew, then I could say yes. When my self doesn't know, how is it possible to say, "Yes, he is"? But according to our more traditional teaching, I think I can say he is a real master.

Q: Then I'm confused about the meaning of the word "buddha," because we talk about the last buddha being Shakyamuni and the next being Maitreya. Do we understand that the understanding of Bodhidharma or the Sixth Patriarch or Dogen-zenji allowed them to become buddhas? Can we say that those people attained complete perfect enlightenment?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Q: Then why don't we call them buddhas also?

Suzuki-roshi: Dogen-zenji Buddha. We say "buddha" or "zenji" or "busso." So means patriarch. The way we name them is different, but what we mean by "buddha" and "patriarch" is the same. When we point them out, one by one, as successive teachers, then we call them Patriarchs-first, second, third, etc. But they are all buddhas. So they are not different, but what we call them is different.

Q: Then what is the meaning of Maitreya, the coming buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Maitreya Buddha is the buddha who will come. There must be a future buddha too. We call him by the name of Maitreya. Buddha attained enlightenment and saw his Dharma Nature, so he became the

Nirmanakaya Buddha. And he also knew the source of his buddhahood. He recognized himself as the seventh patriarch or seventh buddha. Before Buddha there were seven buddhas. But seven doesn't mean just seven, but many. He didn't say, "I am the first one." He acknowledged many buddhas before him. He is one of the many buddhas, and he is Maitreya Buddha also.

-----

(Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes)

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **8 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #4**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #4  
Zen Mountain Center

The point of my previous lecture was that since it may be difficult for you to understand the Lotus Sutra, I wanted to clarify who is supposed to have told it. The sutras usually look like they were spoken by the historical Buddha himself. But our Buddhist sutras were not actually spoken by him. So when you read a sutra, if you think it was spoken by Buddha himself, you will be confused, because there are actually many elements in it which did not exist in Buddha's time. Afterwards, when the sutra was compiled, it was interspersed with various thoughts that existed then. Buddhist thought itself developed from the understanding of the direct disciples of Buddha to that of Buddhists several generations afterward. So you will be very confused when you read the sutra as if it was spoken by the historical Buddha.

Actually, the sutra was told by so-called Mahayana Buddhists several hundred years after Buddha passed away. Buddhism had developed from the sravaka to the Mahayana understanding. If I say Buddhism developed in this way, then you may think it developed or changed. But in reality, it did not change or develop, but tried to resume the original understanding of Buddhism. In this way, for many thousands of years, Buddhists have been trying to restore Buddha's teaching. It looks as if this effort changed Buddhism from the original way to some different teaching, but that is not so. Do you understand what I am saying? It is rather difficult, with my language problem, to explain this part. This sutra was told by someone who was a Mahayana Buddhist. It looks like the historical Buddha, over here, spoke this sutra, but actually someone who was over here told it. And Buddhism itself developed from here to here. So you may say what is taught in this sutra is not Buddha's teaching, but a teaching which developed from Buddha's teaching. So if you are attached to Buddha's original teaching, you may be disappointed, you see?

But what I want to say is that there is no need for you to be disappointed, because what Buddhists have been trying to do was to find out what was fundamental Buddhism. So they thought, this is not fundamental Buddhism, and this is not, until finally they thought this is Buddha's original purpose in teaching. When they reached this kind of understanding, someone invented this story with such conviction and on such a great scale. That is why this sutra is called the king of all sutras. Do you understand?

Nowadays we have various sects in China or Japan, but the reason so many founders of various schools continue to make that kind of effort today is only in order to understand who Buddha was. When someone found that Buddha was such and such a person, he became the founder of some school. All the effort we have been making has been to know who Buddha is and what his purpose for teaching was. Do you understand this point? For a Buddhist, Buddha is not just a historical person—he is truth itself. We think he should be truth itself, and the historical Buddha cannot be perfect. But the background of the historical Buddha should be truth. If so, truth itself should be the real Buddha for us.

Then what is truth? How should we understand the truth, or how should we accept truth in the situation of this age? Because of questions like that is why we have various schools. Do you understand? In this way, with that kind of attitude, this sutra was told. So it is necessary for me to tell you about the history of Buddhism from the original, fundamental, form to the Mahayana form. If I say "Mahayana", there is also the "Hinayana" school, its opposite. When the Mahayana Buddhists reached Buddha's original teaching, they called all the teaching from before Mahayana Buddhism arose "Hinayana". But while the Mahayana school was being established, there was no Hinayana school.

According to the Tendai school, which was founded by Tendai Chih-i in China, there are two kinds of Mahayana. One is the last stage of the development of Buddhism, which is very different from the so-called Hinayana, or teaching of the sravakas. The Pratyekas have no teaching, because they are the ones who have no teacher, who studied by themselves. So there is no school for the Pratyeka Buddhist. They have no way that they are teaching; they have no written material for their disciples. The trees we see, the flowers we see, the stars and moon, or the mountains and rivers, are the teaching. So there is no Pratyekayana. But the Sravakas have a teaching, and the Mahayana teachers who reached this point ["the last stage in the development of Buddhism"], criticized the sravakas by calling their way the Hinayana. Of course, according to the Tendai, this is not the real Mahayana, or real teaching. The real teaching is the one which can include Sravakas, Pratyekas, and the so-called "one vehicle" or "great vehicle" teaching. That is the true teaching. So the Buddhists who discriminate between Mahayana and Hinayana are not true Mahayanists.



For the true Mahayana Buddhist, there are no Sravakas, Pratyekas, "Great One Vehicle," or "Mahayana." This is called the truth vehicle, while the other is called the special teaching. The special teaching is not good enough. It should be perfect teaching. So according to the Tendai analogy, there is the perfect teaching, the special teaching, and the teachings of the Pratyekas and Sravakas. This is a more proper understanding of Buddha's teaching.

In this way, our understanding of Buddha's teaching improved more and more. Finding out how we should improve and accept Buddha's teaching as a perfect teaching is the effort we have been making. So Buddhism should change, it should not be completed. One after another, we must have new teachers, and we must improve our understanding of the teaching from an immature one to a mature one. We should study this sutra with this in mind. Did you understand what I'm trying to say?

Today I want you to present some questions if you have any.

Student A: If that was the interpretation of Buddhism that was perfect for that time, maybe some new interpretation is perfect for this time. Or do you think that the Lotus Sutra is the best expression of Buddhism for the present?

Suzuki-roshi: Another way of understanding is by logic. Or, culture is also a truth for carving Buddhism. So I think that nowadays you should use some other truth to carve Buddha's image.

Q: Do you think the Shobogenzo may have been the best sutra for that time?

Suzuki-roshi: For that time, it was. And he used a very unusual truth for a person who was born several hundred years ago. Most of the truths he used may be very appropriate for us to use too. In this sense, many scholars are interested in the Shobogenzo. But even so, you cannot say Buddhism was completed by Dogen-zenji. If you think it was, the Shobogenzo becomes like a coffee shop on the freeway. Dogen will be very angry if you stay there. That is why he wrote it. His intention was not to stay here. You should go on and on. That was the point he put emphasis on. He said Buddhism is not valuable because of the teaching, but because of the continuous practice, such as the four vows.

Q: I didn't understand the emphasis this sutra places on the future lives of the different disciples. How is that of value?

Suzuki-roshi: "Future disciples" means that Buddhism is the teaching which has a limitless future and beginningless beginning, and which should always be true. So, in the sutra, there are many disciples and buddhas who will exist in the future and who existed aeons ago.

Q: We shouldn't be concerned about that, and it seems so difficult to

understand.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, it's difficult to understand. That was the point of my previous lecture on this sutra. If your understanding does not lead to the Sambhogakaya Buddha or Dharmakaya Buddha, this kind of description doesn't make any sense. It looks like a fable or tale. Do you understand? As you will see later in this sutra, Buddha said to many of his eminent, direct disciples, "You should live until Maitreya Buddha appears, many many aeons in the future," and they said, "Yes." You cannot understand this kind of thought without the idea of the Sambhogakaya Buddha. And you may say the Sambhogakaya Buddha is just some idea, but if you have some experience of zazen, you can accept it. That is why Zen Buddhism arose.

Q: What does the understanding of the vow have to do with the understanding of Sambhogakaya Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: First of all, Sambhogakaya Buddha is the perpetual one, who exists from beginningless beginning to endless end. And secondly, Nirmanakaya Buddha is the one who exists moment after moment with various forms, so Sambhogakaya Buddha is the background of Nirmanakaya Buddha. And Nirmanakaya Buddha is the embodiment of Sambhogakaya Buddha. So Sambhogakaya Buddha will give birth to Nirmanakaya Buddha. Nirmanakaya Buddha is the Buddha which exists moment after moment with various forms. Do you understand? That is why we say sentient beings are numberless, and we exist from beginningless beginning and to endless end.

Q: I think a lot of us have felt that some of the things in that sutra are hard to understand from our experience, in the same way that the vow seems to be impossible to our understanding. But there seems to be a relationship between making that vow and the mmm....

Suzuki-roshi: It may be difficult to explain. I think you know pretty well, and Claude [Dalenberg?] explained it pretty well in his answer to someone's question. That is actually how we exist here. We exist moment after moment, taking the form and color of the great Sambhogakaya Buddha. That is true. Don't you think so? If I say "Sambhogakaya Buddha," since you don't know the technical definition of the term, it may be more difficult. But we exist here, and we are not permanent beings. Only in this moment do we exist like this. Tomorrow I will not be the same person. This is true. Next moment I shall be the future Buddha. Yesterday I was the past Buddha. And you will be another Buddha. In this way there are many, many Buddhas.

But we are incarnated bodies, with a certain color and form and character. So there must be a source or root of each being, as the Sambhogakaya Buddha was the source of the Nirmanakaya Shakyamuni Buddha. When he realized this point, he accepted himself as Nirmanakaya Buddha, as Sambhogakaya Buddha, and as Dharmakaya

Buddha. When we understand ourselves in this way, we exist in this world to continuously try to express Buddha Nature, moment after moment. That is the effort we should make, rather than being caught by a certain color or form.

But even so, we shouldn't ignore things, we should make our best effort in each moment. That is a kind of attachment, but this attachment is, at the same time, detachment, because the next moment you should make your best effort again. So it means detachment from the previous being. In this way, moment after moment, we exist. This kind of understanding is expressed by our technical terms of Nirmanakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha.

Q: Can all sentient beings, then, be considered Nirmanakaya Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, all sentient beings are Nirmanakaya Buddha. Whether or not they realize it, it is actually so. They do not accept themselves as a Nirmanakaya Buddha, that's all. For them, they are not, but for us who understand ourselves and others, all of them are Nirmanakaya Buddha, based on Sambhogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha.

Q: You said some people live by karma and some live by vows.

Suzuki-roshi: People who do not understand this truth live a karmic life. But those who know this point do not live a karmic life. Karmic life is another version of Buddhist life.

Q: You mentioned the triple world.

Suzuki-roshi: The triple world: past, present, and future.

Q: Can you explain bringing people from this world....

Suzuki-roshi: There is no separate past, present and future. Past and future actually exist in this present moment. Do you understand? If you do something good, your future is bound to be good; and that you are good means that your past life was good.

Q: You speak of our existence in only an instant, but at each instant, that existence should make its best effort. And the more I think about this idea of best effort, the less I'm able to understand at all what it means. I think I've asked you this before, but maybe I'm ready to hear it again. What do you mean by making your best effort on each instant?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't mean to sacrifice this moment for the future, and I don't mean to be bound by past life and try to escape from it. This is the kind of effort you usually make. But there's a more important point in your effort. What is it? To stand on your own two feet is the most important thing. To sacrifice this moment for your future, even for your ideal, means that you are not standing on your own two feet. So the

most important thing is to accept yourself, to have subjectivity in each moment. Or, don't complain-accept things as it is and satisfy your self with what you have right now. You should think, this is the only reality, the only Buddha you know, the only Buddha you can see, experience, have, worship. And then if you want to do something, at that time you are Nirmanakaya Buddha and Sambogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha.

---

The following fragment was once called File 68-10-22.A. It was subsequently found to be the end of File 68-10-00.C. It is included here because it is a different edited version of the same text.-Bill Redican, 2/13/96.

#### FOURTH LECTURE OF TRAINING SESSION AT TASSAJARA

October 22, 1968

... that is how, actually, we exist here. We exist moment after moment, as ... taking form and color of great Sambogakaya Buddha. That is true. (chuckle) Don't you think so? If I say Sambogakaya Buddha, you know, by technical term ... because of technical ... because you don't know, what does it mean, definition of Sambogakaya Buddha, it makes you, more difficult maybe. But we exist here; and we are not permanent being. Only in this moment we exist as like this. But next moment I will change to ... tomorrow I will not be the same person. This is true. Next moment I shall be future Buddha. Yesterday I was past Buddha. In this way there is many and many Buddhas. And you will be ... another Buddha. In this way, there are many Buddhas, but Source of ... or ... we are incarnated body, with some certain color and form and character.

So there must be source of Shakyamuni Buddha, who is called, Nirmanakaya Buddha. But when he realize this point, he accept himself as Nirmanakaya Buddha, as Sambogakaya Buddha, as Dharmakaya Buddha. When we understand ourselves in this way, you know, what will be the way ... why we live in this world is to try to continuously try to express Buddha Nature, moment after moment. And that is the effort we should make, instead of being caught by some certain color or form. But even so (laughing), we should not ignore ... we should make our best effort in each moment. So that is a kind of attachment. But this attachment is, at the same time, detachment, because next moment you should make best effort (chuckling). So, it means detachment to the last being. In this way, moment after moment, we exist. So this kind of understanding will be expressed by our technical term of Nirmanakaya Buddha, Sambogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha.

Dan's question: Can all sentient beings, then, be considered Nirmanakaya Buddha?

Roshi's answer: Yeah. All sentient beings are Nirmanakaya Buddha. But (laughing) you know, whether or not they realize it, it is actually so, but they do not accept themselves as a Nirmanakaya Buddha. For them, they are not. But for us who understand ourselves and others, they are ... all of them are Nirmanakaya Buddha and Sambogakaya Buddha based on Sambogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha.

[Is text missing? That is, where is Dan's second question?]

Dan's third question: Some people live by karma, you said, and some people live by vows.

Roshi: By vows, yeah, for people who do not understand this truth, they live their life, life is karmic life. Those who know this point, our life is not karmic life. The karma is ... karmic life is another version of Buddhist life.

Student: Can you explain "triple world"?

Roshi: Oh ... triple world: past, present, and future.

Student: Can you explain "bringing people from this world"?

Roshi: There is no separate past, present, and future. Past, present, and future exist in present. Past exists in this present moment ... future also. Do you understand? If you do something good, your future is, you know, bound to be good. That you are good means your past life was good.

Student: What do you mean by making your best effort on each moment?

Roshi: I don't mean to sacrifice this moment for the future. I don't mean, you know, that ... to be bound by past life, and try to escape from, is not ... this kind of effort will be the effort you make, usually. But there is more important point in your effort. What is that? To stand on your feet (laughing) is the most important thing. You know, to sacrifice this moment for your future, for your ideal, even, means that you are not sitting, standing on your feet. So, the most important things is to accept yourself, you know, to have subjectivity on each moment. Or to accept yourself: Don't complain. Don't make any complaint and accept things as it is, and satisfy yourself with what you have right now. And you should think, "this is the only reality, only Buddha, you know; you can see, you can experience, you can have, you can worship." And then, you know, if you want to do something, as a ... and at that time you are Nirmanakaya Buddha, and Sambogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha.

-----

[Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes]

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **9 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #5**

Tuesday, October 01, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #5  
Zen Mountain Center

What is told in this sutra is the view of the Dharma kaya world, Sambhogakaya world and Nirmanakaya world. We say shoho jisso [the real state of all elements or dharmas]. Shoho means various dharmas or various beings. Jisso is reality. So this is the right view of life and the world, in which various famous disciples of Buddha and arhats and various Sambhogakaya Buddhas and Dharmakaya Buddhas and Nirmanakaya Buddhas would appear. I think it's better to start little by little.

The first chapter is an introduction to the whole sutra, and it describes the scale of the sutra. "Thus have I heard." All sutras are started with these words. Nyoze gamon [evam maya shrutam], "Thus have I heard." At the meeting of the compilation [of the sutras] after Buddha passed away, the leading disciples decided on [the correct form of] Buddha's words. So they started with, "Thus I heard." All the sutras are supposed to have been spoken by Buddha, but it is not actually so. It is a kind of formal way of starting sutras.

"Thus I have heard." "Once upon a time." It doesn't say when.

"Once upon a time the Lord was staying at Ragagriha and on the Gridhrakuta mountain, with a numerous assemblage of monks, twelve hundred monks, all of them Arhats, stainless, free from depravity, self-controlled, thoroughly emancipated in thought and knowledge, of noble breed, (like unto) great elephants, having done their task, done their duty, acquitted their charge, reached the goal; in whom the ties which bound them to existence were wholly destroyed, whose minds were thoroughly emancipated by perfect knowledge, who had reached the utmost perfection in subduing all their thoughts; who were possessed of the transcendent faculties; eminent disciples, such as the venerable Ajnata-Kaundinya, the venerable Asvajit, the venerable Vashpa, the venerable Mahanaman, the venerable Bhadraka, the venerable Mahakasyapa, the venerable Kasyapa of Uruvilva, the venerable Kasyapa of Nadi, the venerable Kasyapa of Gaya, the venerable Sariputra, the venerable Maha-Maudgalyayana, the venerable Maha-Katyayana, the venerable Aniruddha, the venerable Revata, the venerable Kapphina, the venerable Gavampati, the venerable Pilindavatsa, the venerable Vakula, the venerable Bharadvaga, the venerable Maha-Kaushtila, the

venerable Nanda (alias Mahananda), the venerable Upananda, the venerable Sundara-Nanda, the venerable Purna Maitrayaniputra, the venerable Subhuti, the venerable Rahula; with them yet other great disciples, as venerable Ananda, still under training, and two thousand other monks, some of whom still under training, the others masters; with six thousand nuns having at their head Mahaprajapati and the nun Yasodhara, the mother of Rahula, along with her train; (further) with eight thousand Bodhisattvas, all unable to slide back, endowed with the spells of supreme perfect enlightenment, firmly standing in wisdom; who moved onward the never deviating wheel of the law; who had propitiated many hundred thousands of Buddhas; who under many hundred thousands of Buddhas had planted the roots of goodness, had been intimate with many hundred thousands of Buddhas, were in body and mind fully penetrated with the feeling of charity, able in communicating the wisdom of the Tathagatas; very wise, having reached the perfection of wisdom; renowned in many hundred thousands of worlds; having saved many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of beings; such as the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Manjusri, as prince royal; the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, Sarvarthanaman, Nityodyukta ...."

This is very difficult. I may bite my tongue.

"...Anikshiptadhura, Ratnapani, Bhaishagyaraga, Pradanasura, Ratnakandra, Ratnaprabha, Purnakandra, Mahavikramin, Trailokavikramin, Anantavikramin, Mahapratibhana, Satatasamitabhiyukta, Dharanidhara, Akshayamati, Padmasri, Nakshatraraga, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Simha."

There are many names, but I will only explain some of the important ones among them. "Thus have I heard. Once upon a time the Lord was staying at Ragagriha, on the Gridhrakuta mountain, with a numerous assemblage of monks, twelve hundred monks, all of them Arhats ...." Sravakas practice their way in order to attain arhatship. Arhatship is called, "no learn." It means there is nothing more to learn or study after reaching arhatship. An arhat was a perfect being-not Buddha himself, but next to Buddha. As you know, after Mahayana Buddhism arrived, there were the bodhisattvas and buddhas above the arhats.

Those who attained Arhatship were free from depravity, stainless. Stainless means that they annihilated all the stains, or all the evil desires. "free from depravity, self controlled...." Yesterday I explained self-control. You know the difference between controlling self, or desires, and annihilating desires? There is a slight difference. Do you remember? Sally asked that question. Controlling desires is a more autonomous or voluntary way. You do it by yourself. Annihilating is a more negative way. You annihilate some desires because they are evil and we have to get rid of them. Self control is a more positive way. If you switch your practice over from negation to self control, it becomes

more religious in its true sense.

Actually, this difference between the attitudes of annihilating or controlling divides Buddhism right in two. You may not like either of them. You don't like to control your desires, but that is not Zen. We have limitless desires, so if you let all your desires go as they want, what will happen to you? You must do something with them, that is true. Do you agree with that? You may say, "Desires as they are," but that does not mean to let them go as they want.

Usually when we say "desires," they are not just desires, they are desires plus something. That something may be various powers or faculties you have, and even reason will act with those limitless desires. With the aid of all the faculties we have, those limitless desires will extend themselves until we get lost. So something should be done with them. The first stage is to know what they are and how they work. When you know what they are and how they work, you will know how to develop them. That is actually our practice. I tentatively call this kind of effort "self-control" or "controlling desires". Control is not such a good word; you may find some better, beautiful, fancy word for that. But what I mean is to know the nature of desires and how they work, what kinds of friends they have, and what kind of things they do. We should know this and develop desires appropriately; that is self control. So instead of annihilating them, we should know what they are. Instead of trying to attain arhatship by annihilating desires, one by one, you will develop them.

These are opposite ways-one is negative and the other is positive, and Buddhism is divided in two. One way goes from top to bottom, the other from bottom to top. Hongaku homon [the dharma gate of innate Buddha-nature] means to start from Buddhahood and work on our world and our desires. Shikaku homon [the dharma gate of realizing one's Buddha-nature by undergoing religious exercises] means to begin with annihilating greed, and annihilate more and more subtle desires until you attain enlightenment. But the other way is to start from Dharmakaya Buddhahood, or Sambhogakaya Buddhahood, and come down to our world to help others.

Hon means origin, gaku means enlightenment, shi means beginning. It looks like the two ways are quite different, but what we actually do is not different. To annihilate or to control is the same thing, because desires are coexistent with our being. That I am here means desire is here. If you annihilate all the desires, you don't survive. So to annihilate actually means to control, because you cannot annihilate them. If you say to cut out all desires, that looks like there is a strong feeling of controlling them. "Cut out!" If you cut them out, you will die, but that much confidence is necessary. If you extend the practice of annihilating seriously, it will end in asceticism. But if you know the real nature of desires and how they work, those two practices are the same.



If you think that they are evil desires which we should get rid of, and you are worried about them, then that is not our way. So it may be better to say to control them. Here, in the sutra, it says "self controlled," but for sravakas, it is a more annihilistic way.

"... with a numerous assemblage of monks, twelve hundred monks, all of them arhats, stainless, free from depravity, self controlled, thoroughly emancipated in thought and knowledge ...." It is necessary to be emancipated from thought and knowledge. They are "of noble breed, (like unto) great elephants ...." In India there were strong feelings of class discrimination. "... having done their task"-the task of annihilating evil desires-"done their duty"-their duty to attain emancipation-"acquitted their charge"-acquitted their karmic life charge-"reached the goal"-goal of Arhatship-"in whom the ties which bound them to existence were wholly destroyed ...."

We have Buddha Nature, but at the same time, Buddha Nature is covered by something-first of all, ignorance. This point should be explained clearly, but I don't think I have enough time. Figuratively speaking, our desires look like a cloud in front of the moon, but it is not actually so. If there is a cloud, it should be destroyed. "...whose minds were thoroughly emancipated by perfect knowledge ...." Perfect knowledge is wisdom. Perfect wisdom is different from the wisdom of knowing something. Perfect knowledge is not knowledge in a dualistic sense. "... who had reached the utmost perfection in subduing all their thoughts ...." Perfect knowledge is called wisdom. Perfect wisdom is called non-discriminating wisdom or non-judgmental wisdom or non-thinking wisdom. So unless we subdue all our thoughts, we cannot have perfect knowledge. "... Who were possessed of the transcendent faculties ...." There are many transcendent faculties: clairvoyance, or hearing something from a distance, seeing through some substance; arhats had these kinds of faculties. Those arhats were there when this sutra was told.

The group mentioned next is the eminent disciples, such as the ten disciples of Buddha. I should explain them one by one, but I will only explain the most important ones, the ten eminent disciples or the four eminent sravakas. Sravakas are also Buddha's disciples. They are the most direct disciples of Buddha, so we call them "Theravada." The Theravada are the old disciples or shiniya [?] disciples.

The five disciples, including Kaundinya and the venerable Asvagit were the disciples to whom Buddha spoke his first sermon. Originally those five disciples were Siddhartha's men. When he escaped from the castle, those five men followed him. And as you know, when Shakyamuni Buddha gave up asceticism, they thought, "My master is not strong enough, so he gave up the practice." They continued to practice asceticism, but Buddha started to practice zazen under the Bodhi tree and attained enlightenment. He thought for forty-nine days about how to explain his experience and whom to explain it to. At last Buddha went

back to his five men and told the first sermon. Those are the five disciples. And ten more disciples follow those five.

Thank you very much. Do we have more time?

Claude: Yes, we have eight minutes.

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Q: Are we sravakas in that we are listening and learning from you, and are the bodhisattvas the ones of the Mahayana school, of the younger generation who sort of split away from the elders? Just because we can hear the Buddha directly doesn't mean we can't still stand on our own feet.

Suzuki-roshi: Actually, this is how Buddhism developed. When I explain how Buddhism actually developed from original Buddhism, I cannot say this is also how it developed from the sravakayana to the Mahayana. I should explain it in order as it happened. But at least when I am explaining this sutra, I should explain from the viewpoint of Mahayana Buddhism, since this is a Mahayana scripture. For the Mahayana Buddhist, there is no sravaka or pratyeka. True Mahayana includes everything. Actually, when we discriminate, that is the Sravakayana. What was wrong with them was that they were too proud of their teaching as direct disciples of Buddha, saying, "This is true Buddhism, and those who observe Buddha's precepts and can recite his teaching are priests, and those who cannot do that are laymen." That was wrong; they had too much confidence in themselves. That is why we say they are just trying to save themselves, that they just help themselves but not sentient beings, or that they are too proud of his teaching. So there are no sentient beings in their minds. That is why they are called "Hinayana". They made this mistake, but at least their practice was good and their knowledge was good.

Q: You speak of true wisdom being the wisdom of non-discrimination. How are we to understand the emphasis placed on the view that ignorance is like clouds in front of the moon? It sometimes seems like that's the way it is.

Suzuki-roshi: I wanted to explain that, but it is too complicated, so I didn't. The sravakas developed their rigid, or substantial, understanding of Buddhism and set up teachings like kusha [abhidharma] and yuishiki [vijñāna-mātrata = "consciousness only"]. Yuishiki is pretty good, but kusha is philosophically very complicated. It takes nine years to study kusha and three to study yuishiki, or, if you want to study all the Hinayana philosophy, it takes twelve years. Even if you devoted yourself solely to the study of kusha, it would take nine years. They established such a fancy, complicated philosophy. It may be interesting for some intellectual people, but if you study it, more and more you will be involved in thinking Buddhism. And why were the direct disciples of

Buddha the ones who subdued all their thought, you see? They went more and more in the wrong direction. This is the point for which they are blamed.

But originally it was very good. So, especially in Soto, every morning we recite the sutra for the arhats. We say sammyo rokutsu mappo shobo ni kaeshi. Sammyo rokutsu is the arhat's power. [Sammyo = tisro vidyah = three types of knowledge: of former births, of future destinies of all beings, and of the origin and way to remove suffering. Rokutsu = sad abhijnah = six kinds of supernatural powers of buddhas and arhats: free activity, eyes capable of seeing everything, ears capable of hearing everything, insight into others' thinking, remembrance of the former state of existence, and perfect freedom. Mappo = saddharma-vipralopa = last of the three time periods of Buddhism. Shobo = sad-dharma = true law or period of righteous law. Kaeshi = ?] We should be like the arhats, who practiced Buddhism so hard and devoted themselves so well. Although right now we are in the last period of Buddhism, when we practice our way as the arhats did, this time is not the last period any more, this time is like the time when Buddha was there. So Buddha should be with them, and Buddha is here. With this spirit, we worship the arhats every morning. We are very critical about some of the philosophy they created, but we respect their practice very much-not their teaching, but their practice, their sincerity.

-----

[Transcript checked and edited by Brian Fikes]

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **10 - Tenryu's One Finger**

Saturday, October 12, 1968

Sesshin Lecture

Shikantaza, Tenryu's One Finger

Soko-ji, San Francisco

I want to explain our way-our way of zazen. Do you know-you know the famous story of Gutei.[1] When Tenryu[2] pointed up one finger, Gutei attained enlightenment. And do you-what do you think [about] this one finger? He [Gutei] attained enlightenment, you know, and said: "I received Tenryu's one finger, and-which I have been using for-for my lifetime," when he became pretty old he said. "What do you think this is?" [Laughs.]

There is another-I will tell you another story. Yakusan-Yakusan Igen,[3] the disciple of Sekito, one day as he was asked to give lectures to the monks, he just appeared on the altar [took the abbot's seat],[4] and while-while he was sitting, and came back to his room.

The director of the temple went to his room and asked him, "You didn't give me-give us lecture for a long time, so I asked you to give us lecture [laughs]. But as soon as you appeared on the altar, you came back to [laughs]- to your room. Why is that?"

Yakusan said, "There are many teachers. Some of them are teaching Buddhist precepts, and some of them are giving lectures on sutras, and I am a Zen master."

That was his answer. What do you think that is?

If, you know-in other word, then I may ask you, "What have you been doing today?" [Laughs.] I think you have-some of you must have been very sleepy, and some of you must have had pain, terrible pain on your legs, and some of you must find it difficult to stop your monkey mind [laughs]. So I suspect quite few people, or maybe three or four people who are sitting, and rest of the people [laughs] couldn't practice zazen in its true sense-in its usual sense. You may understand in that way.

Today we have not much time to have dokusan, but suppose we have dokusan, I think I will have many questions about this-about breathing, about pain, or about your monkey mind [laughs]. "What should I do with it?" [Laughs, laughter.] As today we have no dokusan so, may be a good idea to give you some instruction about zazen.

Last Wednesday and Sunday too, I talked about to be a obstacle-obstacle of-in your zazen you should be a obstacle of buddha-nature-buddha-light. The one finger Tenryu pointed out is not actually-does not mean "one." It is actually-what he meant is our practice, our shikantaza. What Yakusan, you know, demonstrated is also shikantaza, in which you have no gaining idea. You just sit. Because you have some-you practice zazen to-to have complete calmness in your mind, then various problems you have become really obstacle of-really a problem or disturbance. But when you have no gaining idea, then all the things which happens in your zazen is-will become one finger. At that time, your zazen become so-called-it "painful [?] zazen" [laughs].

You know, when some monk ask a master, "What should I do when cold weather come?" The master said, "Cold? Be a cold buddha. And when summer come, be a hot buddha." [5] When you have no gaining idea, you know, you become various buddha moment after moment. Cold buddha, hot buddha, painful buddha, monkey-minded buddha [laughs].

Monkey-monkey mind is same, you know. But when you have gaining idea, monkey mind is, you know-when-when you want to-to have-when you want to have calm serene mind, the monkey mind you have-you will be discouraged by [laughs] your monkey mind. But when you have no gaining idea, when you just sit and accept it, then monkey mind is one finger-Tenryu's one finger. So moment after moment, various

buddha will appear in your practice. Monkey mind is, in that case, monkey-minded buddha: not just ordinal [ordinary] monkey mind, that is monkey-mind buddha. When it is hot, it is hot buddha.

Yakusan demonstrated, you know, his practice without word, without saying anything. He just sit. Tenryu, you know, pointed out one finger. But this one finger pointed out without any gaining idea-without trying to teach them what it is. He just [laughs]-instead of doing so, he just did it like this [probably held up one finger].

So it is not necessary be always one finger. This is all right [laughs, laughter]. This is all right, too [laughs] [raising two, three, four fingers, etc.].<sup>[6]</sup> But people may [get] confused [laughs], so he just, you know, always pointed out one finger. So, you know, if he is tired out-tired of sitting, he may [laughs, laughter] do like this. That is also, you know, one finger. If, you know, this one finger means something, it is-may be two fingers, or three fingers, or many fingers, not one finger. Because this one finger can be various thing, according to the situation, we call it true one finger.

Like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva's body, he-he is supposed to have thirty-three bodies. According to the people who want to-according to the people he tried to save, he takes various figure, sometime ladies, sometime asuras,<sup>[7]</sup> or sometime human body, and he takes 33 bodies. So even though he has many figures, you know, but his true body is one. That is true one.

So we say "just to sit." Just to sit doesn't-does not mean to-to have same pattern of practice. When we are ready to be many figures, when we are ready to practice [in] various way[s], that is shikantaza. So it is the foundation of-maybe you may call it foundation of various practice.

If you do not have this secret of practice, you may be easily discouraged. But if you make some progress in your practice, you know, naturally you will stick to your old same way [laughs], you know, because you feel very good about your practice, and you feel you made some progress in your own way. But even so, if you attach to the same old way, you will [be] sure to have time to be discouraged about you-with your practice, and you will be very much confused. "What is zazen?" you may say.

It looks like very difficult to sit without any gaining idea. But actually, as you sit today, at least you should be completely involved in the atmosphere or feeling of zendo, and just practice our way. You should not bring in many ideas in zendo. You should-when you enter zendo, you should be a quite different person, forgetting all about what you have been doing, and you should just sit. Zazen practice is not continuation of your everyday life-everyday practice. In-in Fukuan Zazen-ji, Dogen-zenji says: "You should give up everything when you practice zazen. And you should put everything aside and should practice zazen."

At least you have-you must have-you must realize that this point is very important.

We say it takes time before you know what is zazen. But actually, why we say so is without this kind of conviction, you cannot give up everything and practice shikantaza. If you think, "I'll sit two months more or three months more [laughs]," then your practice, you know, is not pure enough. You know-you know-you, you practice zazen as if you do-as if you study something else, you know.

We should not mix up our practice with ordinal [ordinary] training or exercise. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.] [Some lost, perhaps something like, "If you study ...."] [8] ... this point more, you will find out why we have Tassajara or why old Zen masters had very difficult time in their practice. Only to put everything aside and practice our way without gaining idea-they made such a effort. To practice our way to attain enlightenment-even to attain enlightenment is not good, because this kind of gaining idea is-usually is not pure enough. Instead of, "You should attain enlightenment, forgetting everything else," we say, "Practice zazen without any gaining idea." This is more str- [partial word]-you know, stronger instruction, more strict instruction. Without, you know, trying to-even to attain enlightenment, you should practice zazen. That is actually what we mean. To practice zazen to attain enlightenment may be pretty good, but not good enough-not strict enough-not strict with your impetus of your practice.

Instead of useless effort after you started zazen, we make greater effort before we practice zazen when we enter zendo. After, you know, entering zendo, even though you make great effort, it doesn't work so well. Before you enter zendo, you should be fully prepared for zazen practice.

I think you are very sincere students, but, you know-but your conviction is not strong enough, is not pure enough. I think that is why many teachers expelled his disciples. "Go away!" [Laughs.] You know, if he is not ready to practice zazen, it is better to say, "Go away." It means, "Come again." [Laughs, laughter.] "Go away, and prepare for coming in again." That is real kindness. I think we have to repeat, you know, this-we have to-almost all of you should be expelled [laughs] from zendo, and we should start Zen Center again [laughs]. How about it [laughs, laughter]? Again and again [laughs]. "Go away!" Or, "Let's do it again." We must have this kind of spirit always, or else we cannot clean up our mind.

In Japan, once a year, we have general housecleaning [laughs]. We take out everything. We choose-we decide, you know, to have housecleaning, watching newspaper [for the date], you know. And when-sometime it-it may be windy, or cloudy, or rainy day. So we, you know, watch the newspaper, and we have housecleaning. On that day, we take everything out [laughs]. We expel everything [laughs], even

Buddha shrine or Shinto shrine, you know. We take them out, and we clean completely our house. In the same way, I think, this kind of cleaning is necessary. Without this kind of effort, you pile up, you know, things one after another. Then you will be easily caught by some same old way of life, you know. So you cannot practice zazen in its true sense. When you have this kind of spirit, you can practice shikantaza.

When I came to America for the first time, for pretty long time, as our old students knows-know, I put emphasis on way-seeking mind. When we have true way-seeking mind-pure true way seeking mind, we can practice our way without any problem. When you have questions or problems in your practice, it means that you are not practicing shikantaza. If you practice shikantaza, you know, you will be monkey-minded buddha in shikantaza. You will be pain-legged buddha in shikantaza. And your whole body will be obstacle buddha-obstacle of buddha-or to be obstacle itself is buddha. Is there any problem, you know, when whatever you do, that is buddha? That is shikantaza.

When our community-if-when our community is based on this idea, there is no problem. We will enjoy our problem even. To have various problem is to have many mandala. Without this shikantaza, all the teaching and mandala will cause you-will be a cause of trouble. If we become successful, if our community expand, we will have problem-big problem. You may say it's better not to have it [laughs]-you may say-I'm sure you will say so. Why you say so? When you say so-before you say so, you should think why [laughs]. Why we have this kind of problem? Why this is problem with me?

I-the more I think about this point, the more I find out why Dogen-zenji put emphasis on shikantaza. "First of all, before we practice zazen," he says, "in delusion we should set up our pure way of practice. Before enlightenment, we should attain enlightenment."

Before you enter zendo, you should attain enlightenment [laughs]. Do you understand? "If you"-sometime he said, "If you enter zendo by mistake, you should go out." [Laughs.] By mistake [laughs]? You should go out. If you want to enter zendo, you should be really prepared for practicing pure practice. "By mistake" [laughs]-isn't it interesting [laughs]? "If you enter zendo by mistake." [Laughs.] I think almost all of you entered zendo by mistake [laughs, laughter]. So-if so, you know, take a rest in our Zen apartment [laughs] across the street, and come back again [laughs].

Ahhh. Thank you very much.

and Bill Redican (1/24/01).

[1] Jinhua Juzhi (Jap. Kinka Gutei): n.d. (c. 9th century) Disciple of Hangzhou Tianlong, who taught him the practice of holding up one finger. This story is Case 3 of the Wu-Men Kuan (Jap. Mumonkan, Gateless Gate) collection of koans. See also A. Ferguson, *Zen's Chinese Heritage*, Boston: Wisdom, 2000, p. 177.

[2] Hangzhou Tianlong (Jap. Koshu Tenryu): n.d. Disciple of Damei Fachang.

[3] Yaoshan Weiyan (Jap. Yakusan Igen): 751-834. Disciple of Sekito Kisen. Master of Ungan, Sensu, and Dogo. This story is Case 7 of the Ts'ung-jung lu (Jap. Shoyoroku, Book of Serenity) collection of koans. Another version is reproduced in A. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 109. See also SR-71-08-08 and SR-69-06-00.

[4] Text in brackets from original transcript. Not on tape.

[5] Case 43 of Hekiganroku (The Blue Cliff Record), "Tozan's 'No Cold or Heat.'" It is also found in Shobogenzo "Shunju," in a translation that is more similar to Suzuki-roshi's usage.

[6] Text in brackets from original transcript. Not on tape.

[7] asura or asura (Sanskrit): demons or evil spirits.

[8] The text in brackets is from the original transcript. Not on tape.

## **11 - The True Dragon**

Saturday, October 12, 1968

The True Dragon  
Soko-ji, San Francisco

[Laughs.] This? [Probably an aside to tape operator.]

Dogen-zenji says, "Don't practice your way as if blind man-blind man-blind men trying to figure out what is elephant." [1] The real elephant is not a trunk or rope or fan or wall. But the people thinks blind man-blind man-a blind man may think an elephant is like a wall or rope or trunk. But the real elephant is not-none of those-are not-is not none of those.

And he says, "Don't-don't be curious about the true dragon, like Seiko." [2] In China there was a man who [was] named Seiko. He loved dragons. All his scroll is-was-were dragons. And he designed his house like a dragon-house. And he had many figures of dragons. But so dragon thought-real dragon thought, "He-if I appear in his house, he will be very pleased." So one day, real dragon appeared in his room, and he



was very much scared of it and almost [laughs] draw his, you know, sword and cut him-cut the real dragon. So the real dragon [said], "Oh, my!" [Laughs.] And he escaped from his-hardly escaped from his room. "Don't be like that," Dogen-zenji says.[3]

Most of us are practicing our way like a blind man or Seiko. That is why we have to start our practice over and over. You think you are practicing real zazen, but may not be so. So if you notice that you haven't been practicing true zazen, you have to start practice true zazen again. And over and over, we have to start our zazen, because we are always liable to practice zazen like blind man or Seiko.

And here is another story which was told by Nangaku.[4] Rinzai belongs to Nangaku's branch. And Nangaku said after-can you hear me? You-you cannot hear me [laughs]. Okay. Huh?

Student: I can see you.

[Laughs.] Oh. You cannot hear me so [laughter], you have to see me. In that way you shouldn't study zazen [laughs,laughter].

Nangaku-Rinzai belongs to Nangaku's lineage-branch. People say there is Rinzai Zen or Soto Zen, but Dogen-zenji always talks about-talked about-Nangaku's famous story of polishing tile.[5] You know that story.

When Nangaku-no, when Baso was practicing zazen, Nangaku, who passed by, asked him-asked the disciple Baso, "What are you doing?" [Laughs.]

"Of course, I am practicing zazen."

And [Nangaku asked], "Why do you practice zazen?"

And Baso said, "I want to attain buddhahood," he said.

And Nangaku did not say anything, but he picked up a tile and started to polish it, you know. This time, Baso started to wondering what he started to do, and asked him, "What are you doing?"

"I am making a tile-a jewel." [Laughs.]

And after this story, Nangaku told Baso, "When a cart-a cart does not go, do you whip a horse-the horse or a cart? Which do you whip?" [Laughs.]

And he explained about this koan. Which do we-should we hit, a cart or a-the horse? The cart or the horse?

Dogen-zenji says in usually-usually there is no person who hit the cart when [laughs] cart doesn't go. Usually people hit a cow instead of a

cart. Usually people do so. But in-in our way, there should be way to whip a cart. There should be way to whip a cart when cart doesn't go. Usually when you practice zazen, you know, you know how to [laughs], you know, whip-almost all of you just knows you should whip the cow. And to whip a cow, you practice zazen [laughs]. You are giving whip-pretty hard one on your practice, without knowing to whip the cart. That is actually what you are doing.

That is usual way, you know. But we should know that there is another way of practice: to whip a cart-the cart instead of cow. Cow or what? [Asking for correct word.] Horse-no, no-not horse. In China [laughs], horse is too fast [laughs].

Student A: Oxen.

Oxen. Okay. Cow is milk cow isn't it? [Laughs, laughter.] Ox-oxen.

This is something which we should know, or as a Soto priest it is necessary to know. Maybe the best way is to whip the cart instead of the ox. To whip, you know, ox is like you see-like you understand, ox is symbol of mind-the picture of, you know, ten oxes.[6]

The cart means body. And it means also zazen-form-formal practice of zazen. And ox means attainment, spiritual attainment. And cart means physical practice.

Usually, you know, we-our way-usually we understand [that] zazen practice is formal practice. And-or shikantaza is formal practice, and koan practice is spiritual practice or mental-more mental practice. But this kind of understanding is both-is not complete. This kind of understanding is the understanding of blind men or Seiko. True practice is not formal practice, or so-called it shikantaza, or koan practice. None of those. Those practice is just the practice to whip ox-to whip the ox.

The true practice we mean is true shikantaza, you know, not [that] shikantaza [is the] opposite way of koan practice. So those who talks about shikantaza mostly understand that is Soto way, while koan practice is Rinzai's way.

This is, you know, like Seiko loves, you know, dragons. This is-those are carved dragon, not real one. So each one of us, you know, think of this point. Each one of us practice zazen in his own way, with his own understanding. That is right. And he continue that kind of practice, thinking that, "This is right practice." So even though he is sitting in here, you know, in zendo, he is involved in his own practice. In other word, he is carving, you know, carefully carving his own dragon [laughs], which is not real. That is [what] most of [the] people are doing. Some people may, you know, explain what is zazen in philosophical way. Or some people [are] trying to express our zazen in some literature, or painting, or scientific way, without knowing that that

is his own, you know, dragon, not real one [laughs].

So, that is not wrong. That is all right, but we should know that there must be the way to whip a cart. Or we should know that there is true dragon which has no form or no color, which is called nothingness or emptiness, and which include koan practice, and so-called-it shikantaza, and various Hinayana way of practice, or pre-Buddhistic practice. This is the practice transmitted from Buddha to us. You know, we-right now we recite sutra for the screen maybe. What is the screen? The white, you know, screen where there is no Buddha painting-or no-no images.

Actually, I was, you know, reciting sutra for this Shobogenzo [laughs]. I put it in this way [laughing] and recite sutra after that time. I'm, you know, talking about Shobogenzo in this way. But this is also, maybe, carved dragon. But at least when we do something, you know, there must be something which is supposed to be a true dragon, not real dragon. I know that [laughs]. But this is supposed to be a true dragon. In this way we practice zazen, you know.

You come and practice zazen in this zendo where there should be true dragon. But the instant you think, "This is true dragon," that is mistake, you know. But knowing that, if you come to this zendo, you should practice zazen with people, forgetting all about your, you know, carving or your painting. You should practice zazen with people, with your friend, in this zendo, completely involved in the atmosphere we have here.

Sometime I allow people who is-who are stick-sticking to-stick to his old way. I allow people to do that, but strictly speaking those who come and practice zazen here should be involved in-should be completely involved in the feeling we have in this zendo, and practice our way with people according to my instruction. That is what you should do.

But people who do not know what is real emptiness or dragon may think he is forcing his way [laughs] to us. And, "Soko-ji is the Zen-Soto Zen temple. I have been practicing Rinzai way." So-but that is not true. We are practicing our way transmitted from Buddha to us. We are one of the Buddha's disciple. And we practice zazen with Buddha, with patriarchs.

Recently, if you read books written by many scholars, you know, you will find out various, you know, opinion-opinions about, you know, Zen literature or Zen thought; or what is Bodhidharma's way; whether Bodhidharma was historical person or not; what is shikantaza; what is koan practice? But, in short, most of the-I don't say all of them [laughs], but most of the teachers and scholars talking about the-their own dragon. It is easy to, you know, to analyze or to compare one dragon to the other, you know. Because it is carved one it is some form already. So, you know, this is-"Ah-ah-this is Soto dragon [laughs], or this is Rinzai dragon [laughing]." But Soto way is not so easy to, you

know, figure out what it will be [laughs]. Looks like Rinzai, looks like Soto [laughs, laughter]. Maybe Soto [laughs].

In this way they write many books about Zen. But it is not true, you know. There is some true dragon is very difficult to figure out. "What is it? Is this dragon or snake [laughs]? Looks like snake. No good," some scholar may say. But true zazen sometimes looks like snake instead of dragon. So, you cannot say, you know, true zazen is dragon, or true dragon, or miniature dragon. It is not possible to figure out if that is possible-if it takes all the-same form always, that is not true dragon.

For-for people who cannot be satisfied with some form or color, true dragon is some imaginary animal, you know, which does not exist, because [for] those people, something which does not take some form-some particular form or color is not true being. So they may say that is imaginary dragon. But there is-for Buddhist, there is the way to-to understand reality in two ways: by form and color and, without form or color. That is, according to Nangaku, to whip the cart instead of the ox. To whip a-if someone whip a cart, people may say he is crazy [laughs]. But, you know, there is actually the transmitted way to whip the cart. To practice formal way it-to practice some formality, Rinzai or Soto, or in Zen Center ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

But ordinal [ordinary] person-for the ordinal [ordinary] one to see the carved dragon is not to see the true dragon. That is so-called-it "one pure practice"-ichinyo-zammai.[7] Usually, ichinyo-zammai is understood "to be completely involved in some kind of practice." It is so, but at the same time, even though we are involved in-deeply involved in a kind of practice, at the same time we should have complete freedom from it. Do you understand [laughs]?

Usually, you know, when you become very much attached to something, you have no freedom from it. But for us, because of complete freedom, we-for us it is possible to be involved in or to be attached to something completely. That is shikantaza, true shikantaza.

So shikantaza is not matter of whether you practice zazen or not, even. Even though you do not practice our way in cross-legged position, actually if you have this point, you are always practicing zazen. Even you are sleeping, you are practice-actually practicing zazen.

Dogen-zenji says-said: "Sickness does not destroy a person, but if you do not practice zazen, that no-practice will destroy a person." Do you understand [laughs]? Sickness does not destroy a person. You may say: "Today I cannot practice zazen because I have headache. But, if I practice zazen I shall die, so I cannot practice zazen." But Dogen-zenji said, "Sickness does not destroy a person, but no-practice will destroy him."

Actually, Dogen-zenji left when he was very sick-he left Eihei-ji and

went to Kyoto and stayed [in] his disciple's home. We should know what he meant by practice when he said practice does not-no-practice-if you don't practice zazen that will destroy you.

It is not so easy to talk about this point-what is real practice? Because this practice is-if we want to figure out what Dogen-zenji meant when he said so, without having this kind of experience, to talk about this point may be completely wrong. But we can figure out what he meant, and we can figure out when we study Shobogenzo what he meant by our practice. It is-prac- [partial word]-his practice is something beyond formal practice or spiritual practice, or even beyond enlightenment. Something-the more you try to figure out, the more you feel distance from your practice and from his practice, and yet some practice which we cannot be escape from it.

Actually we are practicing his way day by day, but for us there is no time to figure out what he meant completely. And even though we human being continue his way forever, he-we will not-we will not be able to say this is his way. The only thing we can say is this is the way which has no end and no beginning, and from this way we cannot escape. That is all what we can say.

Because of this practice, actually, various being survive in this way, and everything is going in this way, including we human being. Actually-so there is no problem for us. But as a human being who live in this world in this way, the constant effort to keep up the way whole universe is going and practice our way is necessary, as long as this universe exist. With this feeling, with this complete calmness of our mind, we should practice our way.

If you sit at least-if you sit one year, most students [will] actually have this quality of practice. But when you try to figure out what is your practice, you have there [a] problem, or you create problems which does not belong to your practice. If you just sit, there is no problem for most of our students, but sometime you create problem, that's all. And you fight with the problem, that's all [laughs]. You are creating it, actually. In your zazen there is no problem.

When you practice your own personal practice, you have problem. When you just sit, being absorbed in our feeling in zendo-the feeling we have in our zendo, there is no problem at all.

We should make our effort in this point more, instead of trying to- instead of carving your own dragon. That is how you carve your own dragon, actually. How you have completely-complete freedom from everything, including your-you, yourself. To talk about freedom is quite easy. But actually to attain-to have it is not so easy at all. Unless you are able to have freedom from yourself, you will never have freedom from everything. Or, if you only have freedom from yourself, you will have complete freedom from everything. How we attain this freedom is

our practice.

You should not listen to the various instruction in detail. It may help-the instruction will, of course, help you only when you are ready to practice zazen according to the place you practice, forgetting all about the old way of practice you have been making.

I am not emphasizing Soto way instead of Rinzai way, but as long as you practice zazen in Zen Center, you should practice Zen Center's way, or else you will be involved in personal practice. You will be carving your own dragon, always, thinking this is the true dragon. That is a, you know, silly [laughs] mistake. You shouldn't create this kind of problem for your practice.

As Zen masters-as some Zen masters say, "Our way is like a," you know, "like walk," you know, "step by step." This is our practice. When you, you know, stand on one legs you should forget right legs. This-step by step. This is true practice. You know, if you stick to right legs or left legs, left foot or right foot, you cannot walk [laughs], you know. This is how we practice our way. This is complete freedom.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. SFZC librarian Celeste West was kind enough to find the citation of the elephant parable in the Udana-sutra. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] Dogen made passing reference to this famous parable in Fukan Zazen-gi. It is said to have originated in China sometime during the Han dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE). [Louise Kou and Yuan-Hsi Kou (1976), *Chinese Folktales*, 1976, Celestial Arts, 231 Adrian Road, Milbrae, CA 94030, pp. 83-85.] However, an apparently earlier version is found in the Udana-sutra (VI, 4), in which Shakyamuni Buddha recites the tale. (See also *Digha Nikyaya*, 19, and the *Nirvana-sutra*.) African and Islamic versions also exist.

[2] Probably referring to the story of Sho-kung or Yeh Kung-tzu (Jap. Seiko or Shoko) in the Hsin-hsu or Shen-tzu lüeh (Shinshi Ryaku) and the Latter Han History. Sho-kung loved painted and carved dragons but was terrified when visited one day by the real thing. "Do not become so accustomed to images that you are dismayed by the real dragon" (Dogen-zenji, *Fukan Zazen-gi*, in Nishijima and Cross, ed., *Shobogenzo*, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 282). See also SR-67-12-05-B, SR-69-09-00-A, and SR-71-06-05.

[3] In Fukan Zazen-gi.

[4] Nanyue Huairang (Jap. Nangaku Ejo): 677-744. Early Chan master; student of the Sixth Patriarch Dajian Huineng (Jap. Daikan Eno); master of Mazu Daoyi (Jap. Baso Doitsu).

[5] In Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), translated by Thomas and C. C. Cleary, in The Blue Cliff Record, Boston: Shambhala, 1992 (Appendix, p. 566).

[6] The Ten Oxherding Pictures.

[7] ichinyo-zammai (Jap.): ichinyo = oneness, non-discrimination, absolute unity; zammai or sanmai (samadhi, Sanskrit) = nondualistic state of meditation. Suzuki-roshi may have said ichigyo-zammai, which is defined as zazen or prajñaparamita, but it sounded like ichinyo-zammai.

## **12 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1**

Sunday, October 20, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1

[Third Lotus Sutra series in 1968]

Zen Mountain Center

This sutra titled Saddharma-pundarika-sutra was supposed to be told by Buddha, but actually this sutra appeared maybe after two or three hundred years after Buddha passed away. So historically we cannot say Buddha spoke this sutra. If you ask if all the sutras were spoken by Buddha, the answer may be that only parts of them were spoken by him. And they will not be exactly as he said them. Even the Hinayana sutras were not handed down by Buddha's disciples exactly as he told them. Since even the Hinayana sutras were not told by Buddha, the Mahayana sutras could not have been told by him.

But some aspects of Buddha developed after the historical Buddha passed away. The historical Buddha is not the only Buddha. He is the so-called Nirmanakaya Buddha. We also have the Sambhogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha. So Buddha was understood more and more as a perfect one. When Buddha was still alive, this point was not so important because Buddha himself was their friend and teacher and even god. He was a superhuman being even when he was alive. He was their teacher or master, so there was no need for them to have some superhuman being like a god. But after he passed away, because his character was so great, his disciples adored him as a superhuman being. This idea of a superhuman being is a very important element for promoting the understanding of Buddha as the Perfect One.

This sutra was not told by the Nirmanakaya or historical Buddha, but by

the Sambhogakaya Buddha. According to this sutra, it was told a long, long time before Buddha. And Buddha, knowing that there was this kind of sutra before him, talked about the sutra which had been told by the Sambhogakaya Buddha. The sutra was attributed to Shakyamuni Buddha, but he told this sutra the way Vairochana Buddha told it a long, long time before.

So it is necessary for us to know first of all what the Nirmanakaya Buddha, the Sambhogakaya Buddha, and the Dharmakaya Buddha are, and how those aspects or understandings of Buddha developed from the historical Buddha. Without this understanding, this sutra does not mean much. It is just a fable, like a fairy tale which is very interesting, but doesn't have much to do with our life. Accordingly, I have to explain the three aspects of Buddha and how the Buddhism which was told by the Nirmanakaya Buddha developed into the Mahayana Buddhism which was told by the Sambhogakaya Buddha.

This may be a difficult thing for you to understand. Do you know of the Nirmanakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha? The Nirmanakaya Buddha is the historical Buddha. But the historical Buddha has two elements. One is a human being, and the other is a superhuman being. These are the two elements of the historical Buddha. Historically, such a character exists. As you know, Buddha was not God Himself, but was a human being. But for his followers, he was a kind of Perfect One. He attained enlightenment and reached to the bottom of our human nature. He was enlightened in human nature, which is universal, true nature. His human nature is universal to every one and every being. And he subdued all the emotions and the thinking mind. He conquered all of this, and all of the world, and became a World Honored One. He had this confidence when he attained enlightenment, and his followers listened to him as to a teacher who is also the Perfect One.

So the historical Buddha has two elements. The vital element for the idea of Buddha was this superhuman element. If he was just a historical character, or one of the great sages, then Buddhism could not have survived for such a long time. The reason Buddhism could survive for such a long time is this element of superhuman being in the historical Buddha.

This idea of Buddha as a superhuman being was supported by his teaching. One of the most important teachings of Buddha is the teaching of cause and effect, the teaching of causality. If you do something good, naturally you have some good effect. So his disciples wondered how he could have acquired such a lofty character, such a good character. Buddha told them that if you do something good, you will have a good result. If you practice hard, you will acquire good character. Since his character was incredibly high, his former practice must have been an incredibly hard, long one. So, since their adoration for Buddha extended limitlessly, his practice before he attained enlightenment, or



Buddhahood, became limitless. It follows that, if Buddha is a limitlessly lofty person, the time he practiced his way must also have been limitlessly long. In this way, the historical Buddha became more and more something like Absolute Being.

It is the same with us. We appeared in this world, but we appeared in this world with a limitless background. We do not appear all of a sudden from nothing. There must be something before we appear in this world. And there must be something before Buddha also. That he was so great means that he had a great practice. This point is very important for the development of the idea of Buddha.

So he was described in various ways as a superhuman being. He had eighteen characteristics and virtues which are completely different from those of a usual person, and he also had the thirty-two physical marks. They say this is just a "big adjective" for the Buddha. That may be so, but there is some reason why they applied such a "big adjective" to the Buddha, to the extent that these kinds of things were even described in the Agamas, which belong to Hinayana Buddhism. This kind of Mahayanistic idea of Buddha is already included in the Hinayana. So it is difficult to say which is the Mahayana teaching and which is the Hinayana teaching, actually. If you read them closely, even Hinayana sutras have a Mahayanistic description of Buddha.

But actually, he was a human being. When he was 80 years old, he passed away. At this point he was not a supernatural or superhuman being anymore. But how should we understand his death as a superhuman being? If he were a superhuman being, there would not be any need to enter Nirvana. Whether to die or to remain alive would have been his choice. For an ordinary person, it is not possible to have this kind of choice. They say that he took Nirvana because he had completely finished giving people a chance to attain enlightenment. He gave a full teaching for helping people to attain enlightenment, so there was no need for him to live any more. That is why he entered Nirvana. They understood his death in this way.

We usual people appear in this world, according to Buddhism, because of karma, and we die because of karma. But Buddha appeared in this world with a vow, the Mahayana vow. The first of the four vows we recite is to "save all human beings." He appeared in this world with this vow instead of karma. Karma and vow are actually the same thing, perhaps, but our attitude changes when our understanding changes. Karma changes into a vow. Instead of living by karma, we live with the vow to help people who live in karma. That is Buddha's teaching. This kind of teaching is supported by what Buddha taught when he was alive, you see? So for them, this is not just a story-this is the actual story we see through the example of the Buddha. In this way, Buddhism survived for a long time.

This kind of Buddha, who made a vow to save people, starting from his

training as a bodhi sattva, and who appeared in this world as a bud dha, is called the "incarnated body" or Nirmanakaya Buddha. So far, all of this kind of teaching is called Hinayana Buddhism. But if you look closely at those teachings, there is already the Mahayanistic understanding of the teaching. I said just now "incarnated body." If there is an incarnated body, there must be an "essential body," the mother of the incarnated body. When our understanding reaches this point, the more profound teaching will be understood as Mahayana teaching.

Student A: You said that there is some reason why people should apply a "big adjective" to the Buddha. What's the reason?

Suzuki-roshi: Because when Buddhism was the teaching between Buddha and his followers, there was already a kind of poetry [?]. For us, who actual ly do not know who Buddha is, he is just a historical character. But for his disciples, he was a greater than historical character. That was the reason.

Q: But should we believe it because they were romantic? It sounds very superstitious to me, Roshi. You know, flowery and full of things that are not so real.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe that is your understanding. [Laughter.] Which is realistic? I don't know. You have to think more. We are naturally pretty romantic beings, you know. So perhaps we are too romantic and too emotional. That we don't want to be so romantic and emotional and want to be more realis tic, is our desire, but we have romantic and emo tional being. That is very true. So I don't argue about whether we are romantic or realistic. But the purpose of religion is to solve this kind of problem.

Q: By giving in to it?

Suzuki-roshi: No, by knowing that. That is wisdom. [The meaning of next 3 sentences was unclear to me, so I left them unedited--B.F.] You understand if I explain Sambhogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha but so far, how Buddhism developed, a kind of history. And as a true teaching. If we want to treat him as a historical character, it is necessary for us to understand what a historical character is. A historical character has a deeper background. There is no character which just appears without any background. So a more realistic understanding is possible if we understand the background of the Nirmanakaya Buddha.

[Meaning of next sentence unclear--B.F.] So if we say this is just the Nirmanakaya Buddha, that means, in one sense, "superficial," because this is Nirmanakaya Buddha. I'm not talking about the Mahayana Sambhogakaya Buddha or Nirmanakaya Buddha.

Q: In the meal chant it says "numerous Nirmanakaya buddhas." Is there more than one?

Suzuki-roshi: There is more than one, you see? A kind of, perhaps, romantic idea created this kind of profound, more realistic Buddha. If you ignore one side of our life, you will not have a good understanding of human life. Nirmanakaya Buddha is the tentative form and color of the true Buddha. Then, "What is the true Buddha?" will be the next question.

[Tape turned here.]

Q: If someone makes a tape recording of a person's words and takes photographs of the person, there is still something left that he hasn't got. How is he going to describe and communicate to the other people this part that he hasn't been able to record? I think that perhaps about the only way to express it is in a symbolic way.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, very symbolic. But the scriptures include the good and bad parts of human nature. They are very realistic, actually, but the scale is so big that it includes various elements, good and bad, right and wrong. So the scale should be very great and extravagant, or else you cannot accept this kind of teaching which includes the good side and the bad side.

Q: What is the essence of the term "Vairochana"?

Suzuki-roshi: Vairochana means Dharmakaya Buddha. I'll explain it in the next lecture.

Q: Roshi, is there a vow of a bodhisattva not wishing to enter nirvana until all sentient beings have entered nirvana?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. "Until all sentient beings enter Nirvana, I will not enter Nirvana." Some bodhisattvas take this kind of vow. If you take that vow, at that time, you are Buddha himself.

Q: In what way, Roshi, was it like that when Shakyamuni Buddha entered nirvana?

Suzuki-roshi: Shakyamuni Buddha entered Nirvana. Finishing his task, he became a Perfect Supreme Buddha, which is more than a Nirmanakaya Buddha. Those questions are very important. They will be the key to understanding Mahayana Buddhism. So to give an answer to your questions means to give you a chance to better understand Mahayana Buddhism.

In the first chapter, in which the scale of this Lotus Sutra is described, you will find many people who described Buddha's way, such as Devadatta, who tried to kill Buddha, or his wife and son as a nun and priest. And there is much spoken of mountains and trees and flowers. This way of describing it is very poetic, but it actually points out many elements

of Mahayana Buddhism, all the problems we have, all the furniture or ornaments of this sutra.

Q: When we read this sutra, are we reading about the historical Buddha and his times, even when we read about the thirty-two marks, or are we reading about our own mind right now, is it all about existence right now?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You know, when we say thirty-two marks, you understand that he had beautiful blue eyes, beautiful hair, very crinkled feet, good feet, or things like that, but it also describes how he acquired these kinds of marks. If you read that part, it says it is not at all easy to be a Buddha. That is the teaching. We are not just describing something good. And Buddha's teaching is very strict. Even though they are describing his teaching in a fancy way, it is actually very simple and very strict. In one way, you can describe his teaching, if you understand it, as very simple and very fancy, including many things good and bad. So to exist in this way, like a lotus in muddy water, is not so easy. But without this kind of strict, profound, and rich understanding of life, we cannot be disciples of Buddha.

Do I have ...?

Student: No, that's it.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

[Transcript checked and edited by Brian Fikes.

Date established from text of next lecture.

No transcript for Lectures 6, 9, 11, 12.]

### **13 - Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1**

Monday, October 21, 1968

Lotus Sutra Lecture, #1  
Zen Mountain Center

[The Lotus Sutra] ... which was told by a historical Buddha. But some people may be disappointed who believe in historical Buddha. This is not a characteristic of any religion except Buddhism. Only Buddhism went through a long history before having a complete understanding of the historical Buddha. It took a pretty long time for us to understand who he was.

At first his disciples were attached to his character, or to what he said and did. So his teaching became more and more static and solid. His

teaching was transmitted by so-called Hinayana Buddhists, or Sravakas, because they were the disciples, or followers, who tried to preserve his teaching by memory and discussion or meetings. No one is sure when this kind of meeting was held, but it is said that seventy-five years after his death they had a meeting where they chose various good disciples to compile his teaching.

When they discussed the precepts, Upali was the head of the group, and he recited what Buddha had said. When the Sutras were discussed, Ananda, who was Buddha's jisha, discussed what Buddha said. In that way, they set up some teaching: "This is what Buddha told us, and these are the precepts Buddha set up." Naturally, they became rigidly attached to the teaching, and, of course, those who studied this kind of teaching had a special position among Buddhists. Buddha's disciples were classified in four groups: laymen, laywomen, nuns, and priests. And the distinction between laymen and laywomen and priests and nuns became more and more strict. Buddhism at that time already had become a religion of priests, not ordinary people or laymen.

But when the meeting was held in the big cave, there were many people who did not join it. And there were many good disciples and followers among the people who did not join the meeting. Those people naturally got together and formed a group. That is the origin of the Mahayana School. So Buddha's followers divided themselves into Thera vada or Joza-bu [or Sthavira] and the common followers, called Daishu-bu in Japanese [or Mahasamghika]. Daishu means "assembly," a group of people or followers. Among them were many good teachers. One century after Buddha passed away, this group established an understanding of Buddha and his teaching. At that time the difference between the Jozabu and the Daishubu was not so great. But later, after Mahayana Buddhism was established, the other group acknowledged the more traditional and more fundamental teaching of Buddha. That is actually Mahayana Buddhism.

I started this kind of long lecture to explain who spoke this Lotus Sutra. This sutra was supposed to have been spoken by the historical Buddha, but actually, what was recorded here is the Sambogakaya Buddha, not the historical Buddha. Because this sutra was told by the Sambogakaya Buddha instead of the historical Buddha, it is valuable.

Last night we had a very interesting lecture and discussion, and I was very interested in your questions and the lecture. How Buddha would feel about the idea of the pratyeka-yana or shravaka-yana is a very interesting question, I think. In my last lecture we explained what the Nirmanakaya Buddha is, and this morning I want to explain the Sambogakaya Buddha, the one who is actually telling this Lotus Sutra.

The reason I was so interested in the question of how Buddha may have felt about it was because Shakyamuni Buddha, as I told you in the last lecture, has two elements: Buddha as a human being, and Buddha as a

superhuman being. The idea of the superhuman nature of Buddha is the result of a more emotional attachment to his character and teaching, which the Sravakas or Hinayana Buddhists had. This Shakyamuni Buddha who has two natures or two elements, the historical Buddha or the Buddha who incarnated to save others, and the more idealized Buddha, who is called the Nirmanakaya Buddha. But the Nirmanakaya Buddha is already not Buddha himself. If you think more about it, the historical Buddha is not Buddha himself. The historical Buddha became Buddha because he was enlightened in his true nature. That is why he became a Buddha. So without being enlightened in his true nature, the historical Buddha is not Buddha.

Here we already have a background for the historical Buddha. And even though that background was idealized so much as to reach the Nirmanakaya Buddha, there is also the incarnated Buddha. In other words, he changed, starting from a Bodhisattva, and became Buddha. So he is not true Buddha; he is always changing. "Who is changing?" is the next thing we should think about when we really want to know who Buddha was. To have, not just an emotional or romantic observation of Buddha, but also to more sincerely and deeply want to accept him as our teacher, it is necessary for us to know why he is Buddha.

If we are to get to this point, we have to have some idea beyond the incarnated Buddha, or Shakyamuni Buddha, or the Nirmanakaya Buddha. That Buddha is the Sambogakaya Buddha. The Sambogakaya Buddha incarnated into the Nirmanakaya Buddha. So the Sambogakaya Buddha is the Perfect One, and truth itself. When he is seen by people as truth, he may be a teacher. Even plants and animals, mountains or rivers, can also be our teacher when we have eyes to see this. So when the historical Buddha has this kind of background, when he is elevated to this stage, he will be accepted as our teacher in the true sense. Not just in an emotional way, but we can accept him wholeheartedly as our teacher, because he is the one who is enlightened in the eternal truth, who has the strong background of the truth. And he is the one who taught us, who introduced this kind of truth to us. That is why he became Buddha.

He was enlightened in it, and he is the one who teaches us the truth he found out. Without this kind of background, Buddha could not have been remembered by human beings for such a long time. After Buddha was acknowledged as truth itself, then as long as truth exists and as long as we care for truth, we can remain as Buddhists. This Buddha is called the Sambogakaya Buddha.

The Sambogakaya Buddha is not the Buddha who will, or will not, attain enlightenment. He is the truth itself. But people may say the Sambogakaya Buddha is, at the same time, the Nirmanakaya Buddha. People see the truth in many ways, but the truth is always the same. Do you understand? If we understand his background in this way, that understanding is also the Dharmakaya Buddha, truth itself. For the

Dharmakaya Buddha there is no need to attain enlightenment. He is already enlightened. From the beginningless beginning to the endless end, he is always enlightened. Only the Nirmanakaya Buddha attains enlightenment and becomes Buddha.

So for Buddha, after he attained enlightenment, to save others, or for others to help themselves, to be enlightened in himself or to cause other people to become enlightened, was the same thing. To help others and to help himself was the same thing.

To be enlightened does not mean to be aware of it. Do you understand? To be aware of it would be for him to observe himself objectively. When he attained enlightenment, that was being aware of himself. But to enlighten himself means to have confidence in himself, to accept himself as he is, to accept "that I am here". And, in this way, when you do not care for anything, you know that "I am here" already. That is the most important point, to stand on your own two feet before you observe yourself objectively. "Who am I, and what am I thinking? What kind of experience did I have? What kind of enlightenment did I have yesterday?" That is not true realization of oneself. To realize oneself is deeper than that kind of superficial observation of oneself. Before we objectively observe ourselves, we should be one with ourselves.

After Buddha discovered his true nature and knew exactly who he was, he attained enlightenment and became the Sambogakaya Buddha. He became truth itself, one with himself and one with the whole universe. And he did not care for anything. He was completely satisfied with himself. And, when he became one with himself and with everything else, whatever he saw, everything had the same nature as he had. Just as he existed under the Bodhi tree as an enlightened one, as a perfect one, so everything existed in the same way. That is why Buddha said, "It is wonderful to see everything has Buddha Nature." Just as he is, so every thing is Buddha, we say. But when we say this in its true sense, it means "I am Buddha."

Only when we stand on our own two legs can we help others. Before this, you are observing yourself, thinking, "Who am I? Have I attained enlightenment or not? Am I able to help others?" and you cannot help others. When you become just you yourself, without comparing yourself to others: "I am I. I am here. When you have difficulty, I am with you, and I can manage myself pretty well. If you like, I can help you," that is Buddha.

This kind of Buddha is the Buddha before we attain enlightenment. Without this confidence, you cannot even practice zazen. How can you practice zazen when you doubt, or when you are observing yourself objectively without having any subjectivity? How can you practice zazen? Only when you accept yourself, and when you really know you exist here. You cannot escape from yourself. This is the ultimate fact, that "I am here."

This is very true. Don't you think so? But still you doubt, and still you make a separation from yourself and observe your self from the outside: "Who am I? What am I doing?" Zazen practice is not this kind of practice. Someone else is practicing zazen, not "you." "You" should practice zazen. That is shikantaza. That is the Sambhogakaya Buddha.

Buddha's teaching is not the written teaching or something told by the historical Buddha. When the Sambhogakaya Buddha, the true Buddha told it, it was Buddha's teaching-very much so. But when we read, we are trying to figure out what he told us, what was the true teaching, and what was the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha. We are, in other words, deeply attached to someone else, forgetting all about the ultimate fact that we are here. As long as we try to understand the real Buddha in this way, we cannot understand who he was. Anyway, to help others and to help ourselves is the same thing. To realize myself and to make others realize the truth is the same thing.

So the true Buddha is the Sambhogakaya Buddha, and when the Sambhogakaya Buddha does some activity, or is observed by someone, he may be the Nirmanakaya Buddha. Before the Nirmanakaya Buddha, there must be a Sambhogakaya Buddha. And before a Bodhisattva appears to save others, there must be a Sambhogakaya Buddha as the strong background of the Bodhisattva. So every Bodhisattva and Buddha, and their activity of helping others, comes from this source, from this origin of the Sambhogakaya Buddha. And the Sambhogakaya Buddha is truth itself. So we have Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, and Nirmanakaya Buddha.

When we understand the Lotus Sutra as the sutra which was spoken by the Sambhogakaya Buddha, or when we understand that, "I am now reading the Lotus Sutra," then the Lotus Sutra makes sense to us. If we lose this point, we will be turned by the Lotus Sutra. If we realize this point, we will turn it. I said, "I am reading," but actually, I meant, "I am telling the Lotus Sutra." So the Sixth Patriarch said, "When we are in delusion, the Lotus Sutra will turn us, and people may be turned by the Lotus Sutra. But when our mind is clear, we will turn the Lotus Sutra, we will speak the Lotus Sutra instead of Buddha." So, to study the Lotus Sutra and to listen to it are not two different things. To read it and to talk about [tell?] it are the same thing. If there are various materials to talk about, then we can speak the Lotus Sutra.

I have come to the conclusion already, but let us think more calmly and understand clearly what we have been studying in these two lectures. There are several things I want to point out. One is that when we read Buddhist scriptures, it is necessary for us to know at what kind of historical stage each sutra was told-to know, in other words, who spoke the scripture.

For instance, when Westerners started to study Buddhist scriptures,



they thought they were a kind of myth. That may be so, a kind of myth, nothing but a myth. If someone studies a scripture literally, without knowing what kind of background the scripture has, and if someone has compiled the scripture in a very emotional way, the description will be very mysterious. So we should know what kind of people described Buddha in this way, and whether this sutra is based on Mahayana or Hinayana teaching. I am not comparing, and I am not saying which is better. But we should know with what feeling, and what kind of attitude, this scripture was presented, or else we will not understand what it is.

The same is true of the way you treat things and people. Without knowing who a person is, we cannot help him; without knowing what things are, we cannot treat them properly. When you know who made this tea bowl and what kind of history this tea bowl has, then you can treat the tea bowl properly. If you handle it without knowing who made it and what kind of tradition it has, it may be just a bowl; it doesn't make any sense.

So it is necessary to know how this tea bowl appeared here, in front of me. And at the same time, it is necessary for you to know whether this tea bowl is suitable for this season or not. Even though it is a very traditional and valuable one, a summer tea bowl cannot be used in winter. So you should know, at the same time, whether this is suitable for this season and suitable for the guest. And you should choose the tea bowl accordingly.

So we should arrange the teaching this way, and, according to the time and occasion, you should choose from the various teachings. But that is not enough. You should also know the history, or tradition, of each teaching. Then you can use the teaching in its true sense.

This way of doing things is, in other words, the four vows. This kind of effort will be continued forever. I am not forcing you to follow our Japanese way at all, but you should know how Buddhism was extended from Buddha to us. This is a very important point. The other point is to understand whether this kind of teaching will be effective enough to use right now, like a tea bowl. To arrange the teachings this way [moves hand horizontally] is not good; to arrange the teachings this way [moves hand vertically] is not good enough either. When you arrange the teachings this way [motions vertically], and choose one of them, and when you arrange the teachings this way [motions horizontally], the historical or traditional way, and understand the characteristic nature of various teachings, then you will find out what kind of teaching you should apply. That is why I am telling you what kind of nature this sutra has and who spoke this scripture.

The point is not whether this Lotus Sutra was told by the historical Buddha, or by some other person. As long as you attach to the historical Buddha too much, you cannot understand Buddhism. Buddha was great because he understood things in this way. How do we know Buddha had

this kind of attitude towards things? Even though we do not have very much historical material, we do have quite a bit. We can study Hinayana Buddhism and pre-Buddhistic material and ask how pre-Buddhistic thought became Hinayana teaching.

How did it? It is impossible for pre-Buddhistic teaching to be Hinayana teaching, so what was the bridge? The bridge was Buddha; Buddha made the bridge. When we realize this point, we see that the Hinayana understanding was not perfect enough. The Hinayana Buddhists made Buddha a pre-Buddhistic person. He was pushed backwards to a pre-Buddhistic character.

So Mahayana students found that the Hinayana scriptures cannot be recognized as the main current of Buddhist thought. They are not the main current. This kind of mistake always happens. We do not like sectarianism because that is Hinayanistic. I always say that sectarianism is like having coffee in a coffee shop when you are going to San Francisco. You know, when you have a cup of coffee on the freeway, that is very good. But you shouldn't stay there. You should go on to San Francisco.

Emotionally, we like coffee shops and big banana splits. But that is Hinayana, you know. Even though it is good, we should continue on our trip. This is the Mahayana way-on, and on, and on. Usually people stopped at the coffee shop for many, many days-one or two weeks. But we cannot stay that long, because the coffee shop will not stay open that long. If it is not the main current, it will die, eventually, and only the main current will continue. So we don't have time to stay at the coffee shop very long. Once in a while, when we become sleepy, we must have some coffee. That is our way. With this attitude we should continue our trip. And if we want to continue our trip, the four vows are necessary. At any rate, we should continue our trip as long as our car goes. This is our attitude and our practice.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **14 - Fourth Lecture of Training Session at Tassajara**

Tuesday, October 22, 1968

Fourth Lecture of Training Session at Tassajara  
Tassajara

[This may be the end of another lecture. -WKR, 8/28/00]

... that is how, actually, we exist here. We exist moment after moment, as ... taking form and color of great Sambogakaya Buddha. That is true. [Chuckle.] Don't you think so? If I say Sambogakaya Buddha, you know,

by technical term ... because of technical ... because you don't know, what does it mean, definition of Sambogakaya Buddha, it makes you, more difficult maybe. But we exist here; and we are not permanent being. Only in this moment we exist as like this. But next moment I will change to ... tomorrow I will not be the same person. This is rue. Next moment I shall be future Buddha. Yesterday I was past Buddha. In this way there is many and many Buddhas. And you will be ... another Buddha. In this way, there are many Buddhas, but Source of ... or ... we are incarnated body, with some certain color and form and character.

So there must be source of Shakyamuni Buddha, who is called, Nirmanakaya Buddha. But when he realize this point, he accept himself as Nirmanakaya Buddha, as Sambogakaya Buddha, as Darmakaya Buddha. When we understand ourselves in this way, you know, what will be the way ... why we live in this world is to try to continuously try to express Buddha Nature, moment after moment. And that is the effort we should make, instead of being caught by some certain color or form. But even so (laughing), we should not ignore ... we should make our best effort in each moment. So that is a kind of attachment. But this attachment is, at the same time, detachment, because next moment you should make best effort (chuckling). So, it means detachment to the last being. In this way, moment after moment, we exist. So this kind of understanding will be expressed by our technical term of Nirmanakaya Buddha, Sambogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha.

Student A (Dan): Can all sentient beings, then, be considered Nirmanakaya Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. All sentient beings are Nirmanakaya Buddha. But (laughing) you know, whether or not they realize it, it is actually so, but they do not accept themselves as a Nirmanakaya Buddha. For them, they are not. But for us who understand ourselves and others, they are ... all of them are Nirmanakaya Buddha and Sambogakaya Buddha based on Sambogakaya Buddha and Dharmakaya Buddha.

[Is text missing? That is, where is Dan's second question?]

Dan: Some people live by karma, you said, and some people live by vows.

Suzuki-roshi: By vows, yeah, for people who do not understand this truth, they live their life, life is karmic life. Those who know this point, our life is not karmic life. The karma is ... karmic life is another version of Buddhist life.

Student: Can you explain "triple world"?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh ... triple world: past, present, and future.

Student: Can you explain "bringing people from this world"?

Suzuki-roshi: There is no separate past, present, and future. Past, present, and future exist in present. Past exists in this present moment ... future also. Do you understand? If you do something good, your future is, you know, bound to be good. That you are good means your past life was good.

Student: What do you mean by making your best effort on each moment?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't mean to sacrifice this moment for the future. I don't mean, you know, that ... to be bound by past life, and try to escape from, is not ... this kind of effort will be the effort you make, usually. But there is more important point in your effort. What is that? To stand on your feet (laughing) is the most important thing. You know, to sacrifice this moment for your future, for your ideal, even, means that you are not sitting, standing on your feet. So, the most important things is to accept yourself, you know, to have subjectivity on each moment. Or to accept yourself: Don't complain. Don't make any complaint and accept things as it is, and satisfy yourself with what you have right now. And you should think, "this is the only reality, only Buddha, you know; you can see, you can experience, you can have, you can worship." And then, you know, if you want to do something, as a ... and at that time you are Nirmanakaya Buddha, and Sambogakaya Buddha, and Dharmakaya Buddha.

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **1968 november (1)**

### **1 - Shosan Ceremony**

Monday, November 11, 1968

Shosan Ceremony  
Tassajara

[If you want to know what buddha-nature is][1] ... which is not possible to know what it is-but if you want to realize it, you should wait until it comes to you. If you know-if you want to talk about [that] which is not possible to talk about, present some words to me.

Claude Dalenberg: [2] Docho-roshi: Incessant change and evanescence everywhere. Life is so short. What is the most important-most important thing to do?

Suzuki-roshi: To continue everyday practice forever.

Claude: Thank you.

Suzuki-roshi: Good point.

Ed Brown: Docho-roshi, thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Thank you very much.

Jim Norton: Docho-roshi, if I look at the moon, on one hand I may think, "This is the moon." And on the other hand I may think, "This is my own eye." Is this Nirmanakaya and Sambhogakaya?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, it is. The moon-you see by your eyes, and your eyes is the-are not different, actually. So that is Nirmanakaya Buddha.

Jim: Thank you very much.

Jeff Williamson: Docho-roshi, recently in my zazen I have been putting forth every bit of effort that I can find. And before too long-before too long that I have been sitting there, I think that I should slow down, that I am trying too hard to have good practice. And then I think, "No, I am not trying too hard. I am putting forth my very best effort." And I really do not understand what you mean when you say, "Put forth your very best effort, but be careful that you do not try too hard." I do not know where to draw a line. I don't know when I'm doing one thing and when I'm doing the other. Could you please say something that would help me now?

Suzuki-roshi: "Try your best effort" means not to lose your way. Always keep up with your practice. That is what I mean. Of course, zazen practice is difficult because we should reject the two extreme. While you are practicing, it-or while you are keep up with your practice-everyday practice, you will find out how to reject the two extreme. So when you become frustrated, when you have problem, when you are discouraged, at that time you should try your best effort to resume your own practice. That is what I mean.

Jeff W.: Thank you very much.

Jeff Sherman: Docho-roshi, very often I feel your compassion. I don't understand emptiness. I was wondering where-where compassion is in emptiness, or-

Suzuki-roshi: Compassion-

Jeff S.: -what is emptiness.

Suzuki-roshi: -compassion will be directed, will be on always some phenomenal world, which is-which cause our attachment. Originally when-originally everything is empty. That is how our compassion arise.

So compassion and somethingness and emptiness is the same-has same quality. When we understand com- [partial word]-emptiness, we become compassionate on something which exist in term of material or spiritual. So emptiness is not different from compassion. It is source of compassion.

Jeff S.: I'm not sure I understand, but I don't know-don't know what to say about my not understanding. I can't ask another question.

Suzuki-roshi: Where there is something, there should be compassion. Compassion should be always on every being [?], like everything arise from emptiness.

Jeff S.: Thank you very much.

Doug Bradle: Docho-roshi, there you sit resolute in your serenity, and here am I miserable and quivering in my confusion. And as I try to think of a question for you, I just became hopelessly tangled up in my own thoughts. And then, just now I thought, well, you probably had to go through the same thing at one time too. And you probably had to try and think of a question for your master. And what did you do? Did you become hopelessly confused like me, or did you find some way out?

Suzuki-roshi: As you have someone to ask about, you-you don't know-you say you don't know what to do. If there is no one to ask you--ask about the confusion, then what is the confusion? The confusion itself is already the meaning of life, your own experience which you have-get through. So to ask question, to present question, is a kind of communication-mutual understanding. It means that-to extend your experience. So you should accept the confusion as your experience of life. To be in confusion means to be in-to be amid of the boundless mercy of the Buddha. We should accept in that way. And we should lead our life in this way.

Doug: Thank you very much.

Chris Flynn: Docho-roshi, some Zen masters, both contemporary and historical, have put a great deal of emphasis on reaching kensho.[3] They-they put emphasis on method and posture, but here at Tassajara and Soko-ji we don't do that.

Suzuki-roshi: Then what will you do-will you do, here? Here-it is necessary to have confidence to keep up with everyday activity which is going here. If it is difficult to do everything perfectly, then choose something like zazen practice or like sutra reciting, like study-sutra study. Choose one or two out of the many activities, and try to-try to be concentrated on the activity you have chosen, and try to do it satisfactorily.

Chris: Thank you very much.

Rick Norton: Docho-roshi, how may this Lotus Sutra be used to gain salvation?

Suzuki-roshi: We don't know how [it] may. Still the salvation is going. It may go forever.

Rick: Thank you very much.

Elias: Docho-roshi, there are many questions about how hard and how long. The stream outside Tassajara has been flowing a long time. I wish to ask it now how long and how hard must it flow? Listen.

Suzuki-roshi: If you notice that point, that is Buddha's-that is Buddha's sermon.

Elias: Thank you very much.

Arnold Silberman: Docho-roshi. [One sound of clapper, then silence for a few moments.] Thank you very much.

David Chadwick: Docho-roshi, I am so grateful to you and Tassajara and Zen Center that I'd like to study Zen. What should I do first?

Suzuki-roshi: You should do something in right time in the right way. Try to keep up with our practice.

David: Thank you very much.

Pat Herreshoff: Docho-roshi, I do not understand the meaning of my life. We have been given to understand that meaning is eternal. Is it possible for me to relate eternal meaning to this transient body?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes it is possible, and eternal meaning is actually in your everyday life. So there is no need to figure out what is the meaning of life-especially for you. I-I say what you are doing is very good, so don't try to figure out the meaning of your life. If you-to me your life is meaningful, but I don't know right now [if] it is meaningful for you or not. But whether-whatever-however, your life is meaningful, very meaningful, and that you are struggling with it is also meaningful. Don't lose another aspect of your life. Don't stick to one aspect only.

Pat: Thank you very much.

Pat Lang: Docho-roshi, could you explain what it means to be a serious Zen student?

Suzuki-roshi: Serious? Excuse me-serious Zen-

Pat L.: Serious student of Zen Buddhism.

Suzuki-roshi: Serious student Zen Buddhism. Don't try to be serious [laughter, laughs]. Just keep up with our practice. Don't, you know, try to get up earlier than other people [laughs, laughter]. Stay in bed. Okay?

Pat L.: Okay. [Laughter.] Thank you very much.

Emmy Buckley: Docho-roshi, I carry a very weak light to help me find my way through the darkness that I feel breathing all around me. I go very slowly. And I am very deeply grateful for your patience and understanding you have in helping me. Thank you very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Go slowly as much as you can.

Francis Thompson: Docho-roshi, your kindness touches my heart.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe because I am not so kind [laughs].

Francis: Thank you very much.

Evelyn Pepper: Docho-roshi, you say that we're all one. Then why are we-is everything so different?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Because it is different, they are all one. Do you understand [laughs, laughter]? If it is same, you know, it is not even one. We say "one" because they are different. If it is, you know, same from the beginning, it is- there is no need to say one. Okay?

Evelyn: Thank you very much.

Angie Runyon: Docho-roshi, I too want to know the meaning of human existence. The meaning of human existence?

Suzuki-roshi: Human existence? Yeah-human existence, you know, is- the characteristic of human existence is duality. We are dualistic being. That is our characteristic of life. So if you attach to one-on one side of our life, we will lose-we will be completely lost because we have double nature. So our understanding of life should be double structure.

Angie: Thank you very much.

Sally Block: Docho-roshi, you have told us that we are not alike at all, and also you tell us that we should develop consideration for each other. How can we develop a feeling for what goes on in other people's minds, or how they think, how they react, why they react, and how they live, so that we can develop consideration for them?

Suzuki-roshi: To be able to understand reality from various angle-even though it is not possible to understand things from various angle, we



should reserve always some understanding for someone else and try to understand other's feelings, other's understanding. Other's understanding may not be always right: sometimes wrong, sometimes right. As you understand is sometime right and sometimes wrong. But without being caught by the idea of right or wrong, we should try to understand something which is something wrong as well as something which is right. This is-if you try to do it, this is very difficult. But the only way is to practice zazen-to be concentrated on your zazen practice, not-the way you practice zazen and the way you do something in your everyday life is not the same. Your everyday life will be good when your practice is good because your everyday life will be supported by your power of practice. So best way for us is to be concentrated on our zazen practice. This is, anyway, the most important point. Something everyday practice will be taken care of if you-if your everyday life is concentrated on your zazen practice.

Sally: Thank you very much.

Liz Wolf: Docho-roshi [one sound of clappers], I have many questions, and I can't choose between them. And so I just want to say that you are the only faith that is here for me, and I want to thank you.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. But choose, you know, something and be concentrated on something you have chosen. Choose some problem and try to be concentrated on that-

Liz: On that what?

Suzuki-roshi: -on that problem-on the problem you have chosen.

Liz: What if it seems insurmountable?

Suzuki-roshi: Choose something easier [laughter].

Liz: Thank you.

Mary Quagliata: Docho-roshi, I always forget what I am going to say at this ceremony because it is so formal, but I hope you had a good day today and we can practice together in a group.

Suzuki-roshi: [Silence. Sounds like Suzuki-roshi bows.]

Harriet Hiestand: Docho-roshi? You told us once that we are each our own teachers, and so every question I thought of for you I could answer. But I felt that I should ask them anyway. How can I trust my own answers?

Suzuki-roshi: Your own answers? Maybe you cannot completely trust any answer. Whether it is your answer or my answer, you cannot trust it completely. But when you ask me question, it is a kind of

communication. To share the problem is the point of asking question.

Harriet: But I get very frustrated because you never answer. You just substitute words, and there's never-never an answer.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. To understand in that way is better, you know, not to rely on the answer so much. But to present some question, that is enough.

Harriet: Thank you very much.

Katherine Thanas: Docho-roshi, who are you?

Suzuki-roshi: Good question [laughs]. To whom you are asking [laughter]?

Katherine: To all of you.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? All of me [laughs]? You know, "all of me" is bad [?], you know. All of-are you really understand all of me, you know? All of me-what you see and what you do not see?

Katherine: I don't know that I understand it all. I feel there is much there.

Suzuki-roshi: I am here. But before I am here, you know, what exist here? Something you don't know existed [laughs]. I am, you know, someone who exist here who is speaking something. And I am also someone who-someone which does not appear in this way. Before I say something-before I exist here, something is here with all being. And I am both someone who has form and color, and someone who has no form and no color. And you are speaking to someone who has body and mind.

Katherine: Thank you very much.

Dan Welch: Docho-roshi, may we all understand our true home by the use of these words in the ceremony.

Suzuki-roshi: I couldn't follow it.

Dan: I hope-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Dan: -that we all come to understand our true home-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Dan: -by the use of these words in the ceremony.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah. I hope so.

Dan: Thank you very much.

Niels Holm: Docho-roshi, will you please tell me why I judge myself and other as good and bad student?

Suzuki-roshi: I couldn't follow it.

Niels: Will you please tell me why I judge myself and others as good and bad students?

Suzuki-roshi: Judge or discriminate, you mean?

Niels: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: You are good student. There is no need to compare you to someone else. You have your own good quality which, you know, no one has. So you are independent. And when you become you yourself, you will be with all your friend. Okay?

Niels: Thank you very much. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Jeff Broadbent: Docho-roshi, why do I feel hatred, repugnance, and disgust?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe because you want to solve everything, every problem in limited sense and by limited way-that is why. You should wait, you know. You should do one by one. Then there is no hatred or no bad feeling.

Jeff: How do you mean one by one?

Suzuki-roshi: One by one? Just to do something in time. To keep up with other's practice. That is the main point. And don't discriminate your work too much within your limited time and material or space. You should do your best. Whether it is good or bad, no one knows [laughs], you know, whether it is good or bad.

Jeff: Thank you very much.

E. L. Hazelwood: Docho-roshi, I have a question, but I can't see it. And so I can't grasp it. And so I don't know what it is. And so I don't know how to ask it.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. The basic problem is the same for everyone. Anyway as long as you are here, don't be too much concerned about yourself, or what you do, or what others do. Just observe Tassajara as one body, as one person who has every parts of body-hands, legs,

head, ears, eyes. And let it work without it-not much mistake. If you try to practice our way-everyday practice our way with this idea, then there is salvation for each one of us.

E. L.: Thank you very much.

Dan Chesluk: Docho-roshi, why have you told us this morning to concentrate on one-on one activity?

Suzuki-roshi: What I mean is not so diff- [partial word]-complicated thing-you know. To do-try to get up, you know, before, you know, alarm [laughs], or, you know, try-try not to eat too much-that kind of thing is-anything which will-which you think you want to try.

Dan: I thought you meant that for a long period of time we should-we should concentrate on one thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah [laughs], that is something which you should do always for long period of time.

Dan: Concentrate on one thing? Pick one thing?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is very good practice.

Dan: 'Cause for myself I tend not to do that, you know-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe so.

Dan: -[2-4 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: So stick to one practice forever [laughs]. That is very good [laughter].

Dan: Thank you very much.

Jack Weller: Docho-roshi, I am troubled by your saying that you don't trust us.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. I want to encourage you to, you know, stick to something, you know, not in term of good or bad, but anyway [laughs], you know. Like a water stick to [seeks], you know, lower place. That kind of-without that kind of spirit, I-we cannot trust anyone, you know, until we can see that kind of practice in some other person.

Jack: Then we can trust them, right?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah.

Jack: So we can trust you.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] Ho!

Jack: But you cannot trust us.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe. I am trying, you know, always to stick to something, not because this is good or bad, you know-whether it is good or bad. To stick to one thing-when you stick to one thing only, you know, it may be sometime understood as something good. Sometime it may be understood [as] something which is bad. But whether it is good or bad, it is out of question. If it is helpful, you know, for-to me and for others, we should stick to one practice.

Jack: Thank you very much.

Allan Winter: Docho-roshi, how can we make our marriage with Buddha more real?

Suzuki-roshi: Marriage?

Allan: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: More real [laughs, laughter]? That [is a] good question. Marriage is not so real [laughs, laughter]. I agree with you. So if you want to have real marriage, you should polish yourself, and you should try to relate yourself to someone else whether your friend is man or a woman. Your wife should be your lover in [on] one hand and should be your-someone who is nothing to do with you-someone who is quite independent from you. That is your wife. Wife is some-some human being which you don't know, which you can-some usual person which you do not-which is nothing to do with you. And at the same time, she will be your friend, or your best friend, and someone who you love most. Your wife has two side-ordinal [ordinary], just ordinal [ordinary] person and someone who you love. Okay?

Allan: Thank you very much.

Stan White: Docho-roshi, the only words I have this morning are not words.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. We are, you know, discussing which is not possible to discuss by words. So how actual words should go-this is how actual words should go. Words is-by words we should communicate something which is not possible to put-to limit by our words.

Stan: Thank you very much.

Craig Boyan: Docho-roshi, who is practicing harder now, me or the clock?

Suzuki-roshi: Which? Both. When you practice hard, clock practicing

hard [laughing, laughter]. Clock will not practice anything [by itself?]. I think so.

Craig: Thank you very much.

Allan Rappaport: Docho-roshi, I am very afraid a lot of the time. I am afraid now. Can you help me?

Suzuki-roshi: Afraid of what? Some-something-afraid of something of which you cannot figure out, you mean?

Allan: I think I'm afraid of being hurt, and then lost.

Suzuki-roshi: Lost? No, that is not possible. You are here, you know, and there is no need to be afraid of-because, you know, to be a-because anyway you are changing. If you are afraid of being always changing, that is, you know-maybe that is why you are afraid. But if you are changing always, why don't you try to change for better? As long as you are making that effort, there's no need to be afraid of anything. Even a little bit, you know-even little bit change for the better will work.

Allan: Thank you very much.

Bill Shurtleff: Docho-roshi, the sound of the water in the stream seems to wash away all of the questions that I had. The questions still come, but they seem to flow away. Trying to hold a question and to give it a form keeps me from hearing your words this morning and from hearing the sound of the stream. It feels strange for me to be without a question, and so I just like to thank you for your wisdom, and for your kindness in being here with us today.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. People take [?], listen, and talk. In this way, everything is going. Like electric lamp, you know, the current is always going back and forth. It looks like very certain, but it is not, you know. Actually it is not as we see it. So the moment we appear, we vanish. We are-we still practice always. That is our life. That is everything-how everything exist, and that is how Sambhogakaya Buddha exist. So when we understand our life in that way, there is no problem at all.

Bill: Thank you very much.

Tim Buckley: [4] [Silence.]

Suzuki-roshi: [Silence.]

Butei,[5] the Emperor of Liang, asked Bodhidharma, "What is the first principle?"

Buddha [Bodhidharma][6] said, "Who is it in front of you?"

Buddha [Bodhidharma] said, "There is no holy person or common person."

And the Emperor said, "Who are you in front of me?"

Bodhidharma said, "I don't know."

Bodhidharma in his answer appeared to be someone who is just sitting without thinking, without doing anything, being with everything-without form, without color. He revealed himself in that way for the emperor. But emperor wanted to know someone who is wise, who is powerful, who is learned, who is very helpful. So this question and answer did not was not so successful.

We should know-we should understand ourselves in two ways: as some person and as someone which has no name, or no body, or no mind. To understand ourselves in this way is liberation from myself. And true understanding of ourselves when we say "things as it is," means that to understand ourselves from viewpoint of being and non-being. That is how we understand ourselves. That is how we should exist as a human being in this world, or else we will be lost. Right now, most people live-lead their life as someone who is known to each other, but we lose the another point. That is why this world is so busy and noisy.

When we understand our world in this way, with calmness of your mind-our mind, we will have compassionate mind for the people who is just involved in one-sided view. Our practice should be concentrated on this point by doing trivial, near-at-hand practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (1/25/01).

[1] Text in brackets is from original transcript. Not on tape.

[2] Names of students were identified in the original transcript.

[3] kensho: to see into one's original nature; to attain enlightenment.

[4] From original transcript. (Silence on tape.)

[5] Emperor Bukei (Liang Wudi, Bu, Wu) (502-550) founded the Liang

(Ryo) Dynasty in southern China. This exchange is found in Case 1 of The Blue Cliff Record and Case 2 of The Book of Serenity.

[6] Suzuki-roshi probably meant to say the Emperor, which is why he repeats the exchange and substitutes the Emperor for Bodhidharma.

## 1968 december (2)

### 1 - True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End

Saturday, December 21, 1968 [vergelijk dec. 1969]

True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End  
San Francisco

Not edited yet

Everyone seeks for true happiness, but happiness cannot be true happiness if the happiness is not followed by perfect composure. The- usually happiness does not stay long. Happiness is mostly just very short time and it will be lost in next moment when you have it. So, sometimes we will think rather not to have it because after happiness usually followed by sorrow and this is, I think, everyone experiences it in our everyday life.

Buddha, when he escaped-can you hear me?-when he escaped from his castle, he felt this kind of-he had this kind of happiness in his luxurious life in the castle, he at last forsake all of those, this kind of life, so we say he started his religious trip because of evanescence, because he felt evanescence of life. That is why he started study of Buddhism. I think we have to think about this point more. I think everyone seeks for happiness, that is all right, but the point is what kind of-how to seek for happiness is the point. But whether our way, whether the happiness we seek for is something which we can...it is something which is possible to have it.

Surely there is-we have to seek his teaching more carefully. He taught us the Four Noble Truths and first of all he taught us this world is world of suffering. When we seek for suffering-happiness-to say this world is world of suffering is very, you know-you may be very much disappointed with your teacher. World of suffering. This world anyway is world of suffering, he says. And he continues. Why we suffer is this world is world of fantasy, everything changes. When everything changes we seek for some permanent thing, we want everything to be permanent. Especially when we have something good or when we see something beautiful or we want it to be always in that way. But actually everything changes. So that is why we suffer. So if we seek for happiness even though we seek for happiness it is not possible to have it because we are expecting something to be always constant when



everything changes. So naturally we must have suffering. So far, according to this teaching, we are-there is no other way for us to live in the world of suffering-that is the only way to exist in this world.

Then it is not possible to obtain eternal happiness, or eternal composure of life. Though we have some way to have eternal composure of life or happiness of life, but first of all if we want to composure of life, we have to change our view, our way of observing things. To observe things as it is, we say, but to observe things as it is for usual sense and to observe things as it is in our way is not the same. This point is not truly realized by even Buddhists. Things as it is, way as it is. What is way as it is. Usually things as it is means to observe things as if something exists in that way, constantly, forever. We say-here in incense bowl. But this is already mistake. There is no such thing exists. This is always changing. This is bronze, but even so this is changing, and you sense in it always changing. In ten minutes there will be no more incense, but if it is very good incense you will think as if something exists-not forever-you may not think in that way, but at least you think this incense exists and fire exists in that way, but the fire is not exactly the same fire as you observe this fire. This is actually, you know-instead of combustion, it is not red-red fire as you-as you see it. It is constant repetition of combustion-like this-there is electricity, but that light is always-current back and forth, this way, and doesn't exist in that way, but we see there constantly electric light, like so. But that is not true. So we Buddhists call this kind of naive way of looking-observing things is aspect of being because we think everything exists in this way. Aspect of being. And when you understand everything changes and everything is changing, like electric light or fire, we call this kind of view, is view of non-being. No such thing exists, so non-being. And for Buddhists, for you maybe if you seek for happiness, if someone who has view of seeking for happiness, it means that he is seeking for something which is impossible and if you have the view of non-being you will not care for anything. If you accept things in that way, you will be very-your way of life is very empty. And you will not find out any meaning of life at all. And our way of observing things is based on view of being and non-being, both. And we know that view of being is too naive, and view of non-being is too-logical. Or too critical. Or view of-true view of life should be both. View of being and view of non-being. This is our way.

But view of being and view of non-being is not-is not possible to accept. We can accept one of the two, but we cannot accept two of those viewpoints. And here there is another problem for us. But when you face-when you face this second problem, you will be said to be Buddhist. And you will give up to rely on your intellectual understanding of teaching and you will start our practice-to accept this kind of paradox.

Recently I ask you and I want you to reflect on why you seek for-why you study Buddhism. Because I think this point is-if this point is not fully understood, it may be difficult-to put whole physical and spiritual power in our practice. Usually maybe in your practice without thinking about

our life more deeply and you try to if you have problem you will try to solve it by means of practice or teaching, but if you really think about whether your view of life is right or wrong, whether you are trying to obtain something which is possible to obtain or you are doing-you are trying to accomplish something which is not possible to accomplish. Then you will not be sincere enough to practice our way because you are always fascinated by some teaching or chanting. We don't know-what we study in intellectual way is very shallow, but what we actually experience is very deep.

When-after-when I came to America, I found very, you know-I found-special, some special food for me and I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it very much-that was potato. Potato was delicious to me, but I don't know if it is so for you or not. I don't know what kind of nourishment potato has, I haven't studied anything about potato, but I like it very much. The reason why I like it is-I don't know why-when I was in Japan, of course, I liked it, but I didn't think I liked potatoes so much!

But after I came to America, having very-various foods and I haven't not much chance to eat potatoes: maybe once a month or so. When I was invited for Thanksgiving, I had mashed potatoes-that was delicious. But usually I haven't mashed potatoes, or even baked potato. At Tassajara I told Ed I like potato [laughs]. Sometimes, as we have various food-various kinds of food, so Ed cannot give me always potato. So only once in a while I had potato.

As soon as I come back from Tassajara I go to the grocery store and buy three or four potatoes. And as it takes pretty long time to cook it, I cut it and fry it. My boy doesn't like it, but I like it. My wife doesn't like it much. So I cook it just for myself. Do you know why? Potato was-when I was young I-my hometown produced a lot of potatoes, so I was eating potatoes always when I was a boy. So that is why I like it. When I was eating I didn't like it so much because I had it almost not everyday, but four times or more a week.

This kind of experience characterized our character. I think you may not like zazen so much, but you think this is good, so you may practice it. But you may not realize how much progress you made in your zazen practice. Some may do, but most of you don't, I am afraid. But that is all right. This kind of experience which is not just reading or listening to lecture and something which you experience, both physically and spiritually, without thinking about it. Without trying to find out the meaning of it, beyond our intellectual understanding, to practice our way without any gaining idea. To practice our way is valuable and you will have real power of digesting things.

In Lotus Sutra, as you know, Chapter Three, Buddha told Shariputra:

You may not know what you have done before. You will not remember what you did in your former life or even in this life. You may not

remember all of it, but," he said, "you have been practicing our way for so long time. That is why now-you have been practicing our way for so long time, that is why now you have attained enlightenment. I know that, but you may not know it-why you have attained enlightenment. I ask you why you came here so many times. I think you don't know why you came here, but there is some reason why you came here. You didn't come here just by curiosity. Why you came here is, I don't think possible to figure out. But there must be some reason.

This kind of reason-you practice your way is so-called-it-there is no other way to say so we say-your buddha-nature seeks for buddha. Buddha seek for buddha. This is very mystic way of putting it, but there is no other way to say it. So we say buddha-nature seeks buddha-nature.

We have various Buddhist philosophy, and we have a lot of teaching to study, but Buddhism is not actually philosophy or teaching. Buddhism is always within ourselves and always helping us. But we do not-when we are not-when we don't realize it, then that is so called it suffering. Or when we live in the realm of good or bad, right or wrong, we lose our meaning of life. Only when we do something we practice, with right understanding, whatever you do that is our practice. Because we are so intellectual being, it is necessary to-to be free from our reasoning or our intellect. That is necessary. And instead of being caught by intellectual mind, we should seek for something more or we have to rely on way things goes and the way we live without-without every reason-why we are practicing-Indian way or Chinese way or Japanese way-you may feel in that way. But actually there is no special way. Our way is not just for Japanese or Chinese or Indian people. This is for everyone. We sit in cross-legged position, but if you think just cross-legged position is just Zen, that is a big mistake.

If you want to practice our way, we should free our mind from intellectual or conscious activity in term of right or wrong, or good or bad. Whatever it is we should try it and we should have taste of it through direct experience. Not just feeling or thinking, but direct experience. That is zazen practice.

So many people here practicing our way. I feel a great responsibility as a teacher. If I am not here maybe you will not come here. If I am here you come here and spend all day in our practice. But if you misunderstand-if you have misunderstanding in our practice it will not work at all. It is quite natural for us to think some result or effect as long as you do something, but our practice is something different from that kind of activity. Just-we practice our way just to have ...

[Tape turned over. But nothing follows in transcript. Check SR-68-12-24 to see if it is the tail end of this lecture.-WKR]

-----

Formatted 8/28/00.

## **2 - The End of the Year**

Sunday, December 29, 1968

The End of the Year

[1]

Next Tuesday we will have no lecture, so this may be-will be the last one for this-at the end of the year we clean up our house and we throw [out] old things which we do not use anymore. And we renew our equipment, even things in the-furniture we renew it. And after cleaning our room we-we put new, new \_\_\_\_\_ and which is distributed from temple like this. We take off old mats and put new ones, like this. This is-when in temple we have prayer for the-to control fire, this is what you call it \_\_\_\_\_ "taking care of fire," it says in Japanese.

And this is-in temple at end of the year we have ceremony to read Prajñāparamita Sutra-600 volumes of Prajñāparamita Sutra. But actually we cannot read 600 pages of sutra, so the priest conducting the ceremony read one-one volume of the 600 sutras. Then we have one volume, one of 600-[inaudible]-just to turn it instead of reading. And so the most important volume will be recited by the priest who is conducting, and we-and you receive this kind of prayer card from the temple. That is what we do.

And end of the year is the most busy days. We have to clean up our rooms, and if you have some debts you should pay. For someone to collect the money he lent, and for the most people it is time to pay the debt. And then we-after cleaning up everything, spiritual and physical, we decorate New Year's decoration so old times [?]. Those should be done before twelve o'clock. And after twelve o'clock there is no need for you to pay-pay back the money you owed, so the man who-who wants to collect his money \_\_\_\_\_ even after twelve o'clock, if he had chosen [inaudible].

So usually it is pretty exciting week. This kind of custom still in Japan and each one of us, rather we enjoy this kind of activity. We understand each other-we fool ourselves in some way and enjoy the last day of the year. This idea is based on Buddhist way of understanding life. Moment after moment we should renew our life, we should not stick old idea of life, or way of life, we should renew it, our life day by day, especially at the end of the year. Especially at the end of the year we should completely renew our feeling and completely renew our car. If we stick to old ideas always, or if you have no chance to renew it, it is rather difficult to renew your way of life. Some encouragement is necessary if you always repeating same thing over and over again, then even though

you have no feeling of sticking to old way of life, actually you are confined in old way of life. Some excitement or some occasion is necessary. For instance, we use this kind of stick. This is to renew your practice, if you become drowsy, if you don't receive a stick you will have chance to renew your \_\_\_\_\_ and in this way, you can live moment after moment. Actually-faithful-you will be faithful to your own life.

So, as it is we say, but actually when most people say "way as it is" is not at all way as it is. Without clearing up your mind and body, physically, you will not have chance to live on each moment. So the (end) for us is laziness. If you are always lazy and drowsy, spiritually and physically lazy, you actually have no chance to live truthfully to yourself. That is why we practice various practices. But if you-if we stick to old way of practice it is not so good also. So it is necessary maybe to change our way of practice sometimes. For an instance, at some monastery they start to bathe in cold water from January, December 1 until December 15. All the monks getting up about four o'clock and going to the lake and bathe \_\_\_\_\_. This is not \_\_\_\_\_-just to get out of drowsy mind. And you will not catch cold. Recently flu is all over, but if you make up your mind to bathe every morning and evening in cold water, your mind do not accept \_\_\_\_\_ because you are so physically and mentally very active. So we monks rather \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves when we catch cold. Lazy monk!

\_\_\_\_\_ Especially-it is rather difficult to take cold-water bath, and more difficult after working so hard and to take cold bath in evening very difficult. Maybe I don't know why but anyway when you get up you need some situation, natural, but in evening usually we are not prepared for that kind of situation. That is-it is so difficult to take cold bath in evening. This kind of practice is not orthodox practice, but according to the situation of the monastery we apply various ways of life and to keep chance to renew our mind and body. Especially people who live in San Francisco where climate is always same, it may be necessary to, to have some pool for Zen monks to take cold baths. Maybe exciting practice for us, and it will give pretty good stimulation for San Francisco people. I am busy now, everyday activity, but if you want I think you can do it, and you are young enough to do it. It doesn't mean to be involved in ascetic practice, it is the purpose of those practices \_\_\_\_\_ physically and spiritually. We say Zen-if we, if we are caught by even the idea of Zen we call-sticking the \_\_\_\_\_ he is not fresh enough-old stinky Zen student! But if we do not have some chance to renew our practice we will soon, soon we will be stinky student. As if you wear same underwear one week or two weeks. What will happen to us \_\_\_\_\_

And so my teacher or my master[2] always told us: "You stinky boys, wash your underwear!" Not just underwear. And so my teacher-my master, his way of training his students was-disciples was pretty

different from usual master. He did not allow me to stay at Eihei-ji so long time. "Two years is enough! You will become stinky Eihei-ji student! That's enough, you should go to Soji-ji."

And when I stayed at Soji-ji more than one year, one day he appeared and after talking with me ten minutes. "Maybe it is time for you to leave Soji-ji." And he always put emphasis on Dogen-zenji's beginner's mind. You should always be all right. It means you should not stick to old style of practice, or any kind of practice and you should be always new student. When you go to Rinzaï temple, you should be new Rinzaï student. And if you go to Japan, you should be new student. You should forget all about what you have studied in America. You will know-the fundamental practice is the same, but we should practice the essential practice with renewed feeling. This is important. To practice always with new fresh-freshness of the feeling is rather difficult. Necessary for us to change some part of our practice.

My master didn't give me-didn't give us any idea of what we will do next day or next week. He didn't talk about tomorrow and it was-he was very unpredictable type of monk and monks and priests were very much afraid of him. They couldn't get what he had in his mind. Maybe he didn't have any idea, but he was always concentrated on what he was doing. That is, I think, too much, but it is necessary for us to practice our way moment after moment, with our best effort and \_\_\_\_\_ mind. As we are pretty new students, so it is rather difficult to practice our way without much rules, but each one of you should make your best effort to study without, without instruction in detail, detailed instruction. You should feel as if you are study-with few people, you shouldn't think that we have so many students. You study our way as if you are studying with your teacher only. I think that help you to ignore other's practice. But we should not be involved in group study only. This is not school-not school system. I want you-to understand this point more, whether you are you have only one teacher. We have each one of you are only disciple, disciple for teacher, for a teacher. With this spirit we should practice our way. If this point is missing, we cannot practice Zen \_\_\_\_\_. Originally Zen master do not have so many students. When Dogen left China, receiving transmission from Tendo Nyoho.[3] Tendo Nyoho-zenji said to him: "After you go back to Japan, you should practice your way in remote country with few students and keep always our practice fresh and new, and take good care of your students." That is what he said when Dogen leave China \_\_\_\_\_ and he secluded himself in remote country, northern part of country and built his small temple in [Echizen, now Fukui] Prefecture, where there is Eihei-ji now.

Tassajara may be-at Tassajara they may have small, but Eihei-ji they-at this time of year the-all the buildings is dark because of the snow. We have to cover all building by \_\_\_\_\_ to protect building from heavy snow. Such a remote country he practiced his way, with candlelight, when winter come. That was his way.

That kind of practice is very important. Even though we are many people now, we should not forget this spirit.

Thank you very much.

-----

Formatted 7/10/00.

[1] Date is unsure. This may be the conclusion of SR-68-12-21 (WKR, 8/28/00).

[2] Gyokujun So-on.

[3] Tendo Nyojo (Tiantong Rujing): 1163-1228. The Fiftieth Chinese Ancestor. He gave dharma transmission to Eihei Dogen-zenji.

## **1969 (54)**

### **1969 maart (5)**

#### **1 - Blue Cliff Record #3**

Sunday, March 09, 1969

Blue Cliff Record #3

Soko-ji, San Francisco

I am glad to see you from here [laughs]. My organ [?][1] may not be so good yet, but I am-today I'm testing, you know, just testing. [Laughs, laughter.] I don't know if it works or not. Whether it works or not, or if I speak or not, is not such a big problem for us. Whatever happens to us, it is something which it should happen-which should happen. So purpose of our practice [is] to have this kind of complete composure in our everyday life.

Some of Japanese member, you know, thought because I am-I am practicing always zazen, "he not-he will not be catch cold. [Laughs.] He will not suffer from flu. But it was funny for him to stay in bed so long." [Laughs.]

But purpose of zazen is to make-to make our-to make ourselves physically strong or to make ourselves mentally healthy or strong, maybe to make our mind healthy and body healthy. But healthy mind is not just, you know, "healthy mind" in its usual sense, and weak body is

not weak body in its usual sense. Whether it is weak or strong, when that weakness and that strength is based on so-called-it truth or buddha-nature, that is healthy mind and healthy body.

As you know, there is a koan in Blue Cliff Record. It was the third koan in Blue Cliff Record[2] and 30-maybe 35 in Shoyo-roku.[3] Soto use mostly Shoyo-roku, and Rinzai use mostly Blue Cliff Record, but subjects we find is same. We find same subject in a different order, with different commentary.

Anyway, the story is the-Baso-Baso-Zen master Baso, the grandson of the Sixth Patriarch-Baso Doitsu[4]-the Sixth Patriarch Eno[5] and his disciple-his-one of the two main disciple is Nangaku,[6] and Nangaku's disciple is Baso. So the other-the other important disciple is Seigen.[7] Those are the most important lineage from the Sixth Patriarch because, under those two disciples, Zen Buddhism flourished, and we have many and many good, famous Zen masters under two-those-two of those teachers: Seigen and Baso-no, Nangaku.

Nangaku's disciple is-was Baso. Baso was a big-physically he was very strong and great-a man of great physique, like this, you know [draws in air the figure of a large man].[8] And when he speaks, his tongue covered [laughing] his nose. Maybe he was very fluent speaker [laughs, laughter]. But he was-once he was, you know, ill, so temple acolyte or temple master, who take care of the temple, asked him, "How are you, recently? Are you well or not?" And Baso said, "The sun-faced buddha and the man-the moon-faced buddha. The sun-faced buddha and the moon-faced buddha." Nichimenbutsu gachimenbutsu.

Nichimenbutsu is supposed to live for one thousand and eight hundred-eight hundred years. And the moon-faced buddha lives only one day-one-one day, one night. That is the "one-faced buddha." So, you know, when I am sick, I may be the moon-faced buddha [laughs]. When I-I am healthy, I am the sun-faced buddha. But "the sun-faced buddha" or "the moon-faced buddha" has no special meaning. It means that, whether I am ill or healthy, still, you know, I am practicing zazen. There is no difference. So you shouldn't worry about my health, you know. Even though I am in bed, you know, I am buddha. So don't worry about me.

And this is quite simple, you know. This is actually what we are doing every day, you know. But the difference between Baso and we ordinal [ordinary] people are-is for Baso, you know, whatever happen to him, he can accept things as it is, as it happens. But we, you know, we can not-we cannot accept everything. Something which you think is good, you may accept it. But something which you do not like you cannot-you don't accept it. And you compare one to the other. And you may say, "this is the truth; this is not true." And "he is a true Zen master; and he is not a true Zen master." And "he is good Zen student; but I am not." That is quite usual way of understanding. With this kind of



understanding you cannot, you know, figure out what kind of-with what kind of idea we can-we sit every day.

To attain enlightenment means to have this kind of complete composure in our life, without any description-discrimination. But, at the same time, if we stick to this kind of attitude of non-discrimination, that is also a kind of discrimination, you know. So how we practice zazen-how we attain this kind of complete composure-is the point, you know, you should have when you start our practice.

First of all, you should know that with ordinal [ordinary], you know, effort you cannot practice our way. When I was in Japan, I also had, you know, some Zen students. Some of them are very rich, and some-and some of them are very influential people. And some of them [are] just, you know, students. Some of them are-were carpenter, you know, and some of them were other workers. In Japan, you know, still we have some-not, you know, class, but some, you know-we respect, still, we treat some-someone-or mayor or teachers in some different way. We, you know, we have-we use some special-we-we have some special way of addressing them and we have-we have some way-special way to talk with him. And we-we have also special manner to them. As you say, "Yes, sir." [Laughs.] That is a kind of thing you have. But nowadays I don't think you have this kind of difference in your way of communication. But I always, you know, told them, "If you want to-if you are Zen students, you should," you know, "forget all about your position, or work, or title, and you should be just," you know, "Zen students, or else," you know, "we cannot practice zazen in its true sense."

When we-actually, when you sit I say, "Don't think," you know. "Don't think" means don't treat things in term of good or bad, you know, or heavy or light. And just, you know, accept things as it is. So even though you do nothing, you may hear, you know, and the moment-usually the moment you hear, your reaction is, "What will it be? Yeah, that is a motor car, or that's very noisy," you know. "That may be the motor cycle."

But in zazen you should not, you know, react in that way. You should just, you know, hear the big noise or small noise, and you should not be bothered by it. It looks like impossible, you know, for you, for especially for a beginner, because the moment you hear, you know, some reaction follows. But if you practice zazen-if you try-if you continuously try not to do so, just accept "things as it is," you can do it eventually.

Of course it is difficult. That difficulty is not some difficulty to-like to carry some heavy things, or to work on mathematics, you know. That difficulty is that very [?]-wants some special effort. How you can do it is to be concentrated on your posture, or breathing, or perfect physical practice. That is the only way to-to have right reaction.

That is why, you know, Zen and samurai, you know, is not-in Japan samurai practiced zazen to master, you know, sword martial art.[9] Martial art is not just physical things. It is, you know, the matter [of] whether he k- [partial word]-he is lose or win. So [laughs]-so long as you are-you are afraid of losing their life [laughs], they-they will be their, you know, ability-they cannot act in his full ability. When-only when he is free from "to kill or to be killed," you know, and only when he react [to] his enemy's activity, he will-that is only way to win. If he try to win, he may lose. [Laughs.] So, you know, if he-how he can act without this kind of fear, which will-which will keep himself in limited activity is the most important thing. Because they had this kind of problem, they practiced Zen very hard. It is matter of, you know [laughs], whether he can survive or he cannot in battlefield. So he fought his fight in zendo, not in battlefield [laughs].

But we have not much, you know, need in our every day life, so we don't feel the necessity of this kind of practice. But our human problem we have in this world is created-are created this kind of-want of [desire for?] this kind of activity. Because we make our effort just to achieve something in its materialistic sense, or spiritual sense, we cannot achieve anything. We must achieve nothing [laughs], so that is the real meaning of nothingness.

So at first, I think, you should observe, you should understand your own everyday activity in two ways. And-and then you should be able to understand or react in one way without problem. One is, you know, dualis- [partial word]-to understand our life in dualistic way: good or bad, right or wrong. We should be-we should try hard to understand things in term of good or bad. And sometime you should unders- [partial word]-you should be able to ignore the understanding from the viewpoint of good or bad. "Good" or "bad" is just superficial understanding. But when you understand things, everything is one. Everything is one. Or all things are one. Then that is the other understanding: understanding of oneness. The understanding of duality.

At first you should be able to understand-accept things in two ways, but this is not enough. It is still dualistic. So you should be able to understand in one of the two ways without thinking, "This is one of the two understanding." So it-here you come back from starting point, but actually it is not starting point because you have freedom from-from one to the other. So you will not be bothered by it. And whatever you do, that is the great activity of the practice.

The sun-faced buddha is good; the moon-faced buddha is good. So whatever it is, that is good-that all things are Buddha. And there is no Buddha, even. But usually [when] you say "no Buddha," [laughs] it means that you stick to one-only one of the three understanding: that is, you know, "no buddha," the opposite of "buddha." [1] [10] Buddha, [2] no buddha, and [3] no buddha and buddha or buddha or no buddha. Whatever you say, it is all right. If you have complete, you know,

understanding of it, whatever you say, it is all right. Only when you are not-you don't understand buddha, you know, you concerned about if I say there is no-buddha. "You are a priest," you know, "why-how you can say there is no buddha?! And why do you chant? Why do you bow to buddha?" [Laughs.]

To bow to buddha is "no buddha" for us. There is no buddha, so we bow to buddha. [Laughs, laughter.] If you bow to buddha because there is buddha, you know, that is not true understanding of buddha. So whatever you say, it is all right. If you say, "The sun-faced buddha, the moon-faced buddha"-Nichimenbutsu gachimenbutsu-no trouble. [Laughing.] Whether I am [at] Tassajara or Soko-ji, that's no trouble. [Laughs.] Should not be any trouble. Even though I die, with me it is all right, and with you it is all right. And if it is not all right, you know, you are not Zen student. [Laughs.] It is quite all right. That is buddha.

If I, you know, when I die, the moment I am dying, if I suffer, that is all right, you know. That is suffering buddha. [Laughs.] No, you know, confusion in it. Maybe everyone will struggle because of the physical, you know, agony or spiritual agony too. But that is all right. That is no-that is not problem. We should be very grateful to have limited body like me, you know, or like you. If you have limitless life, it will be a great problem for you. [Laughs.]

I'm, you know-my wife's favorite TV program is [laughs]-start from 4 o'clock and 4:30. I don't know the-what was-is the title-in Channel 7. [11] Some ghost, you know-problem. Some of them has, you know, has very, you know-the monsters, the people who lived, you know, long, long time ago and appear in this world, and creating many problems for people, and creating problem for himself. [Laughs.] That is what will happen.

And we are almost reaching to the moon now, but we cannot, you know, create human being in its true sense. We can create robot, but we cannot create human being. Human being is human being. We can enjoy our life only with our limited body and limited life. This limitation is vital element for us. Without limitation nothing exist, so we should enjoy the limitation. Weak body, strong body; man or woman. We should-the only way to enjoy our life is to enjoy the limitation which was given to us.

Whatever it is, you know, the limitation has some meaning-not some meaning-it has absolute meaning in it. It-that is most important point: for us to know [the] limitation. So, "the sun-faced buddha, the moon-faced buddha" does not mean, "I don't care the sun-faced buddha or the moon-faced buddha." It means that the sun-faced [hits table with stick] buddha, the moon-faced [hits table with stick] buddha, you know. We should enjoy the sun-faced buddha, the moon-faced buddha. It-it is not indifference. It is the more than attachment-strong, strong [laughs] attachment to the moon-faced Buddha or the sun-faced buddha. But

usually our attachment-we say "non-attachment." When our attachment reach to the non-attachment, that is real attachment. So if-if you attach to something, you should attached to something completely [laughs]. The sun-faced buddha, the moon-faced buddha! "I am here," you know, "I am right here."

This kind of confidence within ourselves is important. When you have this kind of confidence in yourself, in your being, we can practice true zazen, which is beyond perfect or imperfect, good or bad.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (10/26/00).

[1] Probably referring to his throat.

[2] Case 3, "Master Ma Is Unwell," Blue Cliff Record.

[3] Case 36, "Master Ma Is Unwell," Book of Serenity.

[4] Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi (Jap. Baso Doitsu): 709-788. Disciple of Nangaku Ejo, and master of many disciples.

[5] Daijan Huineng (Jap. Daikan Eno): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Zen Patriarch. Disciple of Daiman Konin, and master of Nangaku Ejo.

[6] Nanyue Huairang (Jap. Nangaku Ejo): 677-744. First prominent disciple of Daikan Eno, and master of Baso Doitsu.

[7] Qingyuan Xingsi (Jap. Seigen Gyoshi): d. 740. Second prominent disciple of Daikan Eno, and master of Sekito Kisen.

[8] Note in brackets from original transcript.

[9] See also SR-69-04-19.

[10] Numbers [1]-[3] were assigned by transcriber and could be erroneous.

[11] Possibly Dark Shadows, a soap opera that prominently featured a vampire.

## **2 - Nansen's "Everyday Mind Is Dao"**

Monday, March 10, 1969

## Nansen's "Everyday Mind Is Dao"

... it was very, very cold. It was November? I don't remember exactly. November or-he said [?]-I told you [him], you know:

"Don't wear so-so much clothing. Even though we wear many clothing, you will not be so warm. And if your practice is sincere enough, even though you do not wear so much, you will not be so cold. If you are involved in intense practice, you know, actually you don't feel so cold."

And so he appeared in zendo [with] only one thin shirt [laughs, laughter]. And he practiced. I said to him, "It may be too thin. You have to wear little bit more " [laughs, laughter].

But he say, "It's all right." And he sits [with] just one shirt on his body. Why I, you know, talk about his experience is because I want to talk-talk about one koan: the famous koan of Nansen[1]-between Nansen and Joshu,[2] Nansen's disciple. "Everyday-Everyday Mind Is Dao." [3] I think you may know that koan.

Koan is not something to-something to explain. Why we talk about is to give some suggestion, you know, about how you practice zazen. It is suggestion. We don't talk about what koan means directly. We give you just suggestion, and you, according to the introduction or suggestion, you work on koan. That is how we explain koan and how you listen to koan.

So you don't-you must not think-if I, you know-if you remember what I said or if I-if you understand what I said, you-that is-there is no need for you to solve the koan, you know. So I am not trying to explain what is everyday mind or what is dao, but through this koan-by this koan, I want you to-I want to give you some suggestion how you practice shikantaza.

Actually, shikantaza and koan practice [are] not exactly the same, but there is not much difference. Shikantaza is more condensed practice, more essential practice, or fundamental practice than koan practice. The purpose of koan is same as shikantaza. Anyway, I want to-I want you to understand how you practice our way by explaining this koan of "Everyday Mind Is Dao. Everyday Mind Is Dao."

You may think, you know, that if you practice good enough then you have power which could be extended in your everyday life. It-it is so-actually it is so, but how-then how you, you know, acquire this kind of power is different matter. When you have power, you know, then you can extend that power to everyday life. But the next question will be how you can obtain that power will be the next question. But-and you may wonder what kind of experience you have when you have acquired the power [laughs]. That kind of-this kind of question will continue

endlessly. How-how you will acquire that kind of power, or how to extend the power to everyday life.

So anyway I will explain, first of all, this koan:

Joshu, you know, asked his teacher Nansen, "What is dao?" What is dao?

And his teacher Nansen answered, "Everyday mind is dao."

And Nansen asked his teacher again, "How-how to accord with the dao?" or "How to follow the dao? Tell me how to accord with the dao." That was, you know, Joshu's question.

And Nansen said, "If you try to follow the dao," you know, or "The more you try to follow the dao, the more you will lose the dao." [Laughs.] That was his [answer]. And he continued, "The true power does not belong to the matter of attaining it," or "matter-matter [of] aware of it or not aware of it, or attaining it or not attaining it. If you," you know, "if your practice goes beyond the matter of attaining it or not to attaining it, your mind will be boundless blue sky-like a boundless blue sky. And you will have no problem in your everyday life." That was his answer.

Now I want to come back to the discussion between one of you student and me. He said he want to-to have vacation or to go to see someone, and he want to leave Tassajara for one week, he said. And, you know, I- I wanted to know why, you know, why he was-he feels in that way. And at-at last I found how is that. He wanted to-before he rigid-rigidly, you know, strictly attached to or strictly observed Tassajara way. But now he feels to-to observe his way, you know, strictly with the idea to observe Tassajara way is right and not to observe-not to practice even for one day is not good.

So he-he was-his practice, in other word, involved in right or wrong-right practice or wrong practice. And found out that our practice should beyond, you know, go beyond right or wrong. "If so," you know, "what is wrong in my idea of going-leaving Tassajara for one week? [Laughs.] Before I saw in that way, but right now I don't understand our way in that way-in that way. So I don't understand our way so rigidly. So sometime we can take-we can leave Tassajara. What is wrong with you to leave Tassajara when I want to leave?" That was his-that is why he now want to leave Tassajara.

Before, you know, as you see in the question and answer between Nansen and Joshu, Joshu said-Joshu asked him, you know, "If I do not try to observe the way, how-how will-can I follow the way-

don't-if we-if I don't try to observe it?" It-or in other words, "Is it possible for me," you know, "to observe our way without trying to

observe our way?" But Nansen said, "If you try to observe our way, that way is not true way." [Laughs.] How you will understand this point? It means that, you know, unless you have s- [partial word]-until you have some power or some experience of real practice, you will not understand what is true way.

Even though I ex- [partial word]-I explain what is true way, and even though you understand what I say, that is not true way. Only when you have actually you have that power to extend your experience to everyday life. Then, and without trying to observe our way, naturally, intuitively, when you are able to observe our way, that is true. You understand?

So to-to follow our way rigidly, you know, to-to attain some power or some enlightenment or experience is not, you know-may not be true way. But while you are doing so, unexpectedly [laughs] your enlightenment will come to you. And that enlightenment is not the enlightenment you expected [laughs, laughter]. That will [be] how, you know, you will experience our true way.

So Dogen-zenji says-always says, "Don't try-try not to attain enlightenment. Just [laughs, laughter] practice it, even though," you know, "you-you have some idea of enlightenment-like a picture," you know, "like a beautiful picture." To attain, to realize, to actualize that idea, you practice zazen. What you get is quite different thing. It will not be the paintings, you know, [of] rice cake. What you will get is something quite different. That is true.

So in koan practice, you know, you try hard to attain enlightenment. In shikantaza, you know, we do not try to attain enlightenment. Or in shikantaza we have no time, you know [laughs], to expect something. We have-we have, you know, pain in our-on-in our legs, and sometime it may be very cold [laughs]. So to remain in right posture is difficult, you know. And if you [are] involved in our practice with right posture, with good breathing, you-you have no time even to, you know, try to-even to have beautiful picture of enlightenment, [laughs]. It is already hard enough to sit, and you have no other idea of-to have some imagination.

So actually, what will-we do in the same, and what we will attain is same. But, you know, what you attain is something completely different [than] you expected.

So he says, you know, if you try to-if you try to follow the way, you will be far away from it. That is what Nansen said. But what, you know-after what you will attain is something quite different. It is not something to describe. Maybe like it [?], so we call it emptiness. Or sometime toilet paper. [Laughs, laughter.] Sometime cats. Sometime fox. Whatever it is, you know, it is another name of something which cannot be described. That is true enlightenment. When-only when you have it, you

know, then you may say, "everyday life is true way." Even toilet paper is true way [laughs]. Whatever you do, that is another name of the true way you attain-you have.

This morning I didn't, you know, explain so-so far [?], but even though I say it may be-I agreed with his idea not to-to go-to leave, you know, for one week or two, it does not mean that is the true way [laughs]. True way is not something like that. You know, to-sometime to observe our way, sometime we don't. That is not true way. But even so, I don't mean that you should, you know, stay here. You sh- [partial word]-if you-some day he will realize the true way, then he may understand why I said you should-why I-I agreed with his idea of leaving Tassajara for a while. Or sometime don't wear so-so much clothing. Or you should practice rigidly and strictly enough.

To be completely involved in our practice, some day he may understand but I meant. But at least, you know, right now I don't think he understood what I said. I didn't agree with his idea. Or I didn't agree with his rigid practice-what is the true practice. True practice is not in the realm of, you know, "This is true practice and this is not true practice." True practice is beyond right-the idea right and wrong, and beyond experience, beyond human [?] suggestion.

I think old [all?] student may have very difficult time with me [?] because I do not say anything definitely [laughter]. "Yeah, that is all right. That may be all right. Do whatever you like." And, you know, sometime I don't feel so good, you know, so-so old-old student will wonder, you know, why he is not-he doesn't feel so good when he said, "Oh, whatever you like. Do whatever you like." Or without saying, "Do this. Do that." [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... "I don't feel so good." So, you know, he may understand, you know, his-he doesn't feel so good. Why is-the true way, you know, is not something you can achieve in term of good or-right or wrong, or successful or not successful. But the important point [is] to have always composure within ourselves whether we are successful or not. To have deep mind, to include everything within ourselves-that is, you know, true way or dao.

So everyday-when you have-when you accept even toilet-paper buddha, you know, you have to true way. So anyway, the point is to-that you can accept things as it is, as you accept Buddha as your teacher. That is true way. And as our patriarch and buddhas did it, it is possible for us to attain that kind of true way.

So there is no difference in everyday problem and true-and koan. There is no difference between bird's or fish's way and Buddha's way. And to attain that there is many ways and various ways to attain that kind of true way-true way experience which is your own, which could be your own, and which will be different from each other's way, and which is



quite independent way from other's way-at the same time which is universal way to everyone. That is true way. If so, you know, how can I explain [laughs] what is true way?

But-only way to, you know-although Nansen and his-great teacher Nansen and his disciple Joshu have this kind of discussion, it does not mean anything [1 word unclear] who do not understand the true way. But it will give us some suggestion, and it will give you some encouragement to practice our way even though here is-he-here may be some Rinzai student or Soto student.

You may think that-for-it is nonsense for Rinzai student [laughs] to come to Tassajara and practice shikantaza, but it isn't so. Koan practice could be shikantaza. Shikantaza could be, you know, koan practice. Actually if you really practice koan practice with right understanding-with right-under right instruction, that is shikantaza. If you practice shikantaza under the right teacher it will be koan practice. There could not be-if you understand our practice-what is our practice, there is no two practice. Your practice is pointing one way. It looks like various way because you understand it in term of "Rinzai or Soto," "shikantaza or koan practice." That is your fault [laughs], not, you know, teacher's fault. Or he is-you may say I am Soto priest, Soto teacher, but actually, you know, you may be-my lineage is Soto lineage, but actually our-or way directly came from Buddha. They are set off [?] in two ways.

[Brief whispered exchange with Suzuki-roshi off-mike.]

Did you understand? [Laughs, laughter.] Actually, you know, what I meant is-anyway, you should practice zazen [laughs, laughter]. That is what I wanted to say. But you should practice it. You should-should be completely involved in your practice. That is what I meant in short. Then everyone will attain enlightenment. That is what I said in short. You cannot waste your time. It is not possible to waste your time. But you th- [partial word]-you think I am wasting time, that's all [laughs]. But you are not wasting your time.

So anyway, if you trust in words, you know, it's better to practice zazen [laughs, laughter] without any doubt. And it's better to be completely involved in your practice, forgetting-putting everything aside. That is what I mean.

And we shouldn't be fooled by Nansen and Joshu, even though he said, "Everyday life is [laughs] true way." So if you are fooled by them, you will say, "Whatever you-we do, that is true way." [Laughs.] "There will not be no need to practice zazen. What is wrong not to practice zazen? Even though we do not sit in cross-legged position, that is true way." [Laughs.] It means that when you understand in this way, you are trying to understand koan literally without knowing what they really meant by those discussion.

I am so glad to see that you have experienced here in last time period [?]. So after you did it, you understand what you have done [laughs]. Before you do it or when you-is [?] coming back to Tassajara, or it doesn't mean anything to sit with a teacher, but after you did it, you-you must have experienced what you have done.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed by Dana Velden (6/26/00).  
Checked by Bill Redican (11/1/00).

[1] Nanquan Puyuan (Nansen Fugan): 748-835. Disciple of Baso Doitsu.

[2] Zhaozhou Congshen (Joshu Jushin): 778-897.

[3] Case 19 of the Wu-Men Kuan (Jap. Mumonkan, Eng. Gateless Gate) koan collection.

### **3 - Find Out for Yourself**

Saturday, March 15, 1969

Find Out for Yourself

In your zazen, perhaps you will have many difficulties or problems. But when you have some problem, it is necessary for you to find out-try to find out by yourself why you have problem. Before you ask someone, it is necessary for you to try to find out why.

Usually your way of study is to master it as soon as possible and by some best way. So before you think you may ask someone why you have some problem. But that kind of way may be very good for your usual life, but if you want to study Zen, it doesn't help so much.

You should always try to find out what really mean by "buddha-nature" or by "practice" or by "enlightenment." In this way, you will have a more subtle attitude towards everything until you understand things as it is.

If you are told something by someone, naturally you will stick to something you experienced or you understand-you understood. The moment you think you understand something, you will stick to it. And you will lose the full function of your nature.

So when you are seeking for something, your true nature is in full activity, as if you are, you know-when you-even know what are you

seeking for-like someone who is in the dark seeking for his own pillow because he lost it. In the dark-so you don't see anything but you're seeking for the pillow you lost. At that time, your mind is in full function. So-but if you know where the pillow is, you know, your mind is not in full function. Your mind is acting in limited sense, you know.

So-but if you don't know where is the pillow, you are just seeking, worried, and your mind is open to everything. In that way, you will see things as it is.

So to study means-if you want to study something it's better not to have any purpose to study without, you know, knowing how to study or what is Buddhism. But because you do-you are not satisfied with something which you are told, and you cannot rely on anything which was told-which was-which is set up by someone. Perhaps you may have this kind of feeling always. And I think you seek for freedom just because of the freedom you seek for. You try various way.

Of course, you will sometime-you will find, sometime, you wasted your time. If some Zen master drink a lot of sake, you may think the best way to obtain enlightenment is to take a lot of sake [laughs]. Then you will attain enlightenment, you know. But even though you take a lot of sake as he do-as he does [laughs, laughter], you will not attain enlightenment [laughs, laughter].

It looks like waste of time [laughs, laughter], but it is not so, you know. That attitude is, you know, important. To-if you continue, you know, to try to find out in that way-your, you know, understanding-power of understanding will-more and more you will gain the more power to understand things.

So whatever you do, you will not waste your time. But when you do something with some limited idea or some definite purpose, what you will gain is some concrete things which is not-which will be-which will be the cover of your inner nature. So it is not matter of what you-what you study, but matter of to gain the faculty to see things as it is, to accept things as it is, to understand things as it is.

Some of you may try hard, may study something if you like it, you know. If you don't like it, you don't. You ignore it. That is not only selfish way, but also the limiting your power of study. Good or bad, small or big, we should find out the true reason why something is so big and why something is so small, why something is so good and why something is not so good. But if you [laughs] only are trying to find out something good, you know, you will always lose something. And you are limiting your faculty. So you always live in limited world. You cannot accept things as it is.

We have-perhaps too many students in this zendo. But even there are two, three-even [if] some master has two, three students, they will-he

will never tell you what our way in detail. The only way is to eat with him, to talk with him, and to do something-to do everything with him. And to help him without, you know, even [being] told how to help him.

Even-but eventually, you know, because it is difficult to help him, you will try to find out how to help him and how to make him happy [laughs]. Mostly, he is not so happy. You will be always scolded without any reason. Maybe there is some reason, but because you don't find out why so [laughs] you are not so happy and he is not so happy. So what you-if you want to-if you want [to] really study with him, you will try hard how to please him-how to make your life happy with him.

You may say that is very old, you know, way. I think you had, in your civilization, sometime I think you had, this kind of life-not like in Japan, but there is some reason why they had this kind of difficult time with their teachers. There is no particular way for us, because each one of us are different from the other.

So each one of us must have each one's own way. And according to the situation, you should change your way and-to find out some appropriate way. So you cannot stick to anything. The only thing we have to [do] is to find out new-some appropriate way under new situation.

For an instance, you know, in morning time we have-we clean our room. But we have not enough rags or brooms, so it is almost impossible to participate our cleaning-in [our cleaning]. So under this circumstances, what you should do is to find out something to do [laughs]. You may think, "It is-there is nothing to do for me." But there is, if you, you know [laughs], if you try hard to find out what you should do.

I don't scold you so much, but if strict-if I were a strict Zen master I shall be very angry with you [laughs], you know, because you give up quite easily. "Oh, no. There is not much equipment to clean." Or, "There is not much things-there are not much things to do." And if you sit, you know, [on] balcony with people without much help [laughs], you may easily give up to practice. "Maybe better," you know, "not. It is not possible," or "It may be foolish to practice," you know, "under this circumstances-under such a, you know, bad circumstances [laughs]. You may easily give up. But in such case, you know, you should try hard. How you should practice-for an instance, if you are very sleepy, you know: "Oh, maybe better not to practice to zazen. Maybe better to rest." Yeah, sometime it is better, but there is-that is, at the same time, that may the good chance to practice.

When I was [at] Eihei-ji serving a teacher[1]-helping teacher-my teacher, he was-he did not tell us anything. But whenever we make mistake [laughs], he scolded. It is a rule-a kind of rules to open left-hand-right-hand side, you know, [of the] sliding door. This is usual way. Little bit-you open little bit by the handle-not handle, but by the hole which serve the-which-by which we open.

So I opened this way [probably gestures], and I was scolded: "Don't open that way-that side." So next morning I opened, you know, the other side [laughs]. Scolded again. I don't know what to do [laughs, laughter]. The next morning I-but I found out that the day I open this side, his guest was this side. To open this side is a rule, you know. Left-hand side is the rule. But because-at that morning his guest was there. So, you know, I should open the other side. Before I open, we should-I should be careful and find out which side guest is.

And one day-yeah-the day I [was] appointed to serve him, I gave him a cup of tea. And it is rule-almost rule to fill eighty percent of the cup. That is the rule. So I filled eighty percent or seventy percent [laughs]. And he said, "Give me hot," you know, "hot tea. You should fill the cup," you know, "with very hot tea." So next morning I filled, you know-next morning when there were some guests, I filled all the cups [laughs] with hot water almost ninety-nine percent and served them. [SR hits or slaps something.] I was scolded [laughs, laughter]!

There is no rule actually, you know [laughs, laughter]. He himself like hot-very hot bitter tea filled in the cup. But almost all the guest doesn't like bitter hot tea. So for him I should, you know, give him bitter hot tea. And for the guest I should give-I should have given her-given them, you know, usual-given them usual way. In this way, you know, he never tells [us] anything.

If I get up earlier-or I-when I get up twenty minutes earlier than the handbell come, I was scolded. "Don't get up so early!" [Laughs]. "You will disturb my sleep." Usually if I get up earlier it is good, you know, but for him it is not good [laughs]. In this way when-if you are trying to understand things better, without any rules or prejudice, then that means selflessness.

You say "rules," but rules are already some selfish idea. Actually, there is no rules. But when you say, "This is rule," you are forcing something on the rules to others. You are-so actually, there is no rules. But when it is-rules is only needed when we have not much time or when we cannot help others more closely, more kindly. So-or anyway, this is rules. So you should do that [laughs]. This is easy, you know. But actually-that is not actual way-our way. So to give each student-to give instruction-some instruction is not so good, you know.

If possible, we should give instruction one-by-one. But because that is difficult, we give some instruction or lecture like this [laughs]. But you shouldn't stick to lecture. You should think more what [laughs] I mean-what I really mean. So for the beginner, maybe, instruction is necessary, but for, you know, for advanced students, we don't give so much instruction, and he should try various way.

In this sesshin I think-or I'm-I feel very sorry for you that I cannot help

you so much. But the way you study true Zen is not [through] some verbal things. You should open yourself, and you should give up everything. And whatever it is, you should try-anyway, you should try, whether it is-whether you think it is good or bad. This is the fundamental attitude to study.

You should be like a children, you know, who drew things whether it is good or bad. Sometime you will do things without much reason. If that is difficult, you are not actually ready to practice zazen. It is, you know, we say "absolute surrender." But you have nothing to surrender. If you have something to surrender, it may be-it is usual way. But we have nothing to surrender. But you should find out always yourself. You shouldn't lose yourself. That is only things you should try.

Some more time. Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: What do you mean we don't have anything to lose-or to surrender?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Without finding-without-I mean, you know, "without surrender" means when you have-when you find it difficult to surrender, that is surrender. But you should know that is not complete surrender because, you know, you find it difficult. So that-that much you should [be] aware of, you know-yourself, what you are doing [laughs].

That-that you have problem means you are not-not yet [taps five times with stick-once for each of previous five words], you know, surrendered enough. [Taps several times.] Something is there, you know. So you should-you should not attach to it, or you should not [be] bothered by it, or you should not [be] satisfied with it, whatever it is, or you should not try to avoid it because it is there [taps several times]. So you should think-or you should be aware of that, you know, problem and why you have that problem [taps several times]-that kind of problem.

You know, if you fail to serve, you know, tea, you should think why, without sticking-without making some excuse, you know. You failed anyway, you know. So what you should do not to fail again? So there is no rules but to be aware of what you are doing. Do you understand?

Student B: What do you mean, "We should not lose ourselves?"

Suzuki-roshi: "Lose yourself" means you should not stick to something-some rules or some idea. You should be more realistic [laughs]. Do you understand? Lose yourself-lose-"to lose" means to stick to something, [to be] enslaved by something. We exist-we always-we are doing something always with-in relation to something else. But we should not be enslaved by it. There is difference, you know: to be enslaved by it and to have a good relationship. When you are enslaved by it, some-you're-what you do is not pure enough-realistic enough. Something, you know, is in it between you: rules or idea or idea of self, you know. "I am

doing something." That is actually-"I am doing something" means, you know, I am enslaved by "me," ideal "me." So, you know, we should be more realistic. Do you understand? What I want to say ...

[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student C: Do you think it's important to continue practice even when we're not feeling well? When we're ill?

Suzuki-roshi: When you are ill, but-sometime it may be better to sit even though you are ill. But sometime you cannot, you know. Or sometime [it] may be better not to take formal posture. But you can sit-not sit, but you can practice our way whatever the situation is. Even though you are lying in bed, you can practice zazen-not zazen but-we can practice our way. Hai.

Student D: In the beginning it was suggested-in the beginning of my practice of zazen it was suggested that I count my breaths. Are there other methods I could use? Should I just experiment around [with] different ways.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. For an instance, maybe, you know-usually our breathing is very shallow, you know, and if you try-if you continue shallow breathing in zazen because, you know-in everyday activity, you naturally-sometime you take deep breathing like this [gestures], or, you know, when you do some particular activity you take deep breathing. But in zazen, you know, if you keep-if you do shallow breathing always, you know, it is-it create problem because, you know, in your-in zazen you cannot do like this [speaking in an ironic voice-sounding very tight or compressed], you know [laughs]. So you are always like this without making deeper breathing. So that is why I say, you know, take deeper breathing. You should try to make your breathing deeper. Hai.

Student E: Roshi, why do people suffer? Why do people suffer?

Suzuki-roshi: Suffer? Yeah. The-it means-suffering means, you know, spiritual suffering especially or some-most of the physical suffering too. When you have-you-you expect something, you have already suffering, because actually things doesn't go as you expect. So there is suffering already. Even you are ill, you know, for an instance, if you try-if you do not try too much to, you know, to get well, it is pretty good. It is not so bad. But if you try to get well too much, that is suffering. So you should-when you are ill, you should accept it. "Oh, I am-I am not so well [laughs]. Maybe someday I shall be all right." Then you have not much suffering. So, you know, some idea will create some, some-when you expect something, we have already suffering. And that expectation is not realistic enough, usually. Hai.

Student F: If I-if you try-I guess if you try not to have expectation, that's negative expectation.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: But if you get into wanting to expect-like someone would say, "Would you like to go get an ice cream cone?"

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: How-how do you, in your daily life, how do you keep from-how do you keep a healthy mind from not expecting when some people, without knowing it, want you to get into expecting it with them?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is-to know, you know-if you don't know the nature of suffering, you know, you will suffer more. But if you know why you suffer, then you think, "I expect too much," you know. "There is no ice cream here," [laughs] so I shouldn't think about ice cream. It is-that there is no ice cream is-already not so good. But if I expect it-if I want [laughs, laughter] to have it, you make yourself words [laughs, laughter]. So in that way, you know, you will be relieved from a lot of suffering.

Student G: Roshi, you said not to get stuck or caught by some particular idea. But it seems like many ideas have two sides.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: And you get stuck on one side-still that allows the other side to help you. For instance, if you get caught by the idea of the sangha-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: -become impassioned [?] by sangha or an area [?] of practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: -even though you're caught by it, still it's kind of a skillful way for a sangha to help you, because it keeps you with it.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, yeah.

Student G: But how-it's a very strange feeling, if you find yourself afraid to stop practice or to change practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: -out of some formal sangha, because [you're] getting caught by both sides of the idea.



Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: Even though the other side may help you, still, you know, still you're caught.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. If you know that point, you know-it is necessary to know-to understand that much. Without understanding it, you know, if you push one way always-one side always, that will be awful. So at least we should know both side. Then the rules we have will help us. But because we don't know the other side, rules doesn't help at all-makes us worse.

So our sangha is small world itself or society itself. So we will know-we will learn many things. So for-for us it is necessary to know or to understand why we have rules-why he say so, you know. Like you steal something [laughs]. Why, you know, you should steal his way. Or-and you should, you know, understand what he mean-actually what he means without being caught by rules or words or what he says. And he should know why, you know, we have rules and why you have to say something to others. So actually, there is no rules. But [laughs], the rules is good devices. Hai.

Student H: In zazen, if the cushion before your eyes begins to glow, or you see the bodhisattvas blinking their eyes, or the people on each side of you seem to be mutas [?],[2] what is happening?

Suzuki-roshi: What is happening? Maybe that is a good experience. But sometime, you know, it is because of your bad breathing exercise. Something-if it is healthy, you know, good experience for you, of course that is very good. But sometime, you know, it is just some created idea because of your unhealthy practice. [It is] not always-what I mean is not always good, you know.

Student H: Well, one feels very peaceful when one sees this[?]-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm

Student H: -then perhaps it's good.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student H: But if, for instance, there's a feeling of a strong weight on the head-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student H: -then that's unpleasant.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student H: And one doesn't know what to do.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is, you know, your breathing is not so good. And even though it is good, we shouldn't stick to it, you know. You [?]-

Almost time?

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields and Bill Redican (10/23/00).

[1] Serving Kishizawa Ian-zenji at Eihei-ji Monastery. See also SR-70-06-03.

[2] Possibly makyo: "diabolical phenomena," or deceptive appearances or feelings that may arise during zazen.

#### **4 - Selflessness**

Sunday, March 16, 1969

Selflessness

Our practice should be based on the idea of selflessness. This selflessness is very difficult [to] understand. If you try to be selflessness, you know, that is already selfish idea. [Laughs.] We don't know what to do, what-how to cope with it. Perhaps you may-you must have tried various way, but selflessness is not something which you can try, you know. It-selflessness should-should be there when you do not try anything. Selflessness is not something which you can be aware of. But for us, we have to-it is necessary to try and to know-it is necessary to know how difficult it is.

And because it is difficult, you want some guidance or teacher. Maybe when you have good teacher and when you are practicing with good teacher, you will be naturally not so selfish. Why our teacher is so hard on us is because of our selfish attitude. Whenever he see our selfish attitude he may point out-or he may be angry with it. Usually-for an instance, you know, when I was a little boy, I was going [to] primary school at that time-grammar school, you know. And I learned something about animal-small animal and-like, you know, some-some-some animal which live on fish['s] body. When we were working in the pond to clean the water from the muddy-mud and worm in it, I, you know, picked up a small goldfish and found a small worm on the body. So that was the worm I studied at primary school. So I point out that worm and said:

"This is"-in Japanese-"mijinko!" You know, "This is mijinko!" Maybe I proudly, you know, pointed out thatmijinko. And my teacher said: "Shut up!" [Very loudly. Laughs, laughter.]

I didn't know why he shouted at me, but now I know [laughs, laughter], you know, why he was so angry with me. You know, to encourage student by showing some example is the mercy, but [laughs] to shout at me when we proudly showing-that is another mercy, another kindness. So whatever we do, he is watching us, you know, whether he-we are selfish or not.

We small disciples would eat anything he-he wants, you know. When guest come, if he has a good Japanese cake, he would put-he would hide it from us, you know, because we eat always what he want to use [laughs]. Whatever it is, as soon as we find out, we would eat it [laughter]. At first, you know, we have not much, you know-at first we cut a corner which-[laughter-probably demonstrating the technique] it is in the box, like this. And we would cut just a slice of it, four corner [laughs]. And next time a little bit more [laughs, laughter], until, you know, it is obvious we cut it. So when we realize that anyway he may find out what we did, so we cut [laughs, laughter-probably demonstrating the technique] and divided, you know, between us. When-but when we divide the cake and eat it, he was not so angry. But when he thinks some-someone, you know, ate it all by himself, he became very angry.

Once he put a persimmon-big persimmon-a bitter one, in the rice so that it will be ripened. But someone-it was just one-someone ate it, you know. But I didn't know that when I-and my master thought that we must have eat it. So he asked me who ate the persimmon. Because I didn't know who did it, so I said, "No, I didn't." He became very angry, not with me, you know, but someone who ate it by himself without sharing it-sharing it among us. And as soon as he found out who did it he was very angry. And, you know, I became very sorry for him, to say that I didn't-I didn't eat it.

Any kind of selfish-selfishness is strictly observed by our teacher. Selfish attitude create arrogance, you know, arrogance-arrogant attitude based on selfish idea. Because he is selfish he became-become arrogant. So this arrogancy is strictly observed by our teacher. This arrogance is sometime-most-when it is positive, it is easy to find out. But negative arrogance is rather difficult to see or to know. The negative arrogancy is the arrogancy when you say, "No, I cannot do that," you know. But it means that-what I mean by "I can do it" is to do it perfect, you know. Better. So he may say, "I cannot do, it but you do it," he may say. And if he cannot do it as he expected, he may, you know, express arrogancy, you know. He said he can do it, but look at it, you know. Look at it, what he did. That is arrogancy.

So in Zen School we put emphasis on self-power-to do it ourselves. And

Pure Land way is, you know, we are originally sinful being. But teachers of Pure Land School strictly, you know, pointed out that kind of arrogance: "I cannot do it. I am sinful!" you know. It means that everyone must be sinful, you know. "I am a one of it." Here, you know, if you misunderstand, if your understanding is not close enough, you know-"I am one of it. Everyone is sinful." That is most of the time-most of the time it is arrogance, the negative arrogance. It is better, much better to say: "Although I am-now I am sinful, but we can-by practice we must conquer it." That is more, you know, faithful to the sinful nature of ourselves: sometime, not always.

So it is not matter of what you say or how you, even, behave. When you reach this point, you will find out the real practice of repeating Amida Buddha's name or practicing zazen. There is no other way than to repeat Amida-just repeat Amida Buddha's name without any reason. There is no other way to sit, you know, without any gaining idea.

So before you have this kind of struggle, you may wonder why we say you have to sit without any gaining idea. After you try various way to be free from selfish idea, then I think you will find yourself in the position where you can sit-just sit.

We say "conscience," but that conscience, you know, [is] mostly based on selfish idea. Con- [partial word]-real conscience is more than the verbal thing. More than you can think about or you can feel. Until you, you know, you are when-only when you are every strict with yourself, that real conscience will appear. In other words, as long as you are seeking for something, some truth, or some way, or some understanding from outside, you will not find out what it is. Only when you are strict with yourself you will find out what is needed for you.

So instead of being attached to some verbal thing or something which you can hear or see, you must feel impulse from inside which support everything, every phenomenal world. And to be grateful for-for the life energy from inside, which support everything. That is buddha-nature. And maybe that is Amida Buddha's mercy.

But usually, you know, when-when you have selfish practice, you stick to something, you know, which you can see, which you can understand. And when you stick to something which you can understand, you will forget all about what is supporting the understanding, the color you see or the beautiful shape it has. So instead of being one with the flower, your friend, or your teacher, you will stick to-you will be caught by your teacher, the flower you see, the friend you have, without, you know, direct-without having direct intimate relationship. You will make, you know, some barrier between you, and what you will see is dead flower or wooden teacher.

So in short, what-the best way is to get up, you know, when people get up, to eat whatever it is when your friend eat, and to sleep where our

friend sleep, to behave, you know, like other students behave, without any reason. [Laughs.] That is, in short, the best way. That is shikantaza in everyday life. If you are not able to do that, you don't know what is zazen. In your zazen, you know, every sound comes [?], you know, but you do not think about it. You do not discriminate it. You just hear it. So in our monastic life, you should be able to do whatever it is. Whoever it is, your teacher is teacher, you know. That is the only way to get rid of your selfish practice. You should forget all about why or how, even [laughs.] You should do-whether it is creative activity or imitation. It doesn't matter.

If you become too fussy about things, you know, you will lose your practice. So I don't like to discuss something too much [laughs]. You will be lost in your discussion. It will take, you know, night after night, day by day, and you will not have any conclusion. The last thing you will do is to decide by vote.

Discussion is necessary if you understand the fundamental attitude or fundamental practice of selflessness, discussion is very useful. But usually-when you-because you [are] caught by some idea, some way to solve the problem, you cannot solve the problem. Because no way can be perfect. It will create some other problem, whatever you do. So when you know that whatever we do in term of good or bad, right or wrong, that is not perfect, then tentatively you can choose some way. That is, in another words, selflessness. You do not [taps stick twice] force anything. Tentatively: "Let's do this way." That's all, you know.

Religion is, after all, for ourselves-each one of ourselves. [Tape turned over.][1] And it is-if so, it is necessary to observe our way as a personal practice and independent effort. And when you get through the superficial activity, you will find out some universal things within yourselves. That is a kind of mystery. When you think-when you can accept things-you can accept completely the things which people may accept-the truth which is truth for us was the truth for even Shakyamuni Buddha. There is no difference.

If we-if our understanding, you know, [is] deep enough there is not much difference, there is not much time difference or space difference. Whatever it is which is true with us is true with our ancestors and maybe for our descendant, too.

As we are, you know-as we are practicing our way with so many people, the personal-and we are busy to organize our practice. But we should not forget our personal practice.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (10/30/00).

[1] Sentence was repeated at head of Side B, so the "original" tape must have been a copy. No text was lost at the (non-)turnover of the tape.

## **5 - Ordinary and Holy**

Sunday, March 30, 1969

### Ordinary and Holy

[The point of][1] ... my talk is just to give you some help in your practice. So it is just help, you know. So there's, as I always say, there is no need for you to remember what I said as something definite, you know. I'm just trying to help you, so it is just support of your [laughs] practice. So if you stick to it, it means that you stick to the support-not, you know, tree itself. You know, a tree, when it is strong enough, it may want some support. But the most important one is the tree itself, not support.

I have, you know, I am one tree, and each one of you are a tree of itself. And by itself, you should, you know, stand up. And when one tree stand up by itself, we call that tree a buddha. In other word, when you, you know, practice zazen in its true sense, you are really buddha. So buddha and tree is one, in that sense. It may be sometime we call it a tree; sometime we call it a buddha. "Buddha" or "tree" or "you" is many names of one buddha.

When you sit, you know, you are independent from various being, and you are related to various being. And when you have perfect composure in your practice, it means that you include everything. You are not just you. You are whole world or whole cosmos, and you are a buddha. So when you sit, you are ordinary man, and you are buddha. So in this sense, you are both ordinary man, ordinary man, and buddha. So you are not just ordinary man-ordinary man. Before you sit, you know, stick to the idea of "you" or idea of self. That is sheer [fear?] old [?] ordinary man. But when you sit, you are both, you know, ordinary man and buddha. So you are not the same being. When you sit you are not same being before you sit. Do [laughs] you understand? Because, when you sit, you are ordinary man and buddha.

You may say it is not possible to be ordinary and holy [laughs]. You may think so. When you think so, your under standing is, we say, heretic understanding or one-sided understanding. We should understand everything, not just from one standpoint. We call someone who understand things from just one side, we call him "tamban-kan." Tamban-kan in Chinese or Japanese means "a man who carry a board

on his shoulder." Because he carry a big, you know, board on his shoulder this way, he cannot [laughs] see the other side [laughs]. He is always, you know, carrying big board on his shoulder. Almost all the people are carrying big board [laughter, laughs], so he cannot see the other side. He thinks he is just ordinary man, but, you know, if he take off the board, he will understand, "Oh, I am buddha, too [laughs]. How come to be a buddha and ordinary man? It is amazing," he may say. That is enlightenment.

So when you experience enlightenment, or when you are enlight ened, you will understand things more freely. You don't mind whatever people call you. "Ordinary man." "Okay, I am ordin ary man [laughs]." "You are buddha?" "Yes, I am buddha," you know. How come to be a buddha and ordinary man?" "Oh, I don't know why, but actually I am buddha and ordinary man." [Laughs.] Doesn't matter. Whatever they say [laughs], that is all right.

The buddha, in its true sense, is not just different, special one from ordinary man. So ordinary man, in its true sense, is not someone who is not holy or who is not buddha. This is complete understanding of ourselves. With this understanding, if we practice zazen [laughs], if we practice zazen, that is true zazen. You will not be bothered by anything. Whatever you hear, whatever you see, that is okay. Actually, but before you have this kind of actual feeling, of course it is necessary to be accustomed to our practice. Although intellectually we understand ourselves, but if we haven't actual feeling with it, then it is not so, you know, powerful. And so that is why you must keep on our practice. If you keep practicing our way, naturally, you know, you will have this understanding and this feeling-actual feeling, too.

Even though we use-we can explain what is Buddhism, if you do not have the actual feeling with it, we, you know, cannot call him real Buddhist. Only when you, you know, your personality is characterized [by this] kind of feeling we call him a Buddhist. How we, you know, characterize ourselves by this kind of understanding or practice is always, you know-it is necessary, you know, for us to be always concentrated on this point.

It is rather difficult to explain how to be con centrated on this point. There are many koans and saying on this point. And those saying looks like very different, but [laughs] actually they are all the same. Ordinary mind is tao, you know. Ordinary mind is tao, you know. Even though we are doing quite usual things, whenever we do something, that is actually Buddha's activity-Buddha's activity, but our activity [laughs], you know. Ordinary mind is tao. Buddha's mind, Buddha's activity, and our activity are not different.

Someone may say our activity is originated or based on Buddha's mind. And Buddha's mind is "such and such" is Buddha's mind, and the "so and so" is ordinary mind. You may, you know, say various explanation

[laughs], but there is no need, you know, to explain in that way. Whatever we do, you know, if we, you know, do something we cannot say, "I am doing something," you know, because there is no one independent from, separated from, the others. When we do [thumps stick on table] something, you know, it makes sound [laughs]. What is the sound? [Taps stick once per word.] When I say something, you are hearing it. So I cannot do, you know, anything by myself, just for myself. That is actually what we are doing, so I cannot say I am doing something. Everyone-if someone do something, everyone is cooperated. And everyone will do something. So there is no explanation [laughs], actually, you know. So just [thumps stick] minute-moment after moment [thumps stick], we should continue this kind of activity, which is Buddha's activity.

But you cannot say this is just Buddha's activity, because you are [thumps stick] doing actually [laughs]. You may say then, I don't know what I-who is doing what. But why you say, "Who is doing what?" you know. You wanted to limit your activity, you want to intellectualize your activity, that's all, you know. So before you say something, the actual [thumps stick] activity is here. That is, you know, actually who we are. We are Buddha, and we are each one of us [laughs].

Our activity is cosmic activity and personal activity. So there is no need to explain what we are doing. When you want to explain it, that is all right, but we should not think if we cannot understand it, you know, because of we-because it is impossible to understand it you should not feel uneasy. You know, actual you are here, right here. So before you don't [thumps stick] understand yourself, you are you, you know. After you understand it, you are not you anymore [laughs].

But usually you stick to who is not you, which is not you, and you ignore, you know [laughs], the reality. And you feel uneasy with the reality, and you feel something, some satisfaction, you know, which is not real. As Dogen-zenji said, you know, we human being attach to something which is not real and forget all about which is real [laughs]. That is actually what we are doing. If you realize this point, you will have perfect composure in yourself, and you can trust, you know, yourself. Whatever happen to you, it doesn't matter. You can trust yourself.

That belief or that trust is not usual trust or usual belief in [that] which is not true, [that] which is not real. So when, you know, you are able to sit without, you know, being attached to any image or any sound, with open mind, that is true practice. And that you can do that means you are [have] already absolute freedom from everything.

Right now I am put emphasis on, you know, one side of the truth. But it is all right with you to have, you know, to enjoy your life moment after moment because you are not enjoy your life as something which is concrete and eternal. Our life is momentary, and, at the same time,



each moment, you know, include its own past and future. Next moment will include its own past and future. In this way, our momentary and eternal life will continue. This is, you know, how we lead our everyday life, how we enjoy our everyday life, and how we get freedom from various difficulties. How we not suffer from difficulties and how we enjoy our life, moment after moment, is our practice, based on true understanding.

I was in bed for a long time, and I was thinking about those things, you know. I am just practicing zazen in bed [laughs, laughter]. I should enjoy my bed [laughs]. Sometime it was difficult, but [laughs, laughter] if it is difficult, I laughed at myself. "Why is it so difficult?" [Laughs, laughter.] "Why don't you enjoy," you know, "your difficulty?" [Laughs.] That is, I think, our practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript (checked against tape) by Bill Redican 7/14/00.

[1] Text in brackets from original transcript. Not on tape.

## **1969 april (4)**

### **1 - The Only Desire that is Complete is Buddha's Desire**

Tuesday, April 08, 1969

The Only Desire that is Complete is Buddha's Desire

[Recently][1] I was talking about denial of, you know, desires. This is very confusing, you know-may be confusing. Our way is not asceticism, but actually, what we-if you read, you know, our precepts literally, there is no difference [laughs]. But what it means is completely different. What is the difference is what I want to talk about tonight. Or what is the difference between "to study" and "to listen to." "Go to the master and listen to what he says" and "to study." Or why you started to study Zen. There must be some reason why so many people come and-come to Zen Center and practice Zen and study Zen.

I think this is because of the-because our culture-our civilization-came [laughs] already [to a] dead end, and if you realize that you cannot go any more-any further more. So someone who notice-people who notice that this is the dead end may come to Zen Center [laughs, laughter] to find out some way to go further. That is, you know, your feeling, you know, whether or not you understand what is dead end or why we came to the dead end.

The foundation of our culture is based on individualism. And individualism is based on, you know, idea of self, you know. And from the time of Renaissance, we awoke in our human nature, and we started to put emphasis on our human nature rather than, you know, something which is called "divine nature" or "holy nature." We put more emphasis [on] how-what we are and what is human nature. And we wanted to express our human nature as much as possible. But-and, you know, the human nature-holy nature, you know, or buddha-nature, were replaced by human nature. And that human nature is not what we mean by buddha-nature. This is, you know, starting point of mistake. So whatever the-whatever sort may be-communism, or capitalism, or individualism-all those sorts are based on individual right, or individual power, or individual-supremacy of individual.

So, for an instance, you know, individualism or capitalism seek for the freedom of our desire, our freedom, you know. But capitalism-or-but communism rather put emphasis on equality of the profits or right. But equality of-equality and freedom is not, you know, compatible, you know. If you want to be free, you know, from everything, if you want to extend your desire freely, limitlessly, you know, you-you cannot divide things equally, you know, because you want to extend your desire as much as you can. If each one of you extend, you know, their desire, it is not possible to-or have-to possess things equally.

But our conscience-our conscience always tell us, you know, "You should be free from-you should be free in extending your desire. It is all right. It should be all right to act freely, to possess things as much as you can, if you don't disturb people." But if you have too much, you know, when others do not have so many-so much, you don't feel so good. So [laughs] that is not compatible thought-those are not compatible.

Why, you know, this kind of-this individualism and to-and-or desire-freedom of desire and equality of our right is compatible is because our thought is based on, you know, self-centered idea. We, you know-when we say "equality," equality means, you know, equality of our human power. When we say "desire," "limitless desire," "freedom of desire," it means "our" freedom, "my" freedom, or "someone's" freedom.

So there is no idea of holy being, or Buddha, or God. There's no idea of it which will make some rule to-some background to give appropriate position to equality and desires or freedom. So those idea-those thought-if it is necessary for-for us to accommodate those thought without difficulty, it is necessary to postulate some big fundamental idea of non-selfish desire or limitless boundary of-boundary of material or place, which is not just material or spiritual. Something beyond spiritual and material is necessary. That is so-called-it "non-selfishness."

As long as our life is controlled or based on a selfish idea, you know, it is not possible for every thought to find its own place without fighting with

each other. So there's no wonder why we have difficulty in our life when we-when our life is based on just, you know, superficial idea of self or individual.

Asceticism before Buddhism-asceticism before Buddhism put emphasis- they practiced asceticism for their future, you know, good life: to be born in some place where they have lot of enjoyment or more, you know, perfect world. That is, you know, a kind of selfish extension-extended selfish practice. But our mortification is not based on selfish desire. The purpose of our practice is to control our desires so that our desires find its own place and act properly. We control our desire. And so that every one of us, you know, without any difficulty, to extend our desire, we practice mortification.

So difference is our mortification is based on non-selflessness. And before Buddha's mortification is practice of mortification based on selfish desire or extended practice of selfish practice. When you practice-when you study Buddhism, you know, you have a lot of selfish idea: "I study. I must know what it is," you know. When you want to listen to your teacher, there is not much self, you know-selfish idea. That is the difference. This is very important point.

Why you should have a teacher is, without extending selfish practice or understanding, to learn the truth in its pure form, excluding selfish practice. Study is also, you know, practice. It is not just intellectual. It is intellectual practice. So it is nothing-it is not different from zazen because it is based on non-selfish idea. It is not selfish-extended selfish practice.

Why we say you should practice zazen without "gaining idea," you know: Gaining idea [is] based on selfish idea. And when you just sit because you are told to sit, because that is Buddha's way-only because that is Buddha's way-then you have not much selfish idea in your practice. When you have-you eliminate selfish idea from your practice, that is actually non-selfish practice-the true way of practicing true-true-truth.

In Shobogenzo, on the first chapter,[2] Dogen-zenji refers to interesting story. There were a priest called Gensoku.[3] Gensoku is the name of the priest who is taking care of a temple of Hogen-zenji.[4] And he-he thought he understood Buddhism very well, so he didn't ask any question to the master for three years. At last, the Hogen-zenji asked him, "It-it is already three years since you came here. Why don't you ask some question to me?" And Gensoku said-[someone raises a hand to ask a question][5]-excuse me?

Student A: The Lankavatara Sutra said-says that, like, that there are two different classes of beings. And one class-one person is called a "non-returner," and one person-one class is called the-the "returners," "the once-returners."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: I would-I would imagine that the former are the ones who would maintain or keep their selfish desires, whereas the latter would-would not keep their selfish desires.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

And "Why don't you come and ask some question?" he said-the master said.

But that acolyte, you know, said, "I-I studied for a long time under Seiho-zenji, [6] and I-I think I understand what is Buddhism completely," he said.

"How did you-how-how do you understand Buddhism, and what kind of teaching did you receive from him?"

And the priest said, "When I-when my former master asked me, 'How do you understand?' When-the old master said, 'It is,' you know, 'to study Buddhism is like to seek for fire. It is like a-a man who were-who was born in the Year of Fire,' you know, 'seek for fire.' Fire seek for fire, you know. And to study Buddhism is to study Buddhism. Who is-who himself-who is-who-he himself is Buddha. Buddha study Buddha. That is my understanding of how we study Buddhism."

The-but Hogen did not, you know, accept it. He said, "That is what I thought. You don't understand [laughs] what is Buddhism is at all."

So he was very much upset, and he went away. But before he traveled so long, he thought, "Hogen is the famous Zen master. There must be some reason why he said-he said so when I said to study Buddhism is fire seek for fire."

So he thought, "It may be good chance for me to have real understanding of Buddhism. He must have some good understanding of our way."

So he came back to him and asked him, "What is the way to study Buddhism?" he said. And the master said, "It is like a fire seek for fire" [laughs, laughter]. He repeated same thing.

And Dogen-zenji said, you know [laughs], and he enlightened, you know, by the same words. When-before he [was] enlightened, you know, he thought, "I understand," you know, "what is Buddhism." And he, you know-he thought, "My understanding is perfect." That is why his understanding was not perfect. When he gave up, you know, his intellectual understanding, his limited understanding, and seek for some more truth-when he tried to seek for some more, then he-his mind is

open and enlightened.

So Dogen-zenji says, "If you understand like the acolyte, and think-think that is the way to understand what is Buddhism, Buddhism will not continue so long." We should not be-if it is all right to understand some teaching literally and stick to the teaching is all right. The Buddhism cannot be, you know, transmitted to us. When we limitlessly extend-try to extend our true nature, instead of selfish, limited self, then Buddhism is there. When we forget all about the limitation of-intellectual limitation of the teaching, then true Buddhism will be extended forever. In that way, Buddhism is-will have eternal future.

So some recent teaching or something which was told by someone, and if you stick to it, that is not true teaching. When you, you know, receive it-accept it with selfish-self- [partial word]-non-selfish attitude, you will have it. Something [If you have a?] humble attitude you will have true understanding of the teaching. The teaching is there. That is why Hogen-zenji is necessary for the acolyte-for the students.

If-written [?] teaching-even though Shobogenzo, you know, is perfect, there will be no[7] need to study Buddhism under some teacher. Even though Shobogenzo is perfect, you know, you want your teacher. That is why we recite sutra, you know, before we start lecture. Shobogenzo is here, and I bow to Shobogenzo, and I study Shobogenzo with you. If I say, you know, "I know something," that is wrong. The extended practice of bow to the Shobogenzo is how I speak about it and how you listen to it, instead of, you know, some confidence. If you have confidence, that confidence is not in something which you have, but confidence in something you can extend forever: something which comes from selflessness, which is the base or foundation of all teaching.

So instead of putting emphasis on Soto way, or Rinzai way, or Tendai way, we put emphasis on nothingness. Everything comes from nothing, and our way will be extended forever, limitlessly. That is how we study Buddhism.

Our desire, you know-our desire-when it-the desire based on selfish, you know, idea, that is not acceptable. We cannot accept that kind of desire. But our-when our desire is based on-when our desire is unselfish desire, we-that is how we extend our way.

So [there is a] difference between mortification of asceticism in pre-B-[partial word] [?]-Buddhistic practice and asceticism. Our way is different. And the way to control our desire looks like same, but actually completely different. This is the most important point, and I didn't refer to this point on this lecture-when I give lecture at Tassajara.

So to control-to extend our desire is to be strict to ourselves, you know. Without being strict with ourselves, we cannot do anything, because that will be the wrong practice. So first of all, you should-we should

reflect on our practice. And before we say something, you know, we should reflect on ourselves. This is a very, very important point. You should not rely on some teaching, but you should reflect on yourself, and polish up yourself, and get rid of selfish idea as much as you can, even though you attained a wonderful attainment or enlightenment. If you do not polish yourself-if you forget to polish yourself-that enlightenment will not work. That is not real enlightenment.

When we realize ourselves, and when after reflecting on ourselves, and when we are able to see "things as it is," whatever the thought may be is acceptable: "Capitalism is all right. Communism is all right. Nothing wrong with it." But when we, you know, understand things-when our understanding is based on selfish idea, and when we try to force our opinion to others, then, without reflecting on our way, and when you attach to your own idea, rejecting other's idea, then you will be-your effort will end in dead end [laughs], you know. After all, you should fight-you will fight with others, that's all, and both will be hurt. You cannot survive any more because you lose your background-true background.

You will have some question? Please ask me.

Student B: Is deep breathing the same as introspection?

Suzuki-roshi: Introspection, yeah? First of all, we have to have wisdom to see things as it is. When we have no selfish idea, we can see things as it is. So we know what we are doing always, and we know that we are not perfect, and our idea is a one-sided idea. So we have, you know, always room to accept someone's idea, too, because we know that what I say or how I practice is not perfect. That is humbleness, you know. That is how to accommodate our opinion to other's opinions. Hai.

Student C: You said that we should control desire.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: And I still don't understand how to go about that.

Suzuki-roshi: How do you do that?

Student C: How do I control desire?

Suzuki-roshi: You shouldn't, you know-why I say so-how-why I say "control" is your, you know, way of extending desire is, you know, based on selfish idea. So you-with out reflecting, your desire is selfish one, you know, and you take it-you try to extend it. You think this is-there is nothing wrong, you know [laughs], to extend your desires. That is, you know, the mistake. Something matters [laughs]. Something wrong. It is something wrong if you extend-just extend your desire, without thinking or reflecting, without-not "control," but without observing your-without

reflecting on your desires. What is desire, you know? Desire, in its usual sense, always based on selfish, you know, idea. Isn't that so? [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

But when you think, you know, "Nothing wrong to extend my desire" you know-if-if someone say you should-you should control, you know-you shouldn't do so, then you will feel bad [laughs]-you will feel some restriction. But if you-that is "control" in its ordinal [ordinary] sense. But when you realize-when you reflect on your desire, as a-if you understand your desire [as] pretty selfish, you know, then naturally you will limit your desire to some extent. That is not control. That is the way desire should be. There is big difference. Do you understand?

Student C: Could you explain the part of the [Heart] Sutra that says, "no eyes" [?]-until we come to our [2-3 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: "No-no eyes--"

Student C: "No eye."

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: "No eyes," until we-

Suzuki-roshi: "No eyes" or "no ears" means, you know-we-we think: "I have ears. I have nose," you know. But nose is not just nose, you know. Nose is some organ to smell, and ears some organ to hear. And combination of nose and, you know, the five senses-sense organs will have some understanding. So just nose or just ears doesn't work.

But we usually think: "I have nose. I have ears. Ears is-our ears is quite different organ from," you know, "nose." But that is not true. So even though you cannot see, you can tell-ear will-will "see" something [laughs], you know. The function of the ears will, you know, will change, and the ears will [have] some faculty to, you know, to see colors. And by listening to something, you know, you-you will see some color. That kind of change will take place, if you cannot see. So nose is not just nose, and ears is not just ears, as we understand. So "no nose"- "no nose" is right.

There is nose, that is right, and there is no nose. That is also right. And "yes" and "no" [laughs]. You should understand in two ways: yes and no [laughs, laughter]. That is complete understanding.

So you do not, you know, stick to your nose. "I have no nose. That's okay," you may say. "You have no nose." That's okay. "You have no ears." "That's okay," you may say. Both is true. The two ways of explaining something. So "no nose"-why it says "no nose" is because we think there is, you know, "nose." You shouldn't ask question like that, you know [laughs, laughter]. "No nose" is all right. When you do not ask

question, if you take it for granted, you know, it is real understanding of things. That kind of, you know, wisdom is necessary if you want to see "things as it is." So as long as you have stick to some selfish, you know, understanding or special understanding, you cannot see things as it is. Hai.

Student D: If things as they are require selfless-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student D: -or are selfless, where does the small self come from?

Suzuki-roshi: Small self comes from?

Student D: Where does it-

Suzuki-roshi: Actually, there is no small self, you know [laughter], but you-you say there is small self [taps stick on table four times as he says previous words beginning with "say"]. That is the mistake. We-we usually have that kind of mistake.

Student D: Where did that mistake come from?

Suzuki-roshi: That mistake? That is not actually mistake, you know [loud laughter]. That is all right. But you say "mistake," you know. You may ask me why I say mistake. That is, you know, one-sided view [laughs]. You don't see things as it is because you stick to one-sided view [laughs]. Okay? [Laughing.] Judy, your eyes is wondering [laughs, laughter]-wondering "Is it all right? Is that true?" Hai.

Student E: You said that it is not good to allow our desires to extend themselves limitlessly. Would you also say it's not good to restrict them too much, so that it-one becomes unhappy and makes others unhappy too? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: When I say restrict-you should restrict your desire, I mean you should not extend, you know, your desire in limited sense-limited sense. You know, for instance [picks up something], "This is my desire," you know. You limit the nature of desire already. So "without limitation" means to based or to have a wider understanding of the desire. Then you can extend forever.

Student E: What about a concrete situation [4-6 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Concrete situation? Concrete situation-yeah. Concrete situation-actually, you know, there is no concrete situation [loud laughter]. You know, if you say "concrete situation" [laughs] you should also say "limited desire," you know. When you say "concrete situation," the-your desire-your limitless desire-also limit- [partial word]-will be limited. But actually, you cannot limit your desire, or you-there is no



concrete situation. It is, you know-somewhat it is changing.

Student F: Well. if someone comes up [to you] and you want them to do what won't-what they want to do, and-I had a-we have a choice. I mean, if someone comes up and like-someone goes and felt my arm to see how big it was [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: Um-hmm.

Student F: And instead of showing off, I just let my arm-they held it-they grabbed my arm, and they expected me to go like that [possibly flexed his bicep]. But instead I just raised it. And then when I moved it again, I just lowered it. And wherever they put it I put my arm.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: And I was really surprised at my response. And I said, "Gee!" [Laughter.] What it is is a big [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Yeah. But if you-if you see-if you reflect on your situation, as long as you see your situation, it is all right. Then you will not, you know, do anything too much or too little. You can do just [what] he wants.

Student G: Does reflecting on your desires make it-I mean, when you reflect-I mean-go ahead, Roshi [?]-I'm getting confused by it [laughs].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: I don't know. Do you mean that-I think that you say that if we think about our desires, then when we reflect on them, then we can-if we see they they're selfish desires, then we can limit them.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: Yes?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. You-you limit the desire.

Student G: Can you-can-could-could we-or should we limit our desires and, two, not ourselves but for other? In other words, like, if we have a desire and it's affecting the [2-4 words] what I want or maybe what someone is likely to need to pretend [4-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: The point is, you know, the point is whatever the desire is, you know, it is necessary [laughs], you know, to-to control. It should be under control, in short. But why we should control our desire is [that] the desire we have right now, you know, in this moment, is not perfect one. More or less, our desire is involved in selfish, you know, selfish desire. So only one desire, you know, which is complete is Buddha's

desire [laughs]. We should know that. And Buddha's desire is not desire-is not some desire which we have actually right now.

All the desires we feel we have is actually limited desire, not-not perfect desire. We should know that. But when we don't know that, we will get into trouble [laughs]. That is what I mean. The only perfect desire belongs to Buddha: perfect one which include everything. Whatever he does, it is all right, because he is just one whole being [laughs]. He is no-for him there is no friend or no enemy. What exist is Buddha himself. So for him it is all right, but for each one of us, which is a part of him, you know, it is necessary to, you know, to accommodate our desire. If I desire so much, you know, you should ask someone if I extend my desire little bit more [laughs, laughter] or not, you know. Hai.

Student H: Is our desires conditioned by our human nature?

Suzuki-roshi: Conditioned by?

Student H: Our human nature?

Suzuki-roshi: Human-when we say "human nature," you know, maybe human nature will be understood in two ways. In comparison to buddha-nature, we say human nature in its humble sense and humble attitude. And-but some-sometime most people say human nature-when most people say human nature, he may think, because this is human nature [taps something repeatedly], you know, nothing wrong to have human nature for a human being [laughs]. So I can do whatever we like! You know, that is another kind of understanding of human nature. We should know that, you know, when we understand human nature in its more humble way, you know, in comparison to perfect nature, then human nature makes sense. That is what I-we mean by human nature. Hai.

Student I: Supposing I would like a cheese-I have a desire for cheese.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: Then, as I understand you, to limit my desire is to eat some cheese but not eat too [?] much cheese.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: To not be greedy.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: But someone might interpret you to mean, "Well, since I have the desire for cheese, I must limit my desire. I will not allow myself to eat any cheese." And then that person might become envious and angry when he sees other people eating cheese.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.]

Student I: He will-he will be angry at them because they are eating cheese, and he doesn't let himself do it-

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.]

Student I: -but he has the desire for it.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student I: So-

Suzuki-roshi: But so-

Student I: I just think [?] it would be bad to be too strict-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student I: -as well as too free.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. So you should not interpret same, you know, words in always same way, you know. It is how-how we study Buddhism. If we can, you know, read same word same way-by the same way, that is another mistake. So constantly, you know, we must open our eyes, open our mind, and see the situation. That is the point.

Okay?

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Tanya Takacs and Bill Redican 11/20/00.

[1] The first word or two was missing on tape. "Recently" was added by the transcriber, based on usage in other lectures

[2] Shobogenzo "Bendowa."

[3] Baoen Xuanze (PY), Pao-en Hsuan-tsê (WG), or Ho-on Gensoku-zenji (Jap.): Chan master, disciple of Fayan Wenyi (Hogen Bun'eki) in 9th-10th century China.

[4] Fayan Wenyi (Jap. Hogen Bun'eki): 885-958. Founder of the Fayan (Jap. Hogen) school.

[5] The note in brackets is from the original transcript.

[6] Qianfeng Chuanchu (PY), Ch'ien-fêng Ch'uan-ch'u (WG), or (Jap. Seiho Denso-zenji or Kempo): no dates. Dharma heir of Luopu Yuanan.

[7] Suzuki-roshi definitely said "no."

## **2 - Afternoon Sesshin Lecture**

Saturday, April 19, 1969

Afternoon Sesshin Lecture

Ryogen-sensei: Good afternoon. Are you very tired in sesshin? ...

Suzuki-roshi: [Whispers 1-2 sentences in Japanese, presumably to Ryogen-sensei.]

It is already 3:30. I have twenty minutes more. [Laughs.] Twenty minutes more.

Actually, Zen is not something to talk [about], and also it is something to talk [about]. [Laughs.] If you understand Zen in that way, your understanding will be perfect. If someone ask you, "What is Zen?" you may say, "Whatever you say, that is Zen." [Laughs.] And you may say, at the same time, "Whatever you say, it is not Zen." [Laughs.] Both is true for us.

So this kind of paradoxical statement could be understand just by your tummy [?] [making a gesture-possibly rubbing his stomach], you know, by your zazen, or else you don't understand. That is, you know, how we communicate with each other, without sticking to words. You should directly communicate with each other, not by words. This is very important.

So Zen is not something to study, maybe, you know, like you study science or philosophy. Zen is something to listen to. "Listen to" means, you know, to-with empty mind, to accept the truth without seeking for what your teacher says. Just, you know, listen to it with empty mind. Then his words will penetrate into your mind. So whether you understand it intellectually or not is not point. We say if you attend a lecture, even though you are sleeping, it is all right, we say, you know. [Laughs, laughter.] It is all right because, you know, the teaching will come right into your home, through your, you know, through your nose, or-what do you call, you know?

Student: Pores?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Students: Skin.

Suzuki-roshi: -skin, you know. So you-there is no need to listen to your ears. This is enough. [Laughs.] So to listen to it with empty mind is very important as you practice zazen.

Once Yakusan,[1] the famous Zen master in China, was asked to give them lecture. "It is so long since you give us your lecture, so please give some lecture after sesshin." [Laughing.] He came up to the altar and came down, and went [to] his room without saying anything. So for him, one minute is enough. For me, it takes twenty minutes; for him, one minute [laughter].

But his jisha[2] asked him, after he went back to his room, "Why didn't you give them lecture-some lecture, some words?" And he said, "I am a Zen master," you know. "So-but-so I will not say anything. If you want to study Zen, you should listen to some philosopher, you know-Buddhist philosopher, then he will explain it in detail [laughs, laughter]. I am a Zen master, so to practice with you is my motto [?]. So for me there is no need to speak, and for my student there is no need to receive any lecture."

There are many stories like this. In Shobogenzo, Dogen-zenji told us very interesting story. There were famous Zen master named Isan.[3] Isan and Kyozan[4] formed-established Iggyo-Iggyo Zen sect. Isan-some priest, some monk stayed Isan's temple for three years, but he didn't ask any questions. So Isan asked him, "Why don't you ask any questions?" This is a kind of opposite, you know [laughs]. "Why don't you ask any questions?" [Laughs, laughter.] That monk, you know, who was taking care of his temple, said, "I already," you know, "attained enlightenment under Seiho." [5] Seiho was also a famous Zen master-

Can you hear me?

-also famous Zen master. So Isan, you know, asked him, "How did you attain enlightenment?" Isan asked that monk. Monk said, "I attained enlightenment when he said, 'To study Buddhism is like a man who was born in year of fire, seek for fire.'" Isan said, you know, "As I thought, you don't-you didn't understand, " you know, "you didn't attain enlightenment yet." [Laughs, laughter.]

So he was rather upset [laughs, laughter], and he went away, you know. But on the way to some other Zen master, he thought, "Isan is a very famous Zen master, so there must be some deep meaning when he said, 'You didn't understand.'"

So thinking about why he said so, he came back to Isan's temple again and asked the same question-how to study Buddhism. He asked him-he asked Isan.

But Isan said, "It is like a man who was born in year of fire, seek for fire." [Laughs, laughter.] He repeated, you know, what he said, and, at that moment, that monk attained enlightenment [laughs, laughter].

Word is same, you know. First he tried to, you know-at first, his understanding was just intellectual one: "Everyone has buddha-nature," you know, "so it is rather foolish to seek for buddha-nature when he has-when everyone has-everyone, including him, has buddha-nature. It is foolish. I will never seek for buddha-nature." That was his understanding, but just intellectual understanding. He must have repeated same thing over and over wherever he go [laughs, laughter]. "It is like man who was born in the year of fire, seek for fire." That was his stock words.

But when Isan repeated same thing, he was struck [laughs] by his statement. Dogen-zenji says, "If study of Zen is like the way of studying as that monk, Zen will not be transmitted to us." In short, Zen will be understood by your direct experience. And if you want, you know, to have direct understanding, you must have some confidence, you know, you must have some conviction, strong conviction-conviction to study it, you know. "Whatever happened, I must understand it." This is very important. "How long it takes it doesn't matter. I will study it." This kind of-without this kind of conviction and without this kind of experience-direct experience based on strong conviction, you cannot, you know, attain enlightenment.

Someone, some swordman, you know, visited Yagyū Tajima,[6] famous swordman. I don't know whether it was Takuan-zenji[7] or Yagyū Tajima. I don't know. Or this is true story or not, I don't know [laughs, laughter]. Anyway, that man, you know, wanted to master martial art of kendo.[8] Asked him, "How long will it take for me to master," you know, "your way?" [Laughs.] The answer was something like that. "If you want to," you know, "master it in three years, it may take," you know, "one hundred years, maybe. But if you have strong conviction to be killed by me, then you will master it immediately." [Laughs, laughter.] That is, you know, the way.

Excuse me? [Students apparently could not hear in the back.]

Student: Roshi, we couldn't hear that back here.

Oh. "If you-if you expect to study-to master it, in three years," you know, "it may take one hundred years. But if you," you know, "if you don't mind to be killed [by] me in this place, you will," you know, "understand it right now." That was what he said.

You may understand how important it is to have some, you know, some strong conviction to practice zazen. When you sit, actually: "I shall never stand up," you know, "from this seat unless someone tell me to

stand up," that is the way. Then, at that time, your practice is beyond space and time. "How long, it doesn't matter. Wherever I am-am I, it doesn't matter. I shall never stand up unless someone," you know, "tell me to stand up." That is shikantaza.

When I am talking to you, and when you are listening to me, I think you have that kind of conviction, and I have too [laughs]. But when you go home [laughs], what will happen? And when I am not, you know, talking, or when I am not practicing zazen with you, what will happen to me? That is the point.

So this kind of practice should be extended in your everyday life, but your way of everyday life should not be extended to our practice [laughs, laughter]. You should extend this kind of conviction, you know, to your everyday life. That is our everyday life. But we lose, you know-we easily lose this kind of conviction. That is a very important point, and in your everyday life I want you to-I want you to, you know, come back to this kind of conviction. Then, you know, your everyday life will be completely refreshed. And at the same time, I think, you will-it may be your great problem that you haven't this kind of conviction in your everyday life. This is very, you know, difficult thing.

When you eat, you know, for an instance, you rather eat something sweet and nice, you know. But actually, we should-whatever it is, you know, we should be ready to accept and eat, without saying, "This is delicious," or "This is not so good." When you, you know, want to have something more, you should be-you should, you know, come back to our conviction.

Kitano-zenji-when I was at Eihei-ji Monastery, head of the monastery was Kitano-zenji.[9] He told-he told us why he-how he gave up smoking. He was inveterate smoker when he was a monk, and he told us about it. "I was," you know, "very bad smoker." But when he was traveling, he came across the pass-Hakone Pass. It was misty weather. So, sitting on the rock on the top of the pass [path?], take out a pipe and started to smoke in misty weather. It is very good, as you know, to smoke in some damp, misty weather. It was so nice that he was struck by the, you know, by the taste of it, and he determined to give up [laughs, laughter] smoking. That was the last smoke, you know [laughs]. You know, wherever he is, you know, even he is resting on the top of the mountain after climbing up maybe eight miles, he was actually-he didn't lose the conviction [laughs] of practicing zazen. "Oh!" [Laughs, laughter.] "I must give up!"

No wonder he was such a spiritual character. Even though he is weak, you know, when he was more than ninety, you know, he was like this, you know. When he bow, we wondered-or we worried whether he can get up again. [Laughing, laughter.] We all watched him. But he get up, you know. Again and again, he bowed. And, you know, to watch him is much harder than [being] him, we thought. Full of spirit.

That is, I think, a good example. I'm not, you know, convincing you to give up smoking, or something like that. But we have-must have that kind of, you know, way-seeking mind. Then, you know, your practice will be pretty good.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Diana Bartle (7/21/00) and Bill Redican (9/27/00).

[1] Yakusan Igen: Yaoshan Weiyan (745-828). Ch'an master; dharma successor of Sekito Kisen.

[2] Traditionally, a monk who attends the head monk.

[3] Isan Reiyu: Guishan Lingyou (771-853). Ch'an master; dharma successor of Hyakujo Ekai.

[4] Kyozan Ejaku: Yangshan Huiji (807-883).

[5] Seiho Denso or Kempo: Qianfeng Chuanchu (no date). Ch'an master; dharma successor of Luopu Yuanan.

[6] Yagyū Tajimanokami Munenori was a master instructor, in the Yagyū Shinkage school, of traditional Japanese swordsmanship (ken). He was widely regarded as the most eminent swordsman of his day (Winston L. King, *Zen and the Way of the Sword*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 112, 167).

[7] Takuan-zenji: Takuan Soho (1573-1645), a Rinzai master of the Edo period and sword master of Yagyū Tajimanokami Munenori. The shogun requested him to write an instructional guide (*The Unfettered Mind*) for the great swordsmen of the period, including Yagyū Munenori (*ibid.*, p. 167).

[8] Kendo: Way of the sword.

[9] Kitano Genpo-zenji (1842-1933): The 67th abbot of Eihei-ji Monastery.

### **3 - Why We Practice**

Sunday, April 20, 1969



## Why We Practice

It's-it is pretty difficult, but I will try-try to speak about purpose of our practice.

Before I try to explain our practice, I think I should explain why we practice, you know-why we should practice Zen when we have buddha-nature. And this is the great problem Dogen-zenji had. And he worked for this question before he went to China and met with Nyojo-zenji.[1]

And this is not, of course, so easy problem, but if you understand what do we mean when we say everyone has buddha-nature, and everything has buddha-nature. What does it mean? And he explained very carefully in Shobogenzo, on the-in the first chapter.

When we say "buddha-nature," you know, you may think buddha-nature is some innate nature, you know, because we say nature. In Japanese we use same words-nature-buddha-nature. But actually it is not nature like nature of human being or nature of plant-or nature of cats or dogs, you know. It is not, strictly speaking, it is not that kind of nature.

"Nature" means something which is there whatever you do. Whatever you do, there is nature. Nature is not something which is there, you know, before you do something. When you do something, you know, at the same time, nature appears. That is nature, you know. What he meant.

You know, you-you think, you know, we have buddha-nature within ourselves or innate-as a innate nature. And because of this nature, you do something, you know. That is usual understanding of nature [laughs]. But that is not his understanding. Or it is not like some seed, you know, which is there before plant come out you know. "That is not the nature which I mean," Dogen-zenji said. That kind of understanding of nature is, you know, heretic understanding of nature [laughs]. It is not correct understanding of nature.

That kind of nature is some idea, you know, you have in your mind. "Here is plant," you know. "So there must be-before this plant appear-there must be something-seed or within the plant, there must be some nature which promote the-its activity. Because of that nature, some flower is red and some flower is yellow." Most people understand in that way. So why we practice-when we think why we practice zazen is, you know, because we have nature-buddha-nature.

"So after," you know, "after practice-after training-after eliminate various selfish desires, that buddha-nature will," you know, "appear." That kind of understanding is based on unclear-unclearness of your understanding of observing-observing things. According to Dogen-zenji-he, you know, worked on this problem for a long time, so his understanding is very clear.

Only when you, you know-when something appears, there there is nature, you know. So nature or outlook of things is two names of one thing, one reality. Sometime we say buddha-nature. Sometime we say enlightenment or bodhi or buddha or attainment. But those are just-those are the two side of one reality. So not only we call it from those two side, but also we call it, sometime, "evil desire."

"Evil desires," we say [laughs], but it is another name of buddha-nature [laughs]. You say, you know, "evil desires," but for Buddha, that is buddha-nature, you know. There is of course, layman and priest [laughs], but usually you understand in that way, but actually there is no particular person to be a priest, you know. You may be-each one of you can be a priest and I could be a layman, you know. Because-just because I wear a robe I am priest. Because I behave like a priest maybe-like way, I am a priest. That's all, you know. There is no special person for priest or for layman.

So whatever you call it, that is another name of one reality. Even though you call it mountain or river, that is another name of one reality. So we should not be fooled by words of "nature" or "result" or "buddhahood." We should see thing itself with clear mind. In this way, we understand buddha-nature.

Then why we have evil desires at the same time is, as I explained, that is another name of buddha-nature. Then why we practice zazen-where-from where that evil desire [laughs], you know, come up ["out"?]-there is actually no place for evil desires. But actually, you know, we have so-called-it buddha-nature-evil desires which should be annihilated. Why is that? And where should I, you know, should we-after you eliminate, you know, buddha-nature-evil desires from us, you know, like this-here is evil desire [probably gesturing]. Where do you throw this away [laughs, laughter]?

You know, when we start to think in this way, we are already [laughs] started to understand things in heretic way [laughs]. That is just name, you know. Just name of one thing. There is no such thing to pull out, like this, and to throw away.

You may feel as if you are fooled by me, you know, but it is not so [laughs, laughter]. It is not a laughing matter. You know, we are seriously confronting with our selfish desires, and we are always observing things in wrong way. When we come to this point, it is necessary for us to understand our practice-our practice of shikantaza.

I said, where should I throw evil desire? There is very famous koan, you know. A man who climb up to the top of a pole.[2] If he stays here [tapping on stick, probably held to represent the pole], he is not enlightened one. When he jump off from the top of the pole, he may be a enlightened one. This is koan.

How we understand this koan is how we understand our practice. Why, you know, we have something which should be take out from us is because we, you know, stay here, you know [probably tapping the top of his stick]. Because you stay at top of a pole, you have problem, you know. But actually there is no pole for a-no top for a pole-for actual pole is continued, you know, endlessly forever. So you cannot stop here, actually.

But you think when you have some experience of enlightenment or something, you think we can rest here, you know, observing various sight at the top of a pole, forgetting all about to climb up-to continue climbing up a pole. We say, you know, this is-because this is koan, if-we say "usually," but "usually"-people think, you know, on the top-on the top for the pole. Usually we think in that way. But there is-actually there is no top for anything. Things are continuously growing or changing to something else. Nothing exist in its own form ["home"?] or color ["corner"?]. So actually there is no top. But when we think, "Here is a top," that is already misunderstanding.

So accordingly, you have problem whether we should jump off from here [laughs], you know. Actually you cannot jump off [laughs] where we-it is not possible. And even though you try to, you know, stop on the top of the pole, you cannot stay here because it is growing continuously [laughs]. So you will be continuously, you know, higher and higher. You cannot stop here. But you think it is possible.

That is the problem, you know. That is why you should practice and you should forget all about the top of the pole. If so, you know, where should I forget or throw our misunderstanding is right here [taps three times on table with stick], you know. Not this way or that way or past or future. Right here. You should, you know, forget all about the misunderstanding when the place where you are right now. Do you understand? You should, you know, forget this moment, and you should grow to the next-you should extend yourself to the next one. That is the only way. I think you must have understood our practice.

For an instance, you know, my wife [laughs]-every morning, when breakfast is ready, he hit, you know-what do you call it?

Student: Clappers.

Suzuki-roshi: Clappers? Yeah, clappers-like this. If I don't answer for it [laughs], you know, I-he-she may continue to hit it [laughs, laughter] until I feel rather angry [laughs, laughter]. Why we have that kind of problem is quite simple. Because I don't answer, you know. If I say "Hai!"-that's all [laughs, laughter]. Because I don't say "Hai!" she, you know, continue to-she has to continue because she doesn't know whether I heard it or not [laughs].

Sometime she may think: "He knows but he doesn't answer." Eei!  
[Probably imitates a mock attack by Okusan.] [Laughs, laughter.] That is what will happen. When I don't answer, you know, I am, you know, on the top of the pole [laughs]. I don't jump off from here. When I say "Hai!" you know, I jump off from here. Because I stay at the top of the pole, I am-I have something to do-something important to do [laughs, laughter]-something important at the top of the pole: "You shouldn't call me! You should wait!" So before I say something I determined to shut up-not to say anything. "This is very important! Don't you know that?!" [S.R. and students laughing.] I am here [taps on stick], on the top of the pole! Don't you know that?" So she start to- [Probably gesturing.] That is how we create problem.

So the secret is just to say "Hai!" you know, and jump up from here. Then there is no problem. It means that, to be yourself-always yourself, without sticking to old self. When you say "Hai!" you know, you forget all about yourself and [are] refreshed into some new self. And before new self become old self, you should say another "Hai!" or you should work to the kitchen. So the point is on each moment, and to forget the point and to extend our practice, forgetting ourselves.

So, as Dogen-zenji says, "To study Buddhism is to study ourselves. And to study ourselves is to forget ourselves on each moment." To forget ourselves is-means to be yourself on each moment. Then everything will come and help you, and everything will assure your enlightenment. That is enlightenment, you know. When I say "Hai!" you know, my wife will assure my enlightenment. "Oh, you are a good boy!" [Laughs, laughter.] But I stick to the "good boy"-you know-"I am good boy." [Laughs, laughter.] I will create another, you know, problem. "Oh, you are good boy. Then you have to help yourself," she may say. So I shall not be good boy any more. I shall not be enlightened one.

So on each moment [laughs] you should be concentrated yourself, and you should be really yourself. At that moment, where is buddha-nature, you know? Buddha-nature is actually when I said "Hai!" That "Hai!" is buddha-nature itself, in its true sense. Buddha-nature which you have proudly within yourself is not buddha-nature. Actual buddha-nature is when you say "Hai!" or when you become you yourself, or when you forget all about yourself. There is another name-you will have another name of Buddha or buddha-nature.

So "nature" is not something which appear-which will appear in future. Buddha-true, real buddha-nature should be something which is actually [taps on table with stick] here-there. If you cannot see actually what is buddha-nature [taps], it doesn't mean anything [laughs]. It is rice cake or painted rice cake. It is not actual one. If you want to see the actual rice cake, you should see it when it is there. So purpose of our practice is just to be yourself. When you become yourself in that way, you have really-real enlightenment is there. The enlightenment you have in your mind, you have attained-you attained long-you attained long time ago is

not actual enlightenment.

Back and forth when we-you understand our practice, you will enjoy your practice, thinking about what kind of practice you had had before you attained actual enlightenment. Sometime you will have pity on someone who has-who is involved in wrong practice. And sometime you will laugh at yourself, you know, when you fall in-when you are involved in wrong practice. "Oh, what are you doing?" [Laughs.] You will, you know, laughed at you-you will tease yourself: "What are you doing?" You will have various feeling. All the real compassion or real love or true encouragement or true courage will arise from here. You will be not only courageous person but also you are very kind person when you reach-when you understand yourself in that way.

So one practice include various virtue, and one feeling of practice will result [in] various feeling like a wave on the sea. So we say, "One practice covers everything"-various virtue. And when you practice your practice in that way, you may be a piece of stone, you may be a tree, you may be a star, you may be a ocean. So you cover everything.

That is how we practice zazen when-before you attain enlightenment. Actually, enlightenment is, you know-will be there only before you attain enlightenment, or just before [laughs]. You will say-if you say, "I attained enlightenment," you know, it is too late to say [laughs, laughter]. You should say, you know, you should say before smallest particle of time imaginable, if you want to say [laughs]. But if you cannot say, maybe better to be silent. Better not to say anything.

So to talk about enlightenment is rather, you know [laughs], foolish-rather foolish. But sometime we have to talk about it in this way until we lose our, you know, "eyebrow" [laughs]. You know, to talk about it is to lose our eyebrow, you know-to lose ourselves.[3] Instead of being ourselves. In this sense, we say "be yourself" to be natural. If you say, "This is the way to be natural," you know, that is not natural [taps table]. Only when you are you in its true sense, on this moment, at this place, that is "naturalness." So there will not be any particular way to be "natural."

For me, you know, to be here right now is naturalness. And to wear robe is naturalness. And to shave my head is naturalness, as a priest [laughs]. In this way, we should-our practice-we should practice our way and we should remember this. It is not so easy [laughs] to be natural. Not so easy.

If we have, you know-in our practice if we have a smallest gap, you know, we will, you know, fall into hell. So our practice should be, you know, continued. Continuous practice is necessary. And we should not, you know, rest. We should continue it, if possible, without trying to, you know, continue it. Just, you know, to have generous mind and big mind and soft mind is how to continue our way. And we should be always

flexible, you know. We should-we should not be-stick to anything.

I will not repeat same thing over and over again [laughs, laughter]. I think this is enough. To change our topic or angle of understanding, if you have some question, please ask me. Hai.

Student A: You said when we had the smallest "something," we will fall into hell. I didn't understand-

Suzuki-roshi: Smallest. Yeah.

Student A: -what word you used.

Student B: It sounded like "cup."

Audience: "Gap."

Student B: "Gap."

Suzuki-roshi: "Gap," yeah. Gap, yeah. But gap between our effort, rather-rather than gap-our gap of our-gap between our efforts. It is, you know, to be more-we say "soft mind," you know. It is, at the same time, it is big mind, you know, because we do not stick to anything. We do not see things objectively as something good or bad, or strong or weak because, you know, we are strong enough to accept things as it is. So for us who have big mind there is no need to be afraid of anything. But we do not ignore anything. That is strictness of the way.

When we are not afraid of anything, that will be unperturbability [imperturbability]. And the effort-when the effort is understood by him, you know, to the point that is simplicity, there is no need for him to make his effort in various direction, you know. The only way is just to be yourself on each moment. Our only way is to be concentrated on what you do, completely. [Sentence appears to have been finished. Tape turned over.]

... whatever it is, you know. In that way, if you understand our way in that way, that is simplicity. And if it, you know-when the feeling of practice could be extended various way, that is the, maybe, the beauty of the practice. Here we have simplicity and variety of feeling of practice. Simple and rich. Strong and weak. Strong and kind. This is, you know, our practice. So you cannot say what is our practice-it-because it could be various virtue. It is not-it should not be so difficult [laughs], but it is difficult, you know. That is our way. So you cannot say our way is quite easy [laughs]. Or you cannot say our way is very difficult. It is not difficult at all. Everyone can do it, but to continue it is rather difficult. Don't you think so? [Laughs, laughter.] You agree with this point [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Tanya Takacs  
and  
Bill Redican (2/23/01).

[1] Tendo Nyojo (Tiantong Rujing): 1163-1228. Chan master; teacher of Eihei Dogen.

[2] From Ts'ung-jung lu (J. Shoyoroku, E. Book of Serenity), Case 79: "Changsha Advancing a Step": "Climb one step beyond the top of the hundred-foot pole. The whole world in the ten directions is revealed." See also SR-69-04-29 and SR-69-06-17.

[3] "He is making reference to a lecture by Rev. Yashimuro [Yoshimura?] on a koan." [Footnote is by original transcriber. Suzuki-roshi may also be referring to the mirror parable in the Shurangama-sutra-see SR-69-07-30.]

#### **4 - Bodhisattva's Vow**

Tuesday, April 29, 1969

##### Bodhisattva's Vow

This morning I want to explain how to take our bodhisattva's vow. We say "bodhisattva's vow," but actually this is not only Mahayana Buddhist vow but also all the Buddhist vow. When we say Mahayana, we also-it means that something-usually it means that the something superior teaching in contrast with Hinayana. But this is-may not be real understanding. According to Dogen-zenji, this is not right understanding, to say "Hinayana" or "Mahayana."

From the beginning of-the Agama-sutra[1] is supposed to be the oldest sutra-Buddhist sutra, but even in Agama-sutra this kind of thought is there. [It] says, Shujo muhen-"Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them." [2] Why Buddha, you know, come to this-came to this world is to save sentient beings. Usually those who do not believe in Buddhism comes to come to this world because of karma. But for Buddhist-for Buddha, he did not come to this world because of the karma.

In Agama-sutra, they say Buddha passed away by his own choice. And because he finished his task, he-because he has nothing to do more in this world, he took nirvana, it says. When he finished, you know, his task he took nirvana. It means that already [the] purpose of his coming

to this world is to save sentient beings or to help others. So if that is, you know, the reason why he come to this world if he finish his task-when he finished his task, there is no reason why he should stay in this world. So he took nirvana.

So underlying thought [is] already to help others, to save sentient beings. Usually, you know, Mahayana Buddhist denounced Hinayana Buddhism. Only Mahayana-Hinayana Buddhist just practice our way to help themselves, not to help others. That is what they say, but actually when they say in Agama-sutra that he took nirvana because he finished his task in this world, it means that already he came to this world to save others. And [in] various Hinayana-so-called-it Hinayana sutra, we find this kind of thought everywhere. Anyway, those vows are supposed to be Mahayana-Bodhisattva's vow or Mahayana vow, but it is actually-those four vows actually [are a] vow for all Buddhists. All Buddhists should have this vow.

To take vow is very important. To believe in Buddhism means to take vow. If you don't take vow, life will be life of karma. Only when we take vow, we-our life is life of Buddhist. And how to take vow is with-should be ex- [partial word]-may be the most important point. How to take vow.

Another reason Mahayana Buddhist denounce Hinayana-so-called-it Hinayana Buddhist is they are rigidly caught by precepts or teaching or what was told in scriptures. And they have no freedom from precepts or teaching. That is another reason why we denounce-why Mahayana-so-called-it Mahayana, Buddhist denounce Hinayana Buddhist.

But when Buddhism [was] started by Buddha, there was Maha- [partial word]-there were-there was not much difference between-actually, Buddhism was Mahayana. So if I dare to say, that was Mahayana. And why Maha- [partial word]-so-called-it Mahayana Buddhist arise was mainly Buddhist teaching of Buddhism or teaching of Buddhism became more and more concrete or caught by concrete idea of some particular teaching or some precepts. And they rigidly try to stick to the teaching. At first it was they respected the teaching too much and preserved-trying to preserve teaching, and that was the purpose of the priest especially. And this kind of effort result [in] very rigid understanding of precepts or teaching. So when, for an instance, they had-they-at first, Buddha did not have no idea of setting up precepts. And some-when someone do something wrong, Buddha just said, "That is not right. Why don't you do it this way?" That was the precept-the original precept. So there was no precepts in term of "Don't do-this is a precepts all the Buddhist should keep."

But when we count precepts in-like Ten Precepts-Ten Prohibitory Precepts, it is, you know-we feel as if we-if we fail to observe those Ten Precepts, you know-if you miss-if you cannot [if you violate] even one of the ten, you will not be the good Buddhist. So the purpose of precepts,



receiving-taking vow or taking precepts is just to, you know, observe those things literally. That is maybe the usual way of understanding of precepts. But a true purpose of precepts is not just to observe precepts so that you can attain enlightenment.

Why we observe precepts or why we take vow is to actualize Buddha's spirit-Buddha spirit. So to take vow I, you know, this is the way: "Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them." The sentient being are numberless, you know-if it is numberless, you know, how is it possible to save them? [Laughs.] Same thing will be true with keeping precepts, you know. We should not kill: We should not take life without reason. "Without reason" is, you know, extra, you know. Without reason-we shouldn't say "without reason." We should just say, "You should not kill." [Taps table four times.] That is enough, you know.

When you fell into the idea of more usual, you know, secular understanding of precepts, you should say, "without reason" [laughs], if it means that if there is some reason, we can kill. By saying so we are making some excuse to kill. But why we have to make this kind of excuse is because you think the purpose of keeping precepts or taking vow is to attain enlightenment. And if you do not kill, or do not observe precepts, or do not take vow, you will not be a Buddhist or you will not attain enlightenment.

But purpose of-if you understand the purpose of observing the precepts is-precepts is to arise buddha-mind, then when you say "I will not kill," at that moment you have buddha-mind. There is no need to think, "I have to keep or observe precepts or vow forever." Even though-actually we don't know what we will do in next moment [laughs]. It is very difficult to know, to be sure about our future. But even it is so right now "I will not kill!" That is enough to arise buddha-mind. Even though it is not possible to save all sentient beings, but moment after moment if you say, "I must save all sentient being"-then you have buddha-mind.

So to arise-to be a Buddhist, moment after moment, we take vow. So it is not necessary to think about whether this is possible or not. When you take vow or when you keep precepts in this way, your way is already is not Buddhist way. You are fell into the superficial practice of "you should do" or "you should not," or "you should take vow" or "you shouldn't take vow." To take vow is to observe our way. So this is one of the way-many ways to practice our way, like zazen practice.

So "Sentient beings are numberless": Maybe, you know, it means that sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them moment after moment, continuously. But "moment after moment, continuously" is not necessary. "I vow to save them" is strong enough and good enough. "I vow to save them." If the sentient beings are numberless, we will take this vow numberless times, that's all [laughs]. In this way, we feel another, you know, quite-feeling of quite different quality. We feel the eternal practice of our way, of our Buddhist way. So that it is-"Sentient

beings are numberless" means that our practice is-will continue forever.

"Desires are inexhaustible. I vow to put an end to them." [3] If our-the purpose of keeping precepts is to annihilate our desires. This vow is con-[partial word]-not possible, contradiction. But if the purpose of vow is to arise our buddha-mind, then it makes sense. The "inexhaustible" is some-gives us some encouragement, and we can continue our practice forever. And we-we will have firm confidence in our practice which continue forever. So we will be encouraged by this vow forever.

"The dharma is boundless. I vow to master them." [4] Here it says also "boundless," the boundless dharma. I vow to master it. So our vow will continue forever, and we-we can believe in our boundless dhamma. [5]

"The Buddha's way is unsurpassable. I vow to attain it." [6] The same thing will be true with this vow.

In this way, we should take vow and we should keep our precepts. When you receive precepts, you know, you say, "I will," you know, "keep it," you say. When I give you precepts, you say, "I will keep it." It is not even promise. When you say, "I will do it," by words that is how you keep precepts. "I will do it." That's enough.

But you [laughs]-you may think, you know, when you don't know, you can [how can you?] keep the precepts. To say "I will keep it" is, you know, not so conscientious, you may say. When you take the precepts in that way, or when you receive precepts in that way, you are not receiving precepts in its true sense as Buddha expected. Why don't you say, "Yes, I will do it." [Hits table several times.] That is what Buddha wanted you to say. That's all. And whether you can keep it, you know, in next moment or next day is not the point. Do you understand? So it not so-it is not difficult at all to receive precepts. We say so-so we say, to receive precepts is to arise buddha-mind. To receive or to give precepts is to arise buddha-mind at that moment. It is not matter of keeping precepts literally or not. To arise buddha-nature, buddha-mind [we say], "I will do it!"-you know. That's enough.

You know, when you say "I will not say so because I don't know whether I can do it or not," that is maybe a kind of arrogance, which is the enemy of Buddhist. People may say, you know, people who is not so conscientious may say, "I will do it." But a person like me who is very conscientious will not say [laughs], "I will keep it." You see? Big arrogance is there [laughs]. Anyway, you know, you say-when you say, "I will keep it!"-you know, there is no arrogance. There is soft mind, which we Buddhist expect is there when you say, "I will do it. At least I try to do it." And "try to do it" will not be so good, you know. "I will DO it!" [laughs], you should say. "I will try to do it" is you are hesitating. "I will do it" is like to jump into the ocean. "I will do it!" Then there is no trouble.

The other day I told you about to climb up the top of the pole and to jump off the top of the pole. [7] We say-usually we say to climb up the top of the pole is easy but it is difficult to jump off from it. I don't think this is true [laughs]. To climb up, you know, to the top of the, you know, pole is difficult, but to jump off from it is not difficult. The way is just so say, "I will do it!" [Laughs.] When you think which is easier, you know, to climb up to the top of the pole or to jump off from the top of the pole, which is easier? [Laughs, laughter.] When you-because you are thinking that way, it is difficult. When you don't think, when you trust Buddha, and when you say, "I will do it!" that is way-easy way.

We are liable to be caught by something we see or something we experience, and we liable to compare one experience to the other and say which is difficult. So you say to climb up, you know, to the top of the pole is difficult-too easy in comparison to jump off from the pole [which is] not so difficult, but to jump off is very difficult. But you shouldn't say so [laughs]-or because you say so, because you think so, because you compare the experience of jumping off from the pole to the experience to climb up, you hesitate to do so. So how you keep this-those-how you keep precepts or how you take vow, four vow, is to-to do it, you know, without being involved in some idea of vow or practice or precepts.

In Japan, Buddhist receive precepts-we say jukai-and everyone says, "I will keep it." [Laughs.] And when I was young, you know, I thought this is nonsense. [Laughs.] How they keep precepts, you know? When they go home have to eat eggs, meat, even they eat rice, that is living being. They are killing everything as long as they live. How is it possible to say, you know, "I will keep it. I will not kill"? But later, you know, I was struck by them when they say, "I will keep it." [I thought], "Oh, that is the way," you know, "to keep precepts."

In this way, we should take vow-Mahayana vow. This is the way the Buddha's disciples-direct Buddha's disciples took vow. Later, you know, Buddhism became more and more idealistic or more rigid, and we lost the important point. Those things is not something which we should be told. Actually we are doing-we are leading our life in this way. If you observe carefully our everyday life, we are actually doing so-doing in this way. When we understand our life in some sophisticated way [laughs], you get into trouble.

So if you want to study our way, we must not forget this point. It is necessary to study, of course, but in your study if you lose this point, your knowledge or your study will not work. You cannot own your knowledge in its true sense.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker.  
Checked by Bill Redican (2/23/01).

[1] Agama-sutras (Jap. Agon-gyo): A collection of four Sanskrit sutras roughly corresponding to the Pali Nikaya. The Agamas form the basis of Hinayana teachings.

[2] Shujo muhen seigando: "Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them"-the first line of the four-line vow traditionally chanted after lecture.

[3] The second line of the four-line vow traditionally chanted after lecture.

[4] The third line of the four-line vow traditionally chanted after lecture.

[5] Suzuki-roshi used the Pali pronunciation.

[6] The fourth line of the four-line vow traditionally chanted after lecture.

[7] From Ts'ung-jung lu (J. Shoyoroku, E. Book of Serenity), Case 79: "Changsha Advancing a Step": "Climb one step beyond the top of the hundred-foot pole. The whole world in the ten directions is revealed." See also SR-69-04-20 and SR-69-06-17.

## **1969 mei (1)**

### **1 - Suzuki-Roshi's 65th Birthday**

Sunday, May 18, 1969

Suzuki-Roshi's 65th Birthday  
Soko-ji, San Francisco

I don't know what to say. I am already 65 years old. Today I became 65. And I am-in one way, I am very-I feel very good to become older. And on the other hand, I regret, you know, for my past practice. Not regret-I am not so regret-regretful, but reason why I am not so regretful is we have now pretty sincere students here in America. That is big encouragement for me. Why I am regretful is-on the other hand, why I am regretful is because I am not so good teacher for you, because of my past practice. I try to be sincere, but I find now that I was not sincere enough [laughs]. That is my feeling. So I don't know what to say [laughs].

But let us, anyway, have more sincere practice. Even though you think you are sincere, [you] may not be sincere enough. That will-that will be

how you feel when you become old.

You know Joshu,[1] famous Zen master Joshu-he joined-or he attained enlightenment when he was eighteen, and he was practicing hard until he was sixty. And after sixty he started new practice, making trip to visit various famous Zen masters. And he never sit in perfect chair like this. His chair was always broken-he sit always on broken chair, mending, you know, the chair by piece of wood and rope, like this [probably gesturing].

I think that is true spirit of Zen master or priest. The image of the priest you have and image of priest we have may be something different. For us, Fuyo Dokai[2] or Joshu is the best example for us. With great spirit and with humble life, they strived for the truth. So what I feel is I wish I could, you know, make a trip to visit various teachers. So far, I had so busy days when I was in Japan. I was too busy. In America, for a while I was not so busy. I enjoy [laughs] American life here. But now I feel pretty busy. So actually I have no time to visit various teachers.

To Tassajara I am lucky to have, but I am lucky to have good teachers visiting Tassajara. But if I could make a trip, you know, it may be much better: with-as a unknown priest to visit-unknown humble priest, you know, and to ask question and to receive instruction. In this way they studied.

Joshu said: "If someone is good I will study under him. If I am better, I shall be a teacher, wherever I go. Whether he is old or young is not point," Joshu said. So we should be always equal, you know. If you know better than I, you should teach me. If I know something which you don't know, we should-I should teach you. In this way, we should practice our way.

We have many teach- [partial word]-students now. That is, I think, very good. But it is difficult for me to take care of you, because you are so many [laughs]. I don't know what to do with so many students. I am thinking always [about] that point. And while I was in bed, what I thought was it may be better for us to be concentrated on more simple practice. The most-I think the most simple practice is counting breathing practice: suzoka [?]. This is very old style of practice. That-this practice was for Hinayana Buddhist and for Mahayana Buddhist and for Bodhidharma's zazen and for various teachers' practice. And which is very simple and-but which is pretty difficult: just to count from one to ten, over and over. [Laughs.] That is practice.

From old time, many people tried this way. Just counting inhaling only, or exhaling only, or both inhaling and exhaling. Can you hear me? Inhaling and exhaling. So there are three ways. So you can try, you know, any of those three ways. I try-I am practicing on counting exhaling only. And I want you to, you know, try this practice more. I think you started-you have tried already, but before you can complete it

[laughs]-many people asked me, so far: "I tried counting breathing practice for one year. So maybe the time to start-how about just following," you know, "our breathing, without counting? Just follow the breathing."

So-but I-I always said okay. [Laughs, laughter.] But I think I was not so kind to you. I know he-he couldn't, you know-for-even though he tried one year, he may not be able to, you know, to do it. Why he says is-that is because he lose-he forget to count [laughs], maybe, you know. So many times he forget counting, or he may go from ten, eleven, twelve [laughs, laughter], thirteen, fourteen-and forget. Maybe forget sometime. So that is why he said-that was the reason why he said: "It may be better just to follow our breathing" [laughs].

So I-I said [it] be all right. But recently I don't think so [laughs]. We have to-we should be able to do it. After you are able to do it, you should start another practice, one by one. In that way we should practice. That is very interesting. When you are too tired, you cannot do that. And when you are too much involved in something, specially, you cannot also do it. For an instance, at Tassajara, like Paul,[3] who is always thinking about building [laughs], his practice will be always, you know, building practice [laughs]. I think that is not so good. I-I see something wrong, you know, with their everyday life when he is, you know, involved in something specially, forgetting all about our practice.

If we-if we ignore this point, Tassajara will not go smoothly and you will not be friendly with each other. Someone may be, you know, involved in building. Someone may be completely involved in office work or kitchen work, and someone may be involved in pure practice. So there is no, you know, common practice for us. So we should not lose the fundamental practice. I noticed this point recently.

And especially older student-old students is not so good for their practice-zazen practice. This is serious [laughs] matter for Zen Center. The reason why is not because our practice is not mature, but we are not sincere enough for-in our practice. So every one of us-for every one of us, the most important point should be our practice. As long as they enter zendo, they should practice our zazen sincerely. And we should be involved-we should devote ourself for beginner's practice like counting breathing.

We say "koan zazen"- "koan Zen," or "shikantaza," but, you know, that is only-in its strict sense, koan Zen or shikantaza is for very advanced students, not for us. Before we can practice koan Zen or shikantaza, we should be able to practice counting breathing practice and-or following breathing practice. This is very-which is very close to shikantaza: just follow our breathing. And then, maybe, we can say our practice is shikantaza.

The people say Soto Zen is "sleepy [laughs] zazen." Soto priest, even

though their posture is good, but they are sleepy. That is true [laughs, laughter]. We become easily sleepy-especially, you know, when we are completely involved in some heavy-physically heavy work or when we are want of sleep.

And to count breathing is-if you count your breathing, you will easily notice that you are not taking care of your everyday life. So if you-if you find out some physical reason, or some reason why you cannot do that, you will notice the reason why, and you can organize your everyday life more. That is the one advantage-one of the advantage of monastic practice. If you are in Tassajara, you are comparatively in good situation. Although those things looks like very minor problem, but actually, if we ignore this point, even though you try to achieve something great, you will not be able to do it.

In Japan, you know, they-scholars and teachers study Zen from various angle-Zen and Buddhism from various angle. But if they ignore those points, it may be like counting sand-counting sands of Ganges. It doesn't work at all [laughs]. They will create more problems [laughs]. So Buddhism will be lost. I think this is very serious problem.

But before I think we talk about or worry about those things, we should do-do it, you know. We should practice real practice, without counting others' treasure, you know. It doesn't, you know, mean anything to count someone's treasure.

So let's start, you know, counting breathing practice, you know, with all of us. I-I think I will go to Tassajara again next month-first, maybe, fourth or-third or fourth. We have two more weeks, so we will be concentrated on our counting breathing practice.

I have not much things to say for this morning, but I thought I must ask you-it might be very good idea to ask you to be concentrated on this counting breathing practice. One by one, in this way, we will solve our problems. You made a great progress, actually, but, on the other hand, there is some, you know, danger in it.

So we must, you know, step by step, we must make mule step [laughs]. Better than horse, maybe. The cow step is best for-for us, but that is too slow for American people [laughs, laughter]. Let's make our, you know, practice sure, you know. Sure and steady.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (11/10/00).

[1] Zhaozhou Congshen (Joshu Jushin): 778-897. Disciple of Nansen Fugan.

[2] Furong Daokai(Fuyo Dokai): 1043-1118. Disciple of Tosu Gisei. Furong was known for renewing the monastic standards of the Caodong-zong school of Chan Buddhism. Dogen commended him for refusing either to wear elaborate robes or to accept imperial honors.

[3] Almost certainly Paul Discoe.

## **1969 juni (3)**

### **1 - Find Yourself Mentally and Physically**

Sunday, June 01, 1969

Find Yourself Mentally and Physically  
Tassajara

A famous Chinese Zen master, Yakusan,[1] did not give lectures for a long time. So his student asked him to give a lecture. So he came to lecture hall and mounted the altar, and sitting on the altar for a while, and came back to his room without saying anything. And his jisha asked him why he didn't give them lecture-some talk. Yakusan said: "I am a Zen master. So if you want-if you want to listen to lecture, you should go to some-some other master, like some Buddhist philosopher or someone who knows many scriptures. But I am Zen master, so you should know that I am Zen master," he said.

Last night Reverend Katagiri[2] was talking about how we should make our effort. When we say "to make some effort," [it] means to make effort with some goal or with some aim. For many hundreds of years, especially after Renaissance, we human being are involved in how to make our life easier and happy. So we are involved in scientific research. And to make effort means to find out some-to be involved in some scientific research, or to make freeway, or to work, to find a job, to earn some money, and to make our life happier-mostly in materialistic way.

So "to make effort" means, I think-mostly, we understand in that way. But to make effort or to study something means-does not mean that kind of study like the student of Yakusan who asked him to give some lecture.

While I was in bed for maybe two, three months, I found very difficult to put myself-to put my body on my bed. I tried various way, but it was pretty difficult. To lie on bed looks like very easy thing, but actually, you know, if you stay in bed so long time it is not so easy.



So how to, you know, find yourself physically and mentally is not so easy a thing. But when you are involved in something, you forget that point. And you are always running after something, to get something, to gain something, without finding yourself in right position.

Of course, we must work as long as we live in this world, which is organized in very materialistic way. It is necessary to work with this-in this sense. But more important thing is to find ourselves physically and mentally in right position. You may say to sleep on bed-in bed is not work [laughs]. It is most important work for us, in its true sense. To, you know, to work-to walk on the floor, you know, is very important work. You will find out important it is, you know, when you are hardly walk [work?]. To go to rest room is very important thing. If you cannot go to rest room, what will happen to you? The most important thing. But you don't think that is so important: those activity like to cook something in the kitchen, or to rinse your mouth as soon as you get up, or to get up at right time in right way. Those activities are ignored, or we don't pay any attention to those activities. Zen students put empha-[partial word]-put-pay mostly, you know, attention to those things. And, moment after moment, to find ourselves physically and mentally, is how to attain liberation.

What we do, you know, for an instance, to sit in this cross-legged position like this. And we, you know, pay utmost attention to, you know, our posture. It means that we find ourselves, moment after moment, what will be the best position right now. That is how we make effort.

So why we sit is not actually to attain enlightenment. To sit to attain enlightenment is something heretic [laughs] practice. When you, you know, without paying attention in your posture or in your state of mind, to seek for some other thing or to be involved in a gaining idea, forgetting our physical-physically and mentally our present life is not true zazen. What we do looks like very formal, you know. But it is not actually formality in its usual sense. When we pay best attention in our activity, moment after moment, naturally we will be formal, and we will be very careful in treating things, in acting, and in doing various things.

So in this sense, to bow to Buddha or to drive your car doesn't make much-any difference. If you do-when you-you have this kind of life, we say we have complete freedom because we are always amidst the center of the cosmic being, without being involved in anything else. We are-we are boss of everything. We are doing things for ourselves. Each one of us doing things for each one's own sake, and we are independent from everything. That is complete freedom, complete liberty.

So each one of us must have his own, you know, domain or castle. And we always try not to disturb others' life, but to help other's practice. That is true relationship, one to the other. We treat things not to destroy their own nature-nature of being. So we treat things very

carefully. Nothing is-everything has its own buddha-nature. So we should respect everything and treat everything in that way. That is our attitude to treat things.

But usually, you know, we treat things for- [partial word]-forgetting all about the true nature of things, and [we] abuse things for our own sake. Animals and vegetables are raised for benefit of human being [laughs]. This is very, you know, very shallow, very egoistic, ego-centered way of observing things, way of treating things. But mostly it-it is quite usual for people to use things in that way or to treat even your friend in that way.

That is difference Reverend Katagiri was talking [about] last night: the difference between usual effort and our effort. Our effort is-should be-our right effort should be continued incessantly, without any gap. Carried on forever. That is what we mean [by] to make right effort. Not-not only people-nowadays people or-not only non-Buddhist but also Buddhist and especially even priest has been involved in this kind of-Buddhist priest has been involved in this kind of wrong activity for a long time, I think-I am afraid. So I think now people already begin to realize what we have been doing for a long, long time. And they started to-to be aware of-started to realize their wrong effort.

I think we must be concentrated in-to concentrated in some kind of effort which is quite different-which has quite different quality-quite different meaning. You will realize exactly what Buddha meant when he said: "You should make great effort to attain liberation and to continue our sincere effort-to continue our true effort." And so he explains mostly about our wrong effort, what is-what we are doing actually, and what kind of disaster we will have by our wrong effort. He points out what is wrong with us-with our eye [?]. That is Buddha's teaching.

And actually, what is right effort is very difficult to explain. So to realize our mistake and to start to find out how to behave-how to make our right effort will be our-our practice. This kind of practice also will be continued forever. And way we behave, way we do, should be always renewed according to the time [and] according to the place you live. On each situation we must find how to live [and] how to practice our way. This is right effort.

First of all, we should know that we are involved in-most people are involved in wrong effort.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (1/24/01).

[1] Yaoshan Weiyan (Yakusan Igen): 751-834. Dharma successor of Sekito Kisen. Master of Ungan, Sensu, and Dogo. This story is Case 7 of the Ts'ung-jung lu (Jap. Shoyoroku, Book of Serenity) collection of koans. Another version is reproduced in A. Ferguson, *Zen's Chinese Heritage*, Boston: Wisdom, 2000, p. 109. See also SR-71-08-08 and SR-68-10-12-A.

[2] Dainin Katagiri-roshi (1928-1990): Japanese Soto Zen master who first came to the United States in 1963. He was Suzuki-roshi's close colleague in the early years of San Francisco Zen Center, and he later established the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center.

## **2 - Everyday Zazen**

Tuesday, June 17, 1969

Everyday Zazen  
San Francisco

...[1] Just to-just to practice zazen, you know, will not be perfect enough. So more and more I want to make our rule strict and maybe formal and rigid, or else [laughs], you know, you will waste your time, I think. How should we establish our system of practice in San Francisco is-will be our future subject.

I started to explain, you know, the way upward and way downwards-or to help others or-and to-or help yourself: to climb up [to] the top of the pole and to come down from the top of the pole. This is rather fancy, you know, more advanced practice. So it may be-it may not be necessary for you actually to explain this point, but it may be important for us to understand or to know what kind of practice you will have after you enter our practice hall.

And only when you actually started our true practice in our zendo, that practice will be extended in your everyday life. And this evening I want to, you know, explain this point more: how to develop our everyday zazen-our zazen practice to our everyday life, because to follow rigid practice does not mean Zen is always, you know, to-to follow rigid rituals or rigid practice is Zen.

It is necessary for you to get through that road-that door, but that is just door. So to make-I want to explain what I-kind of practice you will have after you enter the door, or else no one will come to Zen Center [laughs] if I-if you say, "Just to follow the rigid practice is the-Zen. And Zen Center way is just to sit-come and sit at certain time and to follow teacher's instruction, very formal-which is very formal." Then no one will come to Zen Center, I am afraid. So I want to explain little bit, you know, about this point, as much as possible.

It is rather difficult, you know, to explain what is not possible to explain, but as much as I can, I want to explain it-referring to several koan-at least one or two koan.

"Climbing up the top of the pole-this is-and step forward one step for-[partial word]-make-to make one step forward from it"-is very famous koan,[2] and many teachers explaining about it.

And for Soto priest-for Soto students, the most we have a story, you know: "Four Kinds of Horse." Do you the story of "Four Kinds of Horse"? [3]

The horse, you know, which will run at the shade of the whip-before he get the whip. And the next one is-as soon as the whip reach to its hair, you know, he may start to run. That is the second one. And third one is, you know, when he felt the pain on his skin, he will run. That is the third one. The fourth one is-fourth one will not run until the pain penetrate into the-into the marrow of the bone. Shht! [Makes sound like a whip cracking, laughs, laughter.] Then he will start to run [laughs.] That is, you know-the whip, by "whip" we mean the teaching of evanescence of life-teaching of evanescence of life. Or teaching that everything changes. There is nothing to stick to. There is nothing to care for, in its true sense, because everything is changing. That is, you know, the Buddha's-the most important teaching.

But-many Buddhists from ancient times, to understand this teaching, they studied various scriptures and practiced hard. But Dogen-zenji says, you know, that is not something to study [laughs], he says. It is actual fact which you see every day. No one can stay always young. Nothing is always same. Everything is changing, including you. That is actual fact you see. That is not something which you will study after reading many books. So if you really, you know, suffer-if you have a lot of suffering in your everyday life, you will actually, you know, feel the most important teaching of Buddhism-that everything changes, there is nothing to stick to.

But nowadays, you know, our system of the world, or society, is based on [laughs] to develop our desire, to stick to something, you know, to gain something. And we study many things just to develop our greedy desires. And our knowledge of science cannot stay as a science-scientific study. Scientific research is always a result-some improvement by doing something, by making some machine. As soon as we know it is possible to reach the moon, you know, we actually try to do it.[4]

So our, you know, study is not just intellectual study or scientific study. It is directly-it is directly connected with our desire. And everything-every system of our society is based on this kind of desire, without knowing what is human nature in its true sense, but to desire to see something, to gain something in its-not only some subject to study, but

also some concrete way of achieving something.

This is what we are doing, actually. And we are, you know-every one of us is deeply or completely involved in this kind of activity-social activity. But we never, you know, try to understand what is ourselves, what is our true nature. And even a student, Zen students who want to study ourselves through and through is included-is involved in this kind of idea of study-way of study.

By practicing zazen, you know, you want to attain enlightenment. But that enlightenment must be very concrete, you know. Something-if you can fly, you know. If you cannot fly you don't think you attained enlightenment. [Laughs, laughter.] Or if you feel very good, you don't think you attained enlightenment. So [laughs] the effort to attain enlightenment is another way of developing your desire. To go to Japan. To know what kind of thing he is thinking, you know. Or without asking someone any question, to know what kind of mind he has, you know. That is a kind of power of enlightenment. And many people seek for that kind of enlightenment.

So maybe none of us, you know, none of us are really practicing true zazen. Before we stop try[ing] to find out something from outside, we cannot start our true practice. You may ask me how, you know, to practice. But it is rather difficult to say in its positive way-in positive way. But negative way, I can give you various suggestions.

And in-then, I think, Zen Center is not just for priest. And it is for layman, too. Most of us-you will be a student who want to study our way as a layman, I think. So it is-it may be rather difficult to follow our way as a layman-but even for one year or more, not, you know, forever. I think it is necessary to follow our practice as long as you come to Zen Center. And our way-although our way is not just for priest but to-to know, to realize what is our practice it is necessary for you to follow our way as much as possible.

I don't want to tell you what kind of idea I have right now, you know [laughs]. But some change should be done, or else we are too many. So we must organize or set up some system for you, I think.

And how you apply our practice-our practice in your everyday life is, in short: in your everyday life, the most important thing is to be involved in-completely involved in what you are doing. And to do something-just to-to do something as a means of gaining something else-you should do things for sake of-as a practice, as you practice zazen.

In your zazen, just to practice zazen is purpose of practice. You practice zazen for the sake of zazen. And we say: We practice zazen not for others, not for ourselves. We practice zazen just for sake of practice. That is true practice.

And that practice could be the practice to save others and to save yourself, to help yourself and to help others, and to develop Buddha's way. But when you do it, you have no idea of doing something. You should be completely involved in your practice, and you will be-you must be able to do it. That is, in short, how to extend our practice in your everyday life.

To attain enlightenment-even though you attain enlightenment-in Rinzai, you know, you will-you must attain enlightenment innumerable time. [Laughs.] And you have to have big enlightenment two-three times. That is what they say. And in Soto, we should continue our practice forever. How we continue our practice is to be involved in what you are doing right now. If you are counting, you should count, you know. And if you are doing something with your mind, your mind should be always with what you are doing. Just as, when you sit, you just sit without thinking anything. But in your activity, you act or you think, so you should be completely involved in your thinking mind.

For [laughs]-for, you know-for maybe ten days or more, I was completely involved in thinking, you know. In one thinking. I was concentrated, you know, how to-what to-what kind of-which way we should take as a Zen Center group, you know. This way or that way. [Laughs.] I was completely involved in that idea. So I didn't know that I was completely involved in that thinking, but my wife told me many things. "You say [laughs] when you do something you should be completely involved in it, but look what you did! [Laughs, laughter.] What you are doing? What do you do-when you go to restroom?! [Laughs, laughter]" But, you know, I didn't say anything. [Laughs, laughter.] I cannot say anything, because I have-because I feel I have to go to restroom, that is why I went to restroom. But actually I didn't have any idea of going restroom, or where I was [laughs, laughter], you know-restroom and dining room, you know, were same to me. But, you know, I was completely involved in one thing only.

So it is rather difficult to say how you should be-how you should extend your practice in your everyday activity. But actually, you know, in short, your life, you know, should be always-instead of complete combustion, you know-you shouldn't be idle, you know. And when-to be idle-to think about something, you know, or try to think, "I must read this book," is-means still you are idle, you know. You are hesitating to read it. "I have to study," mean you are still hesitating to study. "I must go to Soko-ji and practice zazen"-that-it means that you are still involved in some lazy mind. When you are completely involved in it, without knowing you-your foot, you know, your body will be carried to the zazen practice hall. So you have-you will not have any regret afterwards, what you have done, if you [are] completely, you know, involved in it. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Why it is difficult for us to continue this kind of practice is because of our self-centered desires. And we should always know this point, and we

should always try to give up this kind of self-centered desire after you-even after you attain enlightenment. If you notice this point, whether you are Rinzai student or Soto student, you will start real practice, which Dogen point out. The practice which is one with enlightenment. And in this practice there is no difference between Rinzai and Soto. Just before you enter-the approach is different-just before you enter the meditation hall, there are Rinzai students and Soto students. After you enter our hall, there is no difference at all.

There are various kinds of words to explain this idea of oneness of practice and enlightenment. Soto, you know, students always say "oneness of the practice and enlightenment." But this is one-one of the many ways of explaining our true practice. "To jump off from the top of the pole" is the same idea. Or "to kill Buddha." [5] This is rather [laughs] extraordinary word: "to kill Buddha." Killing-Buddha practice. It means that after you enter the buddha hall, you should be, you know, completely involved in your pure practice. You have no idea of buddhahood, what is buddhahood, or whether you are ordinal [ordinary] person or buddha.

So we say-they say, "Kill the Buddha!" After you attain enlightenment, you must kill the Buddha. You shouldn't have any idea of enlightenment. So you have to kill the idea of enlightenment. I have-you have to forget all about the idea of enlightenment. That is "Kill the Buddha." So when you have no idea of enlightenment, you know, there is no difference between Buddhist or non-Buddhist. When you have no idea of Buddha, you know, you are not Buddhist because you have no idea of Buddha.

The difference between, you know, Buddhist and non-Buddhist is Buddhist has-true Buddhist has no idea of buddha or layman. But ordinal [ordinary] people has-stick to the idea of buddha and laymen or ordinal [ordinary] people. That is the difference. So they may, you know, start to-they may start to come to zazen. But after he enter the buddha hall, he shouldn't have any idea of attainment in their practice. Even though, you know, he enter the buddha hall, as long as his, you know-his practice is involved in attaining enlightenment before he attained enlightenment, then he is not spiritually Bud- [partial word]-true Buddhist. That is the difference. But both-some ordinal [ordinary] people has no idea of buddhahood-what is buddhahood and what is ordinal [ordinary] people.

As Buddhist who knows what is our true practice has no idea of Buddha or ordinal [ordinary] people because he-he forget all about the idea [of] Buddha who is helping others. And no idea of people who wants Buddha's help. But Buddhist will continuously trying to help others forever. That is, you know, way, you know. That is his own practice to help himself. And that is also the way to help others. So there is no two ways. When you are able to extend our practice in your everyday life to help others and to continue your practice for your own sake, you know, [it is] the same thing. Not different at all.

So two way-way upwards and way downwards is the same. So actually, as I said, there is no point-no top of the pole. We should-what we should do is continuously keep on-keep going on and on. That is our way. When we realize this point-so some people may say "to jump off from the top of the pole" means to attain enlightenment. And "forget the top of the pole" is to jump off from the pole. Some people may understand in that way. But actually, when-after you jump off from the pole, you start, you know, real practice. Before you climb up to the pole-top of the pole, that is-was not true practice.

So to climb up to the top of the pole means, for Soto student, you know, to enter zendo after you see the-all the notice, you know, on the bulletin board. "Okay!" [Laughs, laughter] You may say, "Oh my! Anyway, I will do it." That is to enter-to climb up the top of the pole. Not, you know, step by step-all of a sudden! Rrrr! [Makes a mocking roar.] [Laughs, laughter.] Jump off from the top of the pole.

It may take many-pretty long time, before you make that kind of decision, you know. Before you feel the commitment as a student. It may take time, but anyway, when you do it, they way you do it-jump! [Laughs, laughter.] That is the way.

If you wonder: "Why he is so mean? Why he say? Why Soto way is so rigid?" Even though you ask, you know, your teacher, he will not say anything. "Just do it!" That will be what he will say. That is, you know, to climb up from the-to jump off from the pole of the-top of the pole.

Dick [Baker] wrote me [from Japan] and said: "Soto way looks like gradual way," but he said "I don't think so," he said. "Soto way [laughs] is more sudden way. Our way is to push something from the -someone from the cliff," you know. Whaa! So I think that is more Soto way. Rinzai student, you know [laughs], can practice zazen, you know, until he find out big ox, you know. Wandering about mountains and stream, and appreciating beautiful sight, and he may encounter, by some chance, a big ox. But [laughs] Soto way is to show a student big, you know, hip of the ox. Wraa! "This is [laughs, laughter]-this is the ox! You should see! Did you see it?" It is so big that even though you hit it, he will not move. [Laughs, laughter.] That is more Soto way [laughs].

Do you understand? That is what he s- [partial word]-Dogen said. It is not matter of something you will find-find out after reading many scriptures or after listening to fancy explanation of great Zen master. It is actual fact you are confronting right now, here! That is Dogen says-that is what Dogen-zenji says. It is not-not those things. You should, you know, see the big ox in front of you, without any explanation, without practicing zazen. [Laughs.] It is true, you know.

You-just you don't want to see it, you know. It is so big and so ugly! [Laughs, laughter.] "Nooo! No! That is not Buddhism. Oh, no! [Laughs,



laughter.] So may be better [laughs]," you know, "to take a walk," you know, "to take a trip. Trip of study." And, "I may come back same place, but not now!" [Laughs, laughter.] I feel in that way.

So if you don't want waste your time, I think, you should establish some rules for American Zen student. It is very big problem for me and for you, and I was thinking about it for many and many days, until I forget [laughs], you know, where we-where I was. Restroom or dining room-I didn't know. I think-I want you [to] join our, you know, problem: How we establish our way of studying Zen in America. It is not matter of Rinzai or Soto.

Thank you very much.

Do you have some question?

Student A: Roshi, what is the difference between concentrating on something and allowing yourself to actually do it? During the day I continuously work with this-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student A: -whether I should concentrate when I do it, like, "Okay, now I am going to do this"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -or whether I should just do it and allow it to be done. It seems like two different things.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe. In your everyday activity, you know, it is necessary to be concentrated-try to be concentrated on something especially. In your zazen, I think, especially for you, better to allow yourself to do it. You are very good in, you know, concentrating on one thing. So if you practice, you know, that way in your zazen, you know, your mind will be like this, you know. Your mind will be very sharp- very sharp concentration. And your mind will not open. But when we are in some situation where it is difficult to be concentrated on one thing, because of the noise or, you know, disturbance, it is necessary to be concentrated on one thing, I think.

Student A You know, once I experimented. We hiked with the mountain yogis up the mountain-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm

Student A: -you know? And they use a mantram like Om mani padme hum while they hiked. And as they hiked, they are just going over this mantram like this. So sometimes when I go downtown, and there's all this noise and all the billboards, and I just hear all this sound in my

head, I'll start doing this mantram-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student A: -Om mani padme hum.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is good, I think.

Student A: That-that keeps me-gives me a center as I go through all this confusion.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: And sometimes during work, too, when there's a lot of things happening, to have a center like that. Would you consider that concentration also, as an aid to concentration?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, but more-best way is, you know, to extend our-your practice in zendo, you know. You are try to be concentrated on one thing. Still you are trying, you know. So that is not-that is not best way. You should be more natural in your doing things. Hai.

Student B: What is the difference in the discipline to practice and attachment to practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. [Laughter.] Same, maybe. The difference is whether you do it [with] big strong conviction or, you know, sm- [partial word]- or you do it with small ego mind-egocentric mind. That is attachment, literally. That is attachment. But if you do it with big mind, it is-may be attachment, but-it may be strong attachment, but it has no-it will not-that attachment will not [leave] any trace in your practice. So it is also detachment, you know, because you have no trace of doing something.

So when you are doing, that is strong attachment, you know. You are doing. [Hits table for emphasis during preceding two sentences.] But after you did it, the difference is you will-you have no trace of activity. When you do it with big mind, with strong conviction, you have no-you h- [partial word]-you don't have to, you know, think about it because you did it with big mind. You don't-you are not regretful. So it is detachment. And when you are doing, it is very strong attachment.

Student B: When you do it with big mind, then you don't worry about attachment or discipline.

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student B: When you do it with the big mind, then you don't question whether it is discipline or attachment?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Student B: You just practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. The word "disciplined" is-I don't think appropriate words for our practice. Practice is more-something which should be done with big mind, not by small ego-egoistic mind.

Student C: Roshi, when you sit zazen and you feel pain in your legs-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: -do you think we should concentrate on the pain or-or to try and concentrate on something else?

Suzuki-roshi: Anyway, that is every day [laughs], you know-that is, you know, quite natural, and that is a kind of everyday routine, you know. That is not problem, you know. Do you understand? It is same thing you feel hungry, you know. There is no difference.

Student C: Well, when you are hungry you eat, usually.

Suzuki-roshi: You eat. [Laughs, laughter.] But what will happen to you if you eat whenever you will feel hungry? Maybe it is necessary to feel hungry for one hour or so.

Student C: I know. I want to know if you think we should concentrate on the pain [?] or just ignore it.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe-that is not big problem, you know.

Student C: Sometimes it is. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Not big problem in comparison to the problem Buddha points out. This is your problem. [Hits table four times in previous sentence.] You know, that is big, big problem. So many people-Zen student and Zen master say: "We must achieve buddhahood," you know, "next life. If it is not possible to do it next life, we will achieve it someday," you know, "after many life." The problem is so big. But pain on your-our legs is small problem. Nothing wrong to have pain in your legs. And, you know-crossing, if it is too painful, you know, there is no need to-if it is almost impossible for you, there is no need to cross your legs.

Student C: I-but-what I-what I was interested in was what did you think you should devote your concentrate to, in terms of on the pain itself or-or away from it?

Suzuki-roshi: No. Away from? No. No. Don't try to be away from it. And don't try to be concentrated on it. [Laughs, laughter.] You know, let it painful. Let it be painful always. [Laughs, laughter.] That is your

problem, you may say. I have to practice zazen. If you are painful, you know, that is your-your problem. [Laughs, laughter.] Hai.

Student D: Roshi, when counting the breath-when-excuse me-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student D: -is it better to let your breath take its natural rhythm and observe it, so that when you're counting, be detached from it, or to sort of "make" the numbers-like to push the breath in [?] a while and then push it out?

Suzuki-roshi: I think, you know-why I suggested to practice counting-breathing practice is-in its-to practice following-breathing practice is more advanced practice-more advance-advanced practice. And it is difficult, you know, to practice it in its true sense. So-so you should do it, you know, after you are able to practice counting breathing practice. Then your breath- [partial word]-practice will be more complete.

Student D: I-I guess I didn't make myself clear. What I meant is should you be detached when you're counting the breath? Should you let the breath take it nat- ... [Sentence not finished. Tape ends.]

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (12/11/00).

[1] The first words of the lecture are missing on tape.

[2] From Ts'ung-jung lu (J. Shoyoroku, E. Book of Serenity), Case 79: "Changsha Advancing a Step": "Climb one step beyond the top of the hundred-foot pole. The whole world in the ten directions is revealed."

[3] Probably from the Samyuktagama Sutra (J. Zo-ichi-agon), one of the four Agama sutras (J. Agon-gyo). Also discussed in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.

[4] Apollo 11 was launched July 16, 1969 (see also SR-69-07-20).

[5] Quoting Linji Yixuan (Jap. Rinzai Gigen): "Whether you turn to the outside or to the inside, whatever you encounter, kill it. If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha; if you meet the patriarchs, kill the patriarchs; if you meet Arhats, kill Arhats; if you meet your parents, kill your parents; if you meet your relatives, kill your relatives; then for the first time you will see clearly. And if you do not depend on things, there is deliverance, there is freedom!" [From Linji-lu (Jap. Rinzai-roku), Sec.

20: I. Schloegl (trans.), *The Zen Teaching of Rinzai*, Shambhala, 1975, pp. 43-44.]

### **3 - Study with Mind and Body**

Sunday, June 22, 1969

Study with Mind and Body  
San Francisco

Dogen-zenji says: "Everything is encourages us to attain enlightenment. Mountains and rivers, earth and sky: everything is encouraging us to attain enlightenment." So, of course, a purpose of lecture is to encourage-to encourage you attaining enlightenment. So we call our lecture, you know, teisho. Teisho means "with teaching-with koan," to help people to attain enlightenment.

And usual lecture-sometime to explain the context of teaching-like to explain philosophy-to understand our teaching in philosophical way is more a "lecture"-a kowa.[1] Kowa is more philosophical. And purpose of to listen to kowa is to have intellectual understanding of the teaching. While teisho is to encourage students to attain enlightenment, or to have perfect understanding of-to have real experience of-to have real Buddhist experience.

So same thing will be subj- [partial word]-topic of our everyday life in its ordinal [ordinary?] sense. And same thing will be koan [definitely said "koan" here] to encourage-to encourage us to attain, to have direct experience of our life. Even though you think you are studying Buddhism, actually, you are, when you are just reading, you know [laughs]-it is-it may be-it may not be true or it will not help to have direct experience of Buddhism but just intellectual understanding of it.

That is why we, when we study Buddhism, it is necessary to have strong conviction and to study it with mind and body, not just, you know, not only just mind but also body. So if you attend lecture, you know, even though you are sleepy, you know, and unable to listen to it, just to attend the lecture [laughs] in spite of the drowsiness will be, you know-will bring you some experience of enlightenment. And it will be the enlightenment itself.

So intellectual understanding is necessary, but it will not-it will not complete your study. Through-by actual practice you can study it in its full meaning. So intellectual study, we say, doesn't make much sense [laughs], but it does not mean to ignore intellectual understanding or-enlightenment experience is quite different thing from intellectual understanding. And the true, direct experience of things could be intellectualized. And to intellect- [partial word]-to have to try some intellectual explanation to our direct experience is necessary to help your-to help your direct experience. So, for us, both intellectual

understanding and direct experience of it is necessary.

Sometime even though you think that is-you think this is enlightenment experience, it may be just, you know, intellectual, extended explanation of-or extended experience of intellectual things, and not true experience-direct experience. That is why you must have true teacher who knows the difference between extended experience of common experience in its dualistic sense. Direct experience will come when you are completely involved in your practice, or when you are completely one with your activity, and when you have no idea of self-not only when you are sitting, but also when you are-your way-seeking mind is strong enough to forget your selfish desires. Or to forget selfish desire when you do something, study something with your whole mind and body, you will have direct experience.

That you haven't-that you have some problem means your practice is not good enough. When your practice is good enough, whatever you see, whatever you do-that is direct experience of the reality. This point should be remembered. And if you know that, it is not so easy to say "this is right" or "this is wrong"; "this is perfect" and "this is not perfect."

Anyway, [for] most of us, it is not possible to say "good and bad" or "right or wrong." Usually we, you know, without knowing this point, you say, "this is right, this is wrong." [Laughs.] That is, you know, ridiculous when we know what is real practice. Because you are just involved in usual judgement of good or bad, right or wrong, you can easily say, "this is right, this is wrong."

We Buddhists-you may say, for Buddhists there is nothing wrong. Whatever you do, you know, "Buddha is doing it, not me." [Laughs.] And so, "Buddha is responsible for it, not me." But [laughs] that is, you know, also a kind of misunderstanding.

When we say we have buddha-nature, that is, you know, the statement to encourage you to have actual experience of it. To encourage your true practice we say, "we have buddha- [partial term]-you have buddha-nature." It works only to attain enlightenment, you know, to encourage your true practice. Purpose of the statement is just to encourage true practice, not to give you some excuse, you know, [for] your lazy practice or your formal-just formal practice.

People misunderstand the true meaning of, or true purpose of our words, and you abuse and-or you make excuse for your lazy practice, referring to Buddha's words, understanding the statement in relative sense. This kind of mistake is everywhere. "It works," you know, "only this way and not that-the other way." [Laughs.] Do you understand?

Everyone has buddha-nature. Period. No more. You shouldn't say, "so" or "but" [laughs, laughter]. You should put "period," you know.

"Everyone has buddha-nature." [Hits stick on table once.] No more statement. If you say something, you know, you will be-you will get big slap. Whap! [Laughs, laughter.] You have to put "period" here. If you don't, you know, your teacher will put big "period" [laughs, laughter].

So we say, you know, in China, people carry something on their head. Honey or water in big jar. Sometime he may, you know, falled [dropped?], you know, of course, by mistake. But if you do not, you know, look back, like this [laughs]-it is all right. You should go on and on [laughs], even though there is no more honey or water on your head. If you go on and on, that is, you know, that is not mistake. But if you [say]: "Oh! I lost it! Oh, my!" If you say so, that is mistake. That is not our true practice.

When skillful martial artist use their, you know, sword, he could be able to-he should be able to cut fly [laughs] on your friend's nose, ffft!- [laughs] without cutting off your [his], you know, nose. It means that, you know, if you have some fear of cutting his nose, that is not true practice. When you do it, you know [laughs], you should have strong determination to do it! Whei! [sound of sword cutting air]-without any idea of skillful or not, or dangerous or not. You should just do it when you have to do it.

When you do it with this kind of conviction, that is true practice. So when you do-do it with this conviction, it is true enlightenment at the same time. Not just because of the skillful-skill. It is necessary to have strong conviction to do it, conviction beyond "successful or not successful." Beyond any feeling of fear. You should do it. That is real practice, and that is the way-seeking mind, which is-which goes beyond the idea of-dualistic idea of good and bad, right or wrong.

Now-can you hear me?

So if you should do it, you should just do it. We shouldn't mind whether it is-whether you will be successful or not. That is our vow, you know, four vow. We-we must do it. We must help people just because we must, you know. Sentient being are numberless, so we don't know whether we can help completely all of our sentient being. That is out of question. Our practice should go beyond it-the idea of numerous sentient being or some limited number of sentient being. A part of it or all of it-it doesn't matter as long. As we are here, we should continue our practice. That is true, you know, practice.

Of course, there is no limit in our understanding of the-our teaching. The meaning of Buddha's teaching is limitless, but we should do it. Whether you understand it or not, we should try to understand it. This kind of conviction is necessary when you-once you started to study Buddhism. Then that teaching ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... has the teaching, valuable teaching which you will not encounter even [in] a thousand kalpas of time. That is the absolute teaching-incomparable teaching to any teach- [partial word]-any other teaching. That is the most valuable teaching.

"Incomparable teaching" or "supreme teaching" does not mean this is the best of all or something like that, in its comparative sense. When you have right attitude in your study, the teaching you study is the absolute teaching. So, as Dogen-zenji says, "We do not discuss the meaning of teaching in its comparative sense, but we should practice it in its-our practice should be right." With right practice we should study. As a right practice we should study the teaching. We should try to accept teaching with right attitude. Whether teaching is profound or lofty is not the point. But the point is our practice, our attitude to study it. So whatever the teaching is, we do not, you know, we do not discriminate teaching in Zen. Kegon Sutra or Lotus Sutra or Agama Sutra, we don't mind. Whatever the sutra is, the sutra is-all the sutra is our fundamental teaching. We do not discriminate: "This is tea- [partial word]-this is scripture for Soto." Or "This is the koan for Rinzai." Or "This is scripture for Nichiren Sect." Or "This is the scripture just for Pure Land School." And all the sutra is our sutra.

Whatever the teaching is, if we have right attitude towards the-in our study, that is our teaching. This is characteristic of Zen and characteristic of true Buddhism. We do not set up any system of Buddhism, but we put emphasis on true practice.

In this sense, we say "Zen school." Zen means "right practice." It means to extend Buddha's practice, you know, day by day. That is, you know, how to be Buddha's disciple. That is why we started Zen Center here, or Tassajara Mountain Center: to practice our way in its true sense. It may be rather difficult to study our way in the city, but if you understand, you know, this point, you have no excuse for not practicing zazen. All the rules we have-but all the rules we have here is just to make your practice easier. Not to make our door narrow, but to open up our door for everyone.

Maybe Tassajara door is narrower, you may think, but wider. To have rules is to help your study. Because we know, you know, how difficult it is, so we set up some rules to help your practice. That is the purpose of having rules in Zen Center. If there is no-no pole, you know, to climb up, it is rather difficult for you to experience what kind of feeling you will have when you jump off from the pole. If a baby has no toy, you know, it is rather difficult to-to have actual experience of human being, as a human being. We have-we must experience many things, but if there is nothing, you know, even though whatever things may be-things in our room could be, you know, devices to experience human experience. But if we have, you know, special toy for babies, it is easier to experience our human-develop our human experience.



The, you know, rules we have is just a kind of toy to help your experience as a Buddhist. But toy-it does not mean toy is always necessary, you know. When you are young it is necessary, but after you know how to handle a cup or how to work, it is not necessary for you to have some wheel to, you know, push, or to have some cup or toy made of, you know-miniature, you know, cup made of plastic. If you want to have taste food better, plastic, you know, cup is not so good, you know [laughs] . It is better to use some ceramic, you know, or cups made of-mud? How do you say it? Clay. You taste better.

So you don't-it is not necessary for you to stick to toy always. And you should extend your way of life deeper and wider. But it is-even so, you know, beautiful, you know, ceramic is not necessary. If you have, you know, if you are ready to appreciate things, and if your practice [is] always encouraged by things you see, things you eat, you know, any special things is not necessary. Whatever it is, things will encourage your true practice.

If you can enjoy your life in its true sense, even though you lose your body, you know, it is all right. If you are not conscious of your mind, it is all right, you know. Even you die, it is all right. If-when you can-when you are encouraged by everything, you know, and when you realize everything is always helping you, then there is no difference whether you are dead or alive. It doesn't make, you know, any sense. It is all right, quite all right [laughs]. That is complete renunciation.

And your practice will be vigorous-enough to continue this kind of practice forever, regardless of life or death. In this way, our enlightenment should be-could be explained. And how to, you know, have this kind of practice is up to you. I cannot, you know, explain your understanding of Buddhism. You should explain your way of life as a Buddhist in your own way.

So, you know, my talk is just to encourage your practice, but even though you memorize what you say-what I said, it will not help you in its true sense. Maybe it will give you some suggestion.

Tomorrow I-I will go to Tassajara and stay there maybe more than ten days or two weeks. So I must say sayonara, you know [laughs, laughter], for ten days or more.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (9/28/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] kowa: ko (lecture) + wa (story or lecture itself). A college- or informative-style lecture, sometimes using a blackboard to convey content.

## 1969 juli (10)

### 1 - The Meaning of Practice

Tuesday, July 01, 1969

The Meaning of Practice  
Tassajara

It is rather difficult for us to figure out why we started to practice zazen. It is rather difficult, and I think it may be same for you. But the more you think why you started zazen practice, the more you will find out how deep it is-the meaning you started zazen practice. And once you start our practice, even though your determination is not so strong, or you don't feel your determination is not so strong, but you will find out how strong the determination has been.

It is rather difficult, you know. You think-when you are here, you think sometimes or, you know, once in a while it may be better to give up [laughs]. But actually to give up our study or practice is not so easy. But you have some, you know-when you-your determination-you think your determination is not so strong-when you think in that way, your-you will not make much-much progress. So anyway once you study-start to study zazen, it's better for you to have strong, you know, determination not to give up our study or our practice. That is why we Soto students put emphasis on way-seeking mind or determination to practice our way forever. And trust in our true nature, who-which is always seeking for our true nature. You know, we say, "True nature is seeking for true nature." You know, true-because we have true nature, so naturally we seek for [it]. It is quite natural for us to seek for true nature. So, "Buddha seek for buddha," we say.

Anyway, you know, even though-once you study-start to practice zazen, even though you stop it, or you leave Tassajara, or Zen Center, I am sure you will come back [laughs, laughter]. I am quite sure about that. But it is rather, you know, waste of time. So once you st- [partial word]- anyway, you are caught [laughs, laughter] by buddha-nature which you have, you know. So it is better to continue it until you have complete freedom even from sitting zazen. That is much better.

So to get through, you know, our practice until you have freedom from it. Then, whenever you do, that is extended practice of zazen. If you-if you stop practicing it until you have freedom from even zazen practice, your life will be always shaky, you know. So you feel as if you waste your whole life.

For a man who realized what is practice, even though we haven't attained enlightenment-so-called-it "enlightenment," we don't feel we waste-we have been-our practice have been waste of time. We don't feel in that way. If you-you are-even though your practice is not perfect, you think someday or in next life you will, you know, sure to-you will have-sure to have that kind of feeling. And we are quite-we know what we sh- [partial word]-what kind of life we should have.

So even though you don't feel your life was perfect, you will leave for your descendent some problem which they should solve. So your descendent or some of you will find out the meaning of our practice, and find out it is necessary for human being to solve this problem and to continue our practice. So if no one start this kind of practice, your descendant will not find out what is our true life and what is the way to solve personal problem as well as social problem.

Especially, I think, in America not much people knows the meaning of practice. And even in Japan, too, you know, it is-in Japan, I think there are-they have wrong understanding of layman and priest. The priest is, you know-priests are quite different Buddhist from layman. But that is not right. So although priests practice zazen, layman doesn't. Layman don't practice zazen. Of course, some of them do. But quite few people practice zazen. They understand-they think zazen practice is too difficult, you know, for layman, so the priest only should practice zazen. But that is-they have this kind of idea. So I think most of Japanese people doesn't understand why we practice zazen. It is not matter of layman or priest. For all of us, it is necessary to practice zazen: not only Buddhist but also for all followers of various religion.

But zazen practice is not just personal practice. Buddhist practice is for each one of ourselves and for the others too. And to help themselves and to help others is the purpose of practice and reason why we practice zazen.

I think it is-now it is the time to practice zazen for-with every one of us. So if you realize this point, our practice is not just, you know, for ourselves. And we should know this point. Al- [partial word]-I know the American people are very individualistic, you know, and so their practice is very sincere. I know that. But their practice is just-tend to be just for himself. And so if he think, you know, he has-he thinks he has freedom of choice whether you should practice-whether he should do it or not. But we-actually we don't practice our zazen just for ourselves. And here I feel some difficulty, some, you know-in spreading our true way in America. Maybe, you know, personally I think you may have very good teachers. But-and good teacher will give up personal things, you know, and sacrificing their-his own life, and he may devote himself to the practice in its true sense. But people may think, you know: "That is just," you know, "his choice. It doesn't," you know-"just his choice. So for him that may be," you know, "very good thing, but I don't-I don't,"

you know, "agree with him." Or, "His practice is nothing to do with [laughs]-with me-with our life." So even though you have-you may have good teacher, I think you will appreciate his value, or his practice, his being so much-you may not appreciate him so much [corrects previous clause].

But that is, you know-that kind of understanding of individualism is not so good. Individualism, in its true sense, is very good. And our religion should be for each one of us, you know, first of all. He should do it for his own sake. He should not [be] concerned about other's criticism, you know. He should have strong determination to do it. In this point, individualism is very good. But if you think individualism is absolute, you know, teaching, like bible or scripture [laughs], it is, you know-we don't take that kind of understanding.

For Buddhist there is no absolute teaching. Even though it is good, we should know good side and bad side. We should know our tendency. We should know that it is human beings who believe in some kind of teaching. And human being originally has some difficulty to accept teaching as it is. Usually we accept teaching just to make some excuse for himself-for ourselves. You know, "In scripture," you know, "it is said so-and-so. So it is good to do so," [laughs] without thinking about it so much. "Scripture says this is American way. That is the Japanese way." You know, we don't accept teaching in that way. When you want to study-accept teaching, you should know what it is. American way is not always good. Japanese way is not always good. If there is good side, there must be bad side. So we should be very careful to accept the teaching. We should know the both sides of the one teaching.

You may say this is difference of the cultural background. So Buddhist-Buddhism should be extended or should be developed according to the cultural background. And, "In America there must be American Buddhism-in Ja- [partial word]-as Japanese," you know, "Buddhism, is based on or extended on the base of the Japanese cultural-culture."

But this is, you know-one of the important characteristic of Buddhism is whatever the, you know, cultural background is, Buddhism has some power to penetrate into the cultural background. We do not ignore the cultural background, but Buddhism is the deeper foundation of various cultural background. That is why, even though Chinese-Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and Japanese Buddhism are different, quite different, are very different, I may say, but there is some traditional, you know, understanding of Buddhism which is always the same.

So I think until you understand your culture, good side and bad side, and accept the Bud- [partial word]-accept Buddhism as a deeper, you know, foundation of your culture, I think you-your effort will-you will make a vain effort. So we should know that all of us are just human being. You know, I am Japanese and you are American. But I think even

though you say you are American, you know, I don't know who is true American and who is not [laughs].

Dick [Baker]-the other day Dick wrote me [from Japan] saying: "I thought," you know, "you are-you are not-I didn't know you are not so Japanese." But when I came to America I thought many people like me, you know, in Japan. The more he understand Japanese people, the more he understand how, you know, difficult Japanese was. If I am, you know, among you, even though I-if I don't wear this robe, I don't know, you know. You may-you don't think I am Japanese. But if you go to Japan, seeing people like me [laughs], you will immediately realize, "Oh, he is Japanese"-maybe especially you saw me from, you know, back. You know, "Oh, same figure is-same figure as you see in Japan. You will find same figure, you know, you saw in Japan in me, you know. But even, you know-I think that is the idea of Japanese, you know. If there is many people like me, you know-if you see many people like me, you will have idea of Japanese. But if I talk personally with you, there is no idea of Japanese or American. And if we are just here, even though I am Japanese, when I am talking with you like this, I have no idea of Japanese. And I don't think you have any idea of Japanese.

So "Japanese" or "American" is just idea. "American way" or "Japanese way," you say, but actually there is no such thing. There may be same, you know, people doing same thing, but it does not mean he is Japanese. People may say, you know, people may have some idea of Japanese, that's all. As Dogen-zenji said: "No one say," you know, "he is-he is Zen Buddhist or Soto Zen student. No one calls himself Soto Zen student-teacher. But people may say he is Soto. But that does not mean we should call ourselves Soto students."

So we-when you make some excuse, you say: "This is-we are American people who is raised in American cultural background." I don't think that is proper-that is right. Actually, for each individual there is no American way or Japanese way. That is his own way. So he should-he is responsible for his own way of life and understanding.

And-and I think we should not try to propagate Zen in America, you know. That is not Dogen-zenji's way. One by one is enough. If we have, you know, good understanding between your friend, that is enough. If you love someone, you know, you should try to make-make him understand you. That's all. That is quite natural for us. But we should not try to propagate Soto Zen or Rinzai Zen in America. It is same thing, you know, [to] try to force Japanese way-way of life to American people, or American way of life to Japanese people, which is not really exist.

That which exist in its true sense is, you know, mutual understanding between one and the other. I think that is true Buddhism in its true sense. We have-all human being or living being has fundamental tendency to try to find out some composure in identifying himself to others, you know. If some worm or frog-frog stay in green, you know,

leaves, they change their color to the green-into green. That kind ...  
[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

But we have to realize a deeper, you know, nature than we feel or than we feel or see. We have deeper nature which is called buddha-nature, which is not various nature-or which is not one of the various nature, but which is the basic nature for various nature. Deeper nature than we see. That is human tendency, you know, to identify ourselves to-to the majority. But, that is-for us, that is the nature to be aware of, or to be careful about, rather than to follow it with our eyes, our thinking mind, our five senses stopped [?], and our reason stopped [?]. That is the nature we should be careful about.

But most people, you know, make some excuse, numbering various nature we have. One by one, when we face to the problem, we should know our nature. And we should be careful our nature, not to stop our-not to limit our basic nature, so that we can extend our fundamental basic nature without any trouble.

So it is important to know American way or Japanese way. But more important thing is to know our own cultural background, and to have eyes to see our-each one's own cultural background, and what kind of tendency you have. If so, it-it may be very helpful for you to have Japanese friend and for Japanese to come to America and study Japanese way, or to have-to listen to criticism of [by?] American people. Then we will be aware of our tendency, which is difficult to-to notice. Not to, you know, not just to stick to American way or Japanese way, but to know our weak points. This kind of effort should be continued.

You think you have, you know-as you are in America, you know, I think you-you may say: "We have no cultural background." [Laughs.] But you have. You, you know-I noticed, you know, many, you know, characteristic of American people. That is, you know, your cultural background. Here at Tassajara what are you doing is not just American way or Japanese way. And we are studying what should be our human way, day after day. There may be many reasons why I came to America without knowing this kind of thing. When I came to America, you know, what I thought was: "Anyway, we are all human beings [laughs], so I think I can survive" [laughter]. That was what I knew-only thing what I knew. I, you know, I didn't know where is San Francisco, even. Anyway I came to-I bought a ticket [laughs, laughter], and I came to America. That's all. And, you know, I was rather angry if people say, you know: "He is Japanese" [laughs], you know. Why I am Japanese? You know, those who come to America is American people, you know. Whatever nationality he is, they are all American people.

Some of them must have come a long time ago, but all of them, anyway, except Indian-American Indian-they are people who came from other country. Why they call me Japanese? And, you know, sometime: "That is Japanese way." Why? I didn't know myself. But now Dick wrote

me, "I find-I found-at last I found you typical Japanese," you know. And I realize, "Oh, maybe so." Because there are many people like me. It may take pretty long time to study the true relationship between various, you know, people-various-various kinds of people. But I think we should start to study our basic human nature.

And we should start to study our weak point. If you want to be really strong, you should know your weak point. Without knowing your strong-weak point, you cannot be really, in its true sense, cannot be strong person. And if you don't know your weak point, you will have various worry, and you will have various problem, and you don't have real courage to do something. If you know your weak point, you know-because you know, "My weak point is here," you know, so you-you know how to protect yourself from it. But if you don't know where is your weak point, you will-you must have protect yourself covering [laughs, laughter] all parts of your body. Maybe best thing is to enter a big bag [laughs]. That will-may be the best way, but you cannot survive in that way. So you should know the weak point only, and protect weak point and extend strong arm, you know. If one-left arm is, you know, not so weak [strong] you should fight with right arm. If you don't know which is-which is stronger, you don't know what to do.

A scroll given to me by my teacher[1] says: "Piece of stone in the air. Piece of-piece of stone in the air." [Laughs.] "Piece of stone in the air." It means that the created problem, not real problem. There is no stone in the air. There may be bubbles, you know, but there is no stone in the air. But we create-we hit against stone in the air, always. "Oh!" That is what we are doing. If you know, you know, real, you know, problem, you will not hit against so many stones which doesn't exist, you know. Maybe-sometime there may be stone in the air-even in the air. But there-there is-I don't think there is so many stones in the air [laughs]. So if you know that there is stone, you know, but you know the way to go through the room even though several stones [are] in the air. But most people has many stones in the air, not only one piece of stone. That is, you know, the problems we have because we don't know ourselves.

Most-most of the problem are the problem we create because we don't know ourselves. If you know yourself, you will have, you know, problem. But that is actual problem which will help you-help your way of life. It is much better to have some problem than no problem. If you want to help others, the best way may be not to involve others in the problem you created [laughs]. Not only you have, you know, various problem created by yourself. You may involve many people in your problem, in your created problem. If you stop doing it, that may be great help, I think.

I may, you know, point out [laughs] something, you know, always, but it does not mean to criticize you. Because it may be difficult for you to-to know your weak point, I may point out, you know, sometime. So

don't be angry with me [laughs] too much, okay?

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Tanya Takacs and Bill Redican (2/1/01). Date was changed from 6/31/69 to 7/1/00 because 6/31 was impossible, and 7/1 was a Tuesday (a common day for lectures at that time in Tassajara).

[1] Kishizawa Ian-zenji. (See Crooked Cucumber, p. 382, for a discussion of this scroll.)

## **2 - Rinzai and Soto**

Tuesday, July 01, 1969

Rinzai and Soto  
San Francisco

Morning.

In-in America, between Rinzai Zen and Soto Zen there-there must be some clear understanding of-of the two, or relationship of the two. Dogen-zenji's, you know, problem of, or koan was, "If we have buddha-nature," you know, "why we should practice zazen?" That was his, you know-that is why he went to China. All-all-in all the scriptures say that everyone has buddha-nature. If so, why we should practice zazen?

And Soto more put emphasis on the statement that we have buddha-nature. And Rinzai put emphasis on practice to attain enlightenment, you know. If we have buddha-nature, like Soto student says, why is it necessary [laughs] to attain enlightenment? And usually, you know, people understand that "we have buddha-nature" means that potentially we have buddha-nature. We have buddha-nature within ourselves, but that nature-buddha-nature is covered by many things: many evil desires. Or because of the bad karma we cannot, you know, reveal-we cannot realize buddha-nature. But if we practice zazen, or if we get rid of evil nature, the buddha-nature, which is innate nature, will reveal itself. Usually people understand in that way. But, as the Sixth Patriarch said, that is nihilism [nihilism?]. But anyway, people understand in that way to explain why we must practice zazen.

But this understanding is not true understanding, even according to usual understanding of sutra. There are many, you know-we try to understand Buddhism just our ordinal [ordinary] way of thinking-ordinal [ordinary way]. That is maybe why we cannot understand what-why



Dogen has to go to China to understand that point. If he understand in that way, you know, it is-for him it was not-there was no need for him to go to China. You know, if-by practice, by our practice, by stopping all sort of evil desires, and we will attain enlightenment, and we will have no trouble, you know, and our buddha-nature reveal itself because there is no evil desires which covers our innate nature. If he understand in that way, there was no need for him to go to China.

But that was not, you know-that kind of understanding is just, you know, usual understanding which you can accept it intellectually, but you cannot accept it emotionally in its true sense, you know. Your mind says you are-you think, you know, or you can explain why we should understand-we should practice zazen intellectually. But actually if you try to attain enlightenment in that way, you will be discouraged, you know, because it is not possible to annihilate all evil desires you have. One student out of thousand, you know, cannot [can?] attain enlightenment in that way. So naturally Dogen-zenji, you know, didn't-couldn't satisfied that kind of answer. So he actually went to China, not because of study of philosophy of Buddhism. He wanted to have complete-he wanted to accept Buddhism as his own teaching. He was very sincere person. He couldn't satisfy-he couldn't be satisfied with the usual, you know, intellectual, philosophical understanding of Buddhism. Although he was the eminent philosopher, he was-he is actually very profound-established very profound philosophy-Buddhist philosophy. But even so, he couldn't satisfy with his philosophy of-philosophy-Buddhist philosophy, and he went to China. And after he received transmission from Nyojo-zenji,[1] he, you know, described this point from various point.

So he is the one who, you know, understand-understood what is enlightenment and what is real practice. What do we mean by-what does the Sixth Patriarch or old Zen masters mean by practice and by enlightenment? This is the point he-Dogen-zenji strived for to explain. And he thought people of his age-of his time will not understand this point fully. And he wrote his understanding for his descendant, who may understand his point.

This morning I want to briefly, you know, explain this point: enlightenment and practice, you know. What is enlightenment and what is practice? The enlightenment-according to Dogen-zenji, enlightenment equal practice. We use, you know, soku. Soku means, you know, "equal," but not just equal. When you say "equal," you know, although-two side of the equal, you know. Although it looks-there looks like different, but if you change, you know, form, two things is equal as, you know, as you solve the problem of algebra, you know. If you change the form, both side is equal. But when we say equal without changing [laughs], you know, anything, that is equal. If, you know, practice and enlightenment is same if, you know, if you attain enlightenment, that is equal. Practice and enlightenment is-are equal, same.

But when we say soku, "equal," it means that without changing [laughs]-without changing form it is equal. They are same. This is rather difficult to understand. Practice equal enlightenment. [Laughs.] It means that the other side of, you know, practice is enlightenment, and the other side of the enlightenment is practice. He understood in that way. So there is no need to change the practice into enlightenment, or there is no need to change enlightenment into practice. Without changing, practice and enlightenment are same. That is his understanding of our practice.

Now, as I said last time, in Rinzai Zen they put the emphasis on-on kensho. To put emphasis on kensho means actually to put emphasis on our practice. To encourage our practice, they put emphasis on kensho. But actually, kensho is not the actual goal of practice. Practice itself is important. Kensho is just candy. [Laughs.] You strive for candy, and you make good practice. That is why Rinzai put the emphasis on kensho.

Soto put emphasis on practice, you know. Forgetting all about our practice is shikantaza, as you know. We, you know, forget all about kensho and fully devote ourselves to practice. So actually [laughs] both Rinzai and Soto put emphasis on-in actual practice. And if you talk about, you know, kensho in Rinzai school said, small enlightenment-numberless small enlightenment and several big enlightenment. What does it mean? Small, you know, numberless enlightenment [laughs], and big, several enlightenment. If, you know, enlightenment is a goal of practice, one enlightenment will be enough [laughs]. Why do they want so many, numberless, numerous enlightenment? And several big ones? [Laughs, laughter.] You know, it is, you know-it is just words, just means of encouraging people to follow Buddha's way, to continue our practice forever, from beginningless beginning to endless end, we should follow Buddha's way because Buddha's way is the true way. And for Buddhists, there is no time to stop our effort to save people and subjectively to save ourselves. That is why we decide, you know, we have four vow.[2]

I think it is necessary both for Rinzai and Soto to have this kind of clear understanding of our practice or Buddhism. Forgetting all about the fundamental teaching of Buddha, just to put emphasis on Rinzai or Soto means nothing. As you know, in all religion the most important point is to have conviction to follow the truth. That is, in other word, faith, or to believe in, or to trust in the truth whatever happen to us. That is our basic attitude of-basic attitude for human life.

So for Rinzai or Soto-for Rinzai because, you know-Rinzai people-because we are not sincere enough, you know, they put emphasis on kensho. But Soto put emphasis in attitude or belief. So naturally Soto is more rigid in our practice, or more formal, you know. If you, you know, if you-to have strong conviction to follow the truth means try to have strong faith or to-in our buddha-nature, and to have determination [to] try to follow the truth or try to help people. So naturally, instead of

putting emphasis on kensho, we Soto students should follow rules of monastery or rules of our life.

So for Soto students, it-we put-it is necessary for you to organize your life so that you can practice zazen well. For Rinzai students, it is necessary to realize, to reach the point where you don't mind your everyday problem so much, so that you can easily follow the Buddha's way. That is more Rinzai way.

Soto way-nowadays we have, you know, many Soto followers in Japan and many priests. But originally Dogen-zenji try to-try to have just several sincere students. We say "one by one," or "half by half" [laughs]. He said one or half by one or half [laughs]. Half by half. [Laughing.] Half is enough if he is sincere.

So, you know, the relationship between teacher and student should be very close. We say if one is someone's disciple one should, you know, make calligraphy exactly the same as his teacher, you know. You sign, you know-in America you have signature. By your handwriting is your signature, but it doesn't work so- [partial word]-in Japan. We put the emphasis-we practice calligraphy so hard that one can imitate someone's calligraphy exactly the same as [laughs] your friend does or your teachers-your teachers does.

That much, you know, close relationship is necessary, but not by imitation but from bottom of your heart. So how you, you know, learn Oriental-Japanese-Oriental culture is to imitate, you know, his teacher's way. And when you are able to, you know, imitate his way, like his own calligraphy or way, you can, you know, establish your own way after you are able to imitate his teacher's way. And after you acquired fully his teacher's way then, if necessary, you know, you should create your own form of calligraphy. But not before [laughs] you can fully-you can imitate his way exactly the same.

My teacher is not, you know, my father-was not my father. But people said when I laugh, you know [laughs]: "You must be," you know, "your teacher's," you know, "secret boy" [laughs, laughter], because the way you do something, way you laugh, way you speak, and way you make your voice [are] exactly the same as your teacher. So your teacher must be your father," they said-some-not every one of them, but some people said. That is more Soto way.

But the point is to give up selfish, you know, way as much as possible. Not completely, because it is not possible to give up our selfish idea. And we know that is impossible. We continue our practice forever. But you may say if it is not complete-if it is not possible to complete it, it does not mean to try to, you know, try to annihilate evil desires. But it is not so. That is not Buddhist understand- [partial word]-Buddhist effort. Even though it is not possible [tapping table with each word], if it is right we should follow the way. It is not a matter of possible or

impossible. Even though it is impossible, if it is right, or if we want to do it, we should do it. We should try to-at least we should try to do it.

Maybe both Rinzai way and Soto way is necessary, I think. If, you know, I want you to be completely Soto students or Soto disciples, I will not allow you to have long hair [laughs]. I wouldn't. At first even, you know, that much, you know, confidence is necessary. If you want to follow Buddhist way from the starting point, that is more Soto way. "Even though you don't like it, you should do it!" Do you understand? That is Soto way. Rinzai way [is]: "Practice zazen! Practice hard until you have kensho! Whether you have long hair or dirty shoes, it doesn't matter. Practice zazen hard!" [Taps stick three times.] That is more Rinzai way. If y- [partial word]-he attain enlightenment, he will not matter whether his hair is long or not. Whatever costume-in whatever costume he is, he [it] doesn't matter.

But Soto way is: "WHY DO YOU-DON'T YOU SHAVE YOUR HAIR if you are Soto student?! [Laughs.] That is difference. So whether you like it or not, we will force you to [laughs, laughter]-we will put you in square box! [Loud laughter.] Instead of, you know, putting emphasis on enlightenment or kensho. Same thing, you know.

So in Rinzai way there is more freedom, maybe. In Soto way we don't have freedom until you have complete freedom, until you feel freedom in your everyday life. So, you know, if you stay in Soto way for several years, you know, strictly observe Soto way, you will not have not much problem in your ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... in its true sense, giving up self-centered activities.

So we should not, I think, be-we shouldn't be too much attached to Rinzai, or idea of Rinzai or Soto. But we should know that-we should know the point. I think this is, in this sense-when we understand this point, I am very much grateful for Dogen-zenji who found-who was sincere enough to found out this point clearly. And, according to him, there is no Soto or Rinzai or no Zen even. We are all Buddha's disciple. That is enough, he said. He is-he was a person who [was] sincerely devoted [to] Buddhism and wanted to be a good Buddha's disciple. Fame or rank was not his point, or how many students he has, that was not his point. To be a good disciple even, you know, he-no one knows where he is, who he is. That is not his point. And he wanted to be a good disciple. And he want-but he wanted to help real disciple. He doesn't mind how much, you know, student he has. If he-if he has one good disciple, that was enough for him. Or even though he hasn't no disciple, maybe that was-he will not regret for that, because he wrote so many things for his descendants, who may understand his way. Usually even priest-even a priest are very much attached to his achievement, in its worldly sense. Because of him, I think, we came to this kind of understanding of Zen.

We say, you know-last year at Tassajara, Peter [Schneider] asked me to speak about non-sectarianism [laughs]. And after I gave lecture, he said: "That is sectarianism!" [Laughs, laughter.] Maybe our sectarianism is non-sectarianism: sectarianism of non-sectarianism. [Laughs.]

And he [Dogen?] says, also-people may say, you know, "Zen," but no patriarchs said-called themselves Zen master. Even though people said "Zen," there is no need to-to be or to call ourselves Zen. We are not Zen Buddhist. We are just Buddha's disciple. If you, if-to understand Buddhism in that way, or to understand Zen in that way is sectarianism, we are very sectarian. But it is not so, actually. At least we have sincere enough or honest enough to accept his teaching, giving up our selfish viewpoint or criticism.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker. Checked by Bill Redican (2/24/01).

[1] Tiantong Rujing (Tendo Nyojo): 1163-1228.

[2] "Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them," etc.

### **3 - Emptiness is Form**

Thursday, July 03, 1969

Emptiness is Form  
Tassajara

I have explained the poem about "Emptiness is form," or shochuhen.[1] Sho is reality and hen is "form" or "seeming" [?]. Shochuhen. And the next one is henchusho,[2] the opposite. And chu means, you know-chu or soku-means some activity in which-not activity-some-not relationship, but something in which everything appears-every event, you know, appears. What will it be [laughs]? Something in which, you know, appears. Maybe say a little bit more [laughs]: something in which everything appears-something in which always appears-that is the present moment, right now. You know, right now, you know, things happen, not in past or present. So practice should be the practice of "right now." That is chu or soku.

When we, you know, catch things, you know-how you catch it, you know? You cannot-you cannot catch past or future, you know. You can catch just present moment, right now. If you want to catch someone, you know, you-you should catch him right now, not past or not in

future.

So if you want to practice zazen, you know, you should practice it right now. That is chu. Shochuhen or henchusho. Or Shiki soku ze ku, [3] you know. Ku soku ze shiki [4] is, you know-is-means "right now

there is being," you know.

But because we are always, you know, involved in thinking mind, and because we try to understand teaching, you know, in-with seeking mind, in term of present or past or, you know, now or later, you know, or always, you know. Usually "is" means "always so." "One plus one is two," you know. That "is" is always so. But our "is" or soku ze-"without changing," you know, "without waiting." You know, "A is B." That is actually what we mean. Right now it is so.

So we-if we, you know, catch things right now, "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form" because we catch it right now. Because we practice right now zazen, you know, not future or not past, we are Buddha himself. It does not mean-"Form is emptiness" does not mean "some day [laughs] we will-we will attain." That is, you know, right understanding of "Form is emptiness."

So in empty screen, you know, you will see many pictures-the projected pictures. Without screen you cannot see anything. Because of the screen, you can see many things. What is that screen now [laughs], you know? Screen is just parable, you know. In this parable, what do you mean by screen?

This is a kind of a training of your mind, you know, comparing your thinking faculty and non-thinking activity. The screen is "right now." Without screen you cannot see anything. You cannot have direct experience of anything, you know. Only by the screen you can see things. Only you, you know-the way you have direct experience of something is to experience it right now, not future or not past time. Do you understand?

So when you count your breathing: "one, two, three"-means "right now, right now, right now, right now." "Right now" is "one, two, three." It means that you never lose you practice. You will not be so rigid, you know, to try to do it in the future time, but right now. Whatever condition you are, you know, you should do it. Even though you are sleepy, when you do it, you know, you have direct experience of zazen practice. So, you know, this is-it looks like very rigid formula of-formula, but what it means is very direct and very clear: much clearer than, you know, formula of mathematics.

"Two plus two is four" is not so clear, you know, and it is not always so. But "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form" is very accurate. Only you are not familiar of this kind of, you know, formula. You think this is

just formula, you know [laughs]. You are-you will not be interested in-in it so much becau- [partial word]-if you-but if you become very sincere with your practice you will understand this formula [as being] very accurate and very explicit.

It means-chu or soku ze means "right now," or "practice"-real practice which you do right now. Okay? You know, so "Form is emptiness," you know. Right now it is so, but it is not always so. Do you understand? You don't understand [laughs, laughter]. Let me have a cup of [laughs] water. You have to think.

Wave and water, you know-right now, you know, it is-wave is water, water is wave. But if you think about it, if you have the idea of water and idea of wave because you saw it, you know -because you saw the wave and you have idea of water-here. And you may think: "But that is water. Water is something like this, you know." [May be referring to his cup of water.] But right now when you see waves on the water, wave is water and water is wave, right now-when you don't think.

What, what-that you think means, you know, you track [?] some movement, you know, activity and analyze wave from water. That is what you do when you think. But right now, you know [laughs], when you [whack-sounds like he hits one palm with his stick] hear the sound, that is-so that is, we say [whack, whack]. You know, which hand [laughs] make sound? [Whack.] Right now [laughs], you know, you cannot say which. Maybe this hand, maybe that hand, or maybe both [clap-sounds like he claps hands together]. You don't know. That is reality.

But when you think after you hear the, you know, sound, there is right hand and left hand and sound. But [whack], you know [whack], this time here, you know, right now sound is hand, hand is sound. Hands are sound.

So this, you know, chu or soku ze is very, very important. That is why Dogen-zenji left [?] Shobogenzo explaining "this moment, this moment, this moment." So "What does it mean?" is very important. It is a point by which our teaching, you know, means something.

If we lose this point, your practice doesn't work. Whatever teaching it may be, it doesn't work. That is "someone's," you know, teaching or teaching which you had long time ago. Or teaching which we will understand, you know, "sometime after" [laughs]-"someday." "Someday is no-day," we say [laughs]. Various [?] day after tomorrow [laughs]. "Day after tomorrow we will do it [laughs]. Day after tomorrow we will do it [laughs]." That is, you know-if you lose this point, nothing works.

Now the poem for the second statement-"Form is emptiness." By the way, when you say "Emptiness is form, and form is emptiness," you know, those two statements, you know, makes complete sense, you

know. Even though you say-when you say-when you just say, for an instance, "Sugar is something which is sweet," you know, there may be something, you know, besides sugar which can be sweet. But relationship between, you know, waves and water, you know-"There is no water except wave; there is no wave except water. So "Sugar is sweet"-statement "Sugar is sweet"-is not complete statement. The waves, you know, when you can say both way: "Waves and-is water and water is waves." Then water and waves are completely same thing, you know. If it is not same thing you cannot say in two ways.

So it means-when we say "Emptiness is form," it is, you know, more stronger. It means, you know, you cannot escape from this. You have no reason not to practice zazen. If you don't practice zazen, you know, you are not buddha because you are not in complete relationship between buddha and you. If you don't do that, you-it is like a water without wave. There is no such water exist, you know. If it is water it must have some, you know, wave. Even though you cannot see it, you know, there must be some waves.

So Dogen-zenji says: "Even though you are buddha, if you don't practice zazen, you are not buddha." [Bangs stick on table once for each of several preceding words.] Or you may say the other in this way: "If," you know, you miss this point" or if you understand yourself on this moment right now [bangs stick on table once for each of several preceding words], without moving anything-without moving even-without having even blink of-what-blinking [laughs]? What do you call this? Hmm?

Student: "Blink."

Suzuki-roshi: Blink [laughs]. Blink of eyes, you know, you cannot, you are not buddha. Without-without having blink, if you practice zazen, or if you do something, you are buddha.

There is no such buddha like dead buddha. Dead buddha is only exist in your mind-not-but actually, you know, there is no such thing exist. Something exists is-something and buddha. [Ohh.] Do you understand that? [Laughter.] Huh? [Laughs.]

So you have no reason why, you know, you are not buddha as long as you alive-as you are taking breathing-because form is emptiness and emptiness is form. That this world exist is because you are doing something right now, you know. That is why exist. Right now you are-because you are doing something.

But-but when you think about it-about our world-it is not real world-the world produced by thinking mind. Isn't that so [laughs]? So we should not be deluded by some idea which we just produce by thinking mind. By direct experience we should be buddha. That is what it means.



Okay.

The poem says: [5]

At dawn an ignorant old woman  
finds ancient mirror.

There was story in India-there were an old woman called Enyadatta [?]-Enyadatta. And he-he-she used to, you know, see herself in-in her old mirror. And she liked to see her beautiful face-or her beautiful eyes and eyebrow in the mirror. But one day she couldn't see the beautiful eyes in the mirror. So she was-she became crazy, you know, at seeing-when she thought she lost her beautiful, you know, eyes or face-eyes.

This is the story which we should understand first.

At dawn an ancient old woman  
finds ancient mirror

wherein she clearly sees her face

which cannot be elsewhere.

And this is the second one [line?]. And next one is:

No more will she reject her head

by grasping at its shadow.

"An old woman" means "form." An old ignorant woman means "form" or "seeming" or "attribute" opposite to the reality or original face. "At dawn"-early in the morning-"ignorant old woman find her ancient mirror." It means that, you know, form-the old man[6] and mirror is one.

When she, you know, see herself into the mirror, you know, she is the image in the mirror, and image in the mirror is herself. So it means "form is emptiness." Emptiness is old mirror, or original face, or emptiness. So here, old woman is-it means old woman is emptiness or original face.

The next line is:

Clearly, wherein the-wherein she clearly sees her face

which cannot be elsewhere.

This is the translation. This translation may be too beautiful, you know. If you are rigid-if you translate it literally:

"Clearly it is," you know, "nothing but the reality," you know.

Both is nothing but reality. She is mirror. Mirror is she. Image in the mirror is herself and herself is in image in the mirror. If you take her as a subject of the sentence, it means "emptiness is form, and clearly it is- they are nothing but the reality."

This is next line:

No more will she reject her head

by grasping at his shadow.

The har- [partial word]-

No more will she reject her head

by grasping at its shadow.

When she-she saw her eyes, you know, in the mirror, she was very happy. So she-she was grasping her head, in other words. And she, you know-but she rejected her head, you know, when she couldn't see her face in the mirror. So it means, you know, she thought-she took one and rejected another. But actually they are the same.

Tentatively, you may understand this way, you know: Early in the morning an old woman had a mirror. And old woman and image in the mirror is one. So it is foolish of her to reject, you know, her original- her own face, you know, accepting the face in the mirror. Even though, for some reason, she couldn't see her own face in the mirror, it does not mean she lost her face [laughs].

So-tentatively, you know, I want you to understand this way. But actually the story we have in Indian sutra Shurangam-dharani, you know.[7]

There were an old [wo]man, you know, who enjoyed to see her image-her face in the mirror. But when she, you know, wanted to see her beautiful, you know, eyes and eyebrow on her head, you know, it is not possible to see her face [laughs]. So even though she tried to see her eyes, you know-which she see, and eyebrow, you know-it is not possible to see, you know. But she became very discouraged when she couldn't see her beautiful eyes on his head without a mirror. And she became crazy. That was more like original story. I don't know which-which is true story but-

If we understand in that way-to reject her-not to reject her face-oh yeah, it-it means, you know, because she couldn't-just because she couldn't see, you know, her own beautiful eyes, but that is real, you

know, eyes-that is "form," you know. And that is nothing but the mirror [image?] she will see, almost all the time, in the old mirror. Old mirror means "reality."

So maybe better to understand this story in this way. Do you-did I explain [laughing] pretty well to make sense for you?

One story is, you know, she thought-when she thought she couldn't see her own face in the mirror, so she became crazy. Another one is: she-after seeing her beautiful face in the mirror, you know, he-she tried to see her own, you know, eyes and eyebrow on his-on her head [laughs], which is not possible. And she couldn't see, so she became crazy.

Anyway, this is just parable-parable, so-I don't mind which-whichever is true. But anyway it means that what you see, you know, right now, in this moment, is also reality-not after or not before. The right now, what you see, is reality.

Now when I come to America, you know-when I came to America, I didn't ask any information about Soko-ji temple. And at that time, there was no Zen Center [laughs]. So I have no way to ask what is Zen Center, but I could ask, you know, "Where is San Francisco?" at least. But I didn't, you know, study anything about San Francisco because I accepted to go to San Francisco, wherever the city is. I thought: "If I go there [laughs], I will find out with my eyes [laughs] what is San Francisco and what kind of temple Soko-ji is.

So only when you, you know-it is, you know-it may help, you know, but we shouldn't be too much interested in someone's talk, you know, or someone's rumor about future-future life. If you go there you will find it.

Maybe I am a kind of extremist [laughs, laughter]. Maybe it-it is better to know, you know, something about what we will-where we will go. But that kind of information-informations doesn't help you so much. And it will create your prejudice, you know, which will disturb- which will be a disturbance for your intuitive-intuition, I think.

Now, at this moment, is very important point.

The next one [of the shohengoi] is: "Form is form." Shochurai.

"Form is form" or Shochurai. Sho is "emptiness." [8] Chu is "right now," or "is." Rai is "come." So seeming in-according to Charles Luk [9]-seeming unite-uniting with the real-seeming uniting ... [10]

[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... as emptiness. That which exist is just emptiness, you know. It is utter darkness where you cannot see anything in it. That is shochurai. It

is enlightenment itself, in which anything doesn't [1-2 words unclear].

When someone, you know, attained enlightenment, he couldn't hear anything for three days, you know, or he couldn't see anything. Whatever he saw, things doesn't make any-made any sense, you know. It is the stage where you cannot find any particular meaning to things you see, or when you are completely detached from things you see. So for him, you know, things appears just like utter darkness. What he see is utter darkness. No perceptual world. Even in your zazen, you know, when your-you have very goodshikantaza, and if you hear the bird sing outside, there is no distance between you and bird. And you-actually you are not hearing the bird. And the bird is not anywhere-anywhere special-not on the tree, or across the stream, or on the wall-just [laughs], you know, sound-beautiful sound [laughs].

That is, you know-you may say that is "bird." But it is not even a bird. Afterwards, you know, you may say: "That was bird. It was very beautiful." But at that time it was not even a bird [laughs]. That is something like this. Or you-you don't even move, you know [laughs]. Just sound. Shhh. That is, you know, shochurai. In-in the new Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary it says: [11]

"Even in the state in which discriminative thinking is transcended, there exist power to manifest the function

of all the phenomenal-phenomena."

"Even in the stage-the state in which discriminative thinking is transcended, there exist power to manifest the function of all phenomena." The thinking or sensational world is-is already transcended completely, but still it has-still there exist-or there will be the manifestation of sound or color. Even though there are sound or color, you know, it is just same as no sound because that is the world of sound only or color only, you know. When it is color only, you know, it doesn't make any sense [laughs]. It is just one color only, you know. If something-if, you know, some-something just happened in that way. If sound-in the world of sound only-do you understand? The world of sound only-there is nothing but a sound-one sound-one sound of the bird.

That is the, you know, that sound is completely different sound from the sound you may hear in term of good or bad-or in term of who made that sound. Do you understand the difference? The difference between you have in everyday life, in usual sense, and the things you will hear in complete zazen. In the world of "things only," or "sound only," you hear. You cannot hear the sound-that kind of "sound only" or "sound only" when you are involved in, you know, lazy practice: "What time will it be?" "I am very sleepy this morning." "I should stay in bed more so that I can have good practice [laughs, laughter] next time," you know. In that kind of zazen [laughs], you will not hear the bird-the bird of sound

only.

This poem says-oh:

Hard though it be,

there is no way to-there-there is no way to keep free from dust.[12]

Tonight's ability to avoid what is forbidden-

There is no-oh [sorting through notes]-

Hard-hard though it be,

there is a way to keep free from dust.

Today's ability to avoid what is forbidden

surpasses yesterday's most eloquent discussion.

This is also-is not literal translation. "Hard though it be, there is a way to keep free from dust." If you translate it literally, "There is the way to keep yourself from dust."

It means that in-excuse me-can-there is a way to keep emptiness from dust. The "emptiness" means "original face" or "emptiness." And "dust" means the dualistic thinking mind. "There is a way-there is a way to keep our empty mind-to keep our emptiness from the dust of dualistic thinking mind." It is more, you know, literal translation.

"Today's ability-today's ability to avoid what is forbidden-what is forbidden. Today's ability, you know, to avoid what is forbidden" means, you know, we don't call [say] Emperor's name, you know. You call, you know, very intimately, friendly pres- [partial word]-name of the President, you know. But in China or in Japan, you know, we don't call Emperor's name by his first name, and he has no-he has no second name. He has just, you know, first name, and we don't call [say] his first name, even.

So "to avoid what is forbidden" means, you know, not to have the-not to call emptiness by name of many things, you know, like: "I attained enlightenment." Or, "Enlightenment experience is something difficult." And, "I have attained enlightenment." And, "This is big enlightenment." And, "This is minor enlightenment." [Laughs.] If you say so, it means that you-you couldn't avoid what is forbidden. You called the name of what-you called forbidden name [laughs].

So if-if someone ask you what is emptiness, you know, there is no way to say what it is. If you say something, that is not all-that is not

emptiness itself. We should know that, you know .

Hmm. I think I have to explain this point, you know, next night-next time. There is many misunderstanding in this area, you know. When you say, you know: "it is not possible," word is very-word has just limited sense, and there is some limit. It will give some limitation to-to the reality, you know.

Even though I say: "Water is cold" [laughing]-but if you don't drink it, you don't understand actually what is-what is water. This is just, you know-

But when we say words is-when we say-we do not say-explain the limitation of the word, but we use words to point out the reality. So we do not mean to reject the word, or to reject our head. We should not reject our head. We should not reject our word even though it is not perfect.

And if you talk about limitation of, someone thinks: "If he thinks-if he talk about how imperfect ability-how poor ability it has-our thinking mind, our words-is, you know, Zen," you know, it is not so. If he is real Zen student, he should be able to point out, you know, by word, what is emptiness or what is enlightenment. At least he should try to do so instead of rejecting word-instead of rejecting the intellectual understanding of sutra. This point is very important because there are many people who make this kind of mistake. Just talking about "word" is no good [laughs]. The intellectual understanding is-doesn't mean anything. It is so poor it-we cannot communicate by words. The only way is to attain enlightenment. Unless you sit and attain enlightenment, you cannot study Zen [laughs]. So I don't explain what it is. "Just sit!" This is, you know, another mistake. If you understand zazen in that way, that is also a mistake.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields (7/10/00) and Bill Redican (7/18/00).

[1] shochuhen: The first of the shohengoi, the five degrees or ranks of enlightenment, a system developed by Tozan Ryokai et al. One definition is "ultimate reality encompassing phenomena" (The Japanese-English Zen Buddhist Dictionary, Tokyo: Sankibo, 1991, p. 684). Phenomena dominate consciousness, but they are experienced as a manifestation of fundamental reality (Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen, p. 69).

[2] henchusho: The second of the shohengoi: "phenomena encompassing ultimate reality" (Sankibo, *ibid.*). Nondistinction becomes prominent; multiplicity fades (Shambhala, *ibid.*).

[3] From the Heart Sutra: "Form is emptiness."

[4] From the Heart Sutra: "Emptiness is form."

[5] From the Mahayana Shurangama Sutra (Ryogon-kyo), "The Sutra of the Heroic One." See, e.g., Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, pp. 57-60. The tale is not in verse form in the Sanskrit/Chinese versions, so Suzuki-roshi is probably translating from the Japanese Ryogon-kyo.

[6] Enyadatta is female in the Japanese version of the tale and male (Yajñadatta or Vajradatta) in the original Indian tale.

[7] "The Buddha said, 'Did you hear about Yajñadatta from Shravasti who on impulse one morning held a mirror to his face and fell in love with the head in the mirror? He gazed at the eyes and eyebrows but got angry because he could not see his own face. He decided he must be a mountain or river sprite, lost control, and ran madly about'" (Shurangama Sutra, Taisho Tripitaka, No. 945; translation by the Buddhist Text Translation Society).

[8] Sho means "emptiness" in the case of the third stage, "the fundamental" in the case of the second, and "the absolute" in the case of the first-i.e., it is used as the opposite of hen (Shambhala Dictionary, p. 69).

[9] Suzuki-roshi may be referring to Charles Luk's *Śuraṅgama Sutra* (Leng Yen Ching), London: Rider and Company, 1966, or *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, London: Rider and Company, 1960.

[10] The Japanese-English Zen Buddhist Dictionary, 1991, defines this stage as "ultimate reality alone" (p. 684). In this stage, one no longer has an awareness of body and mind: both drop away (Shambhala Dictionary, p. 69).

[11] Daito Shuppansha Publishing Company, 1965. Suzuki-roshi is reading its definition of shochurai.

[12] Note.-Translated as a positive statement immediately below (i.e., there is a way).

#### **4 - Question and Answer Session**

Tuesday, July 08, 1969

Question and Answer Session

San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: Tonight I have nothing special which I want to talk [about]. Of course, there may be many things which I must talk [about], but I cannot think of anything right now. And I don't know what kind of thing is to be told. Maybe-so may be better to answer your question. If you have some question please ask me. And at first I will-I want you to make several questions, and I will try to answer for it. Do you have some questions? Hai.

Student A: Will you speak of purity and worship?

Suzuki-roshi: Purity? Uh-huh. And worship. Some other questions too?

Student B: Could you speak of shikantaza?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: You said once that when someone's been enlightened it's just so much "candy." [SR laughs.] Could you explain that?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Oh.

Student D: With-with practice it seems that if I'm just following the natural flow, but if my practice changes often, sometimes watching breathing, sometimes just sitting, really involved in whatever I am doing, it just seems sort of unnatural just to try to stick with one particular practice like [1-2 words unclear] or watching breathing.

Suzuki-roshi: Okay, that's maybe enough [laughs]. Most of your question is-excuse me, will you-

Student E: Could you-could you speak on the practice of not-thinking or no thought during zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Mostly, you know, the-your questions may be about practice, shikantaza, or your question is worship and purity of mind. And purity of mind is also something-the idea of purity of mind is how we practice shikantaza. Or "Enlightenment is just candy." That statement is rather [laughs], you know, maybe blasphemous or something like that. Or to attach to one practice is-looks like unnatural, you know.

Maybe, after all, I have to explain [laughs] how we should practice anyway: the purpose of practice or how you practice. Natural, you know, not-by "n-" [partial word]-our practice should be pure or should be natural. Or we should not be-our practice should not be encouraged by some candy, you know. To be natural or to be-to have pure practice or "to have no candy in our practice" means, after all, to have deeper practice. And our intention to practice zazen is not just in term of pure



or impure, or successful or unsuccessful, or natural or unnatural. Those, you know-maybe what you mean is deeper than what you say, you know. But if I take it literally it looks like very-not so deep, you know.

When you say-when we say "pure," it is more emotional, you know: good and bad practice in its emotional term. Pure or impure is also-maybe emotional area-a field. You say "pure" or "impure." But our practice is more than that. So we do not practice zazen, whether it is Rinzai or Soto-we do not practice zazen to experience some special experience. And when we say "enlightenment" it does not mean to have some experience-some particular experience, according to Rinzai, you know. To-whatever it is, whatever the experience may be, if you feel it or if you understand it, that is not [what] we mean by enlightenment experience.

Enlightenment experience is some experience-to experience-to go beyond you or your surrounding, or teaching, or zazen, or-zazen practice-or enlightenment, or someone who practice zazen, and zazen in its-in some form. Of course there is no idea of koan practice or shikantaza. Koan practice-you know, you-you know, you may say that that is koan practice, that is shikantaza. But when you experience enlightenment experience, actually there is no koan practice or shikantaza. And if you say, "This is," you know, "the enlightenment experience," that is not actually the true experience-enlightenment experience.

So how you practice zazen is without expecting, you know, some special-without dreaming of something, you know, in your mind. Without expecting some special experience you should devote yourself fully in your practice. When that is difficult we count our breathing or we practice koan practice. The koan practice or counting breathing practice is some help, you know. To help our pure practice, we use koan or counting breathing.

We say, "counting breathing practice." It is not actually to-purpose of counting breathing is not to count your breathing without mistake. Even though we try not to make mistake [laughs]-but we try [?] not to make any mistake. But the purpose of zazen is not just to count our breathing without any mistake. To engage in, you know, a full practice we count our breathing. That you can count your breathing without mistake means you are fully engaged in true practice. [Laughs.] Do you understand the difference? Just count your breathing, and-between just to count your breathing and when you are-you are able to-when you are counting your breathing without mistake, that is perfect, you know, that is perfect practice. There is some difference. You may-you can count your breathing, you know, even [if] you are-you have lazy posture like this [gestures, laughs], without mistake, from one to ten and go back to one. But that is not true zazen because your body, you know, activity is not fully engaged in the practice. All of mind and body should be engaged in one full practice. And to help this kind of entire practice of

body and mind, we count our breathing. So counting breathing is just, you know-handle of-handle of your jar, like this [gestures], you know. Not jar itself, just-that is just handle of the jar which you may take hold of. Or it is something to-some way to encourage your pure practice. That is, you know, counting breathing practice. That is not actual purpose of zazen, but it is aid of pure practice.

If I say so, at the same time you will have some mistake. If, you know, that is just aid of practice, you know, it is not so important. So you may make some mistake, but that doesn't matter, you know. But that is not also true. So even though you make best effort in your counting breathing, the purpose of counting breathing practice is not just [to] count. Even though it is not the purpose of practice, you sh- [partial word]-you must, you know, try to count your breathing without mistake.

Do you understand this much? Or, if necessary, I have to explain, you know, more completely. But I don't want to explain so-in so-in some-I don't want to give you another problem, you know [laughs], in an-[partial word]-by my answer. Is that okay with you, or-

And pure practice is, you know, the practice-when you practice-when your practice is beyond pure or impure, that is pure practice we mean. And to sit "without candy" means, you know, also to practice our way beyond our-beyond the idea of what is the purpose of zazen. Even the idea of enlightenment we should not have. Even though you-once you attain enlightenment, and you should not try to have same experience. That kind of thing, that kind of practice is not right practice. Does it make some sense?

And "natural," you know-and here is-natural practice, you know, our-you like word "natural," you know. Because you like it so much [laughs], I don't agree with your idea of natural. Because you like it so much, you stick to the natural-naturalness too much. When you stick to it, it is not natural any more. [Laughs, laughter.] We-we, you know-our life is not natural, you know. But, you know, to do something, you know, without any idea of what you should do, you know, idea of any particular way, that is maybe naturalness. But "natural" we mean-by natural we mean more than that. Before we discuss naturalness, you know, we should know how unnatural our human being are [laughs]. We are very unnatural being. We are not natural being. Our way of life is not so natural-very, you know, twisted and very unnatural.

Recently, you know, people are going to extremes, you know. To go to the extreme will be natural [laughs] according to your connotation of naturalness. But we don't mean that is natural. Do you think usually what you do is quite natural? We say, [1] you know: "to be free from"- "to obtain our natural order of mind we should be free from greed," we say, you know. What does it mean? To open our mind fully.

So when we, you know-when we are free from greed, and anger, and

foolishness, we will have natural order of mind. That kind of naturalness is our naturalness. Do you understand the difference? Your naturalness [is?] to be greedy, to be angry [laughs]-whenever you become angry, to be angry, and to eat as much as you want, that is naturalness. But that is not the naturalness we mean. Very different, you know, actually.

Naturalness-natural mind or-means maybe more flexible mind, you know, without sticking to something rigidly. When we-when we are-when we have-when our mind is perfect freedom from everything, and when our mind is open to everything like a mirror, you know, the mirror do not have any particular image on its face always. So it is naturally-naturally it will have various images according to the object. That is naturalness.

Zazen mind-we say stop your thinking, but when we think, you know, our-to think is to-to have some picture of something, you know, in term of long or short, or white or black, you know. That is thinking mind. So when we start to think, our mind will be dead, you know. So when we don't think, you know, our mind is open to various objects.

My friend is studying Chinese. After finishing his schooling, he started to study. Even he was at school he was very much interested in Chinese classics, about herbs and medicine. And he is still studying: collecting Chinese books about various therapy or medicine or herbs. According to Chinese classics we have two minds. One is here and the other is here [gestures]. This mind is called yang mind, and this is yin mind. Yin and yang, two minds. And this mind is, you know-the center of this mind is branch of this mind. According to-he says, according to some American doctor, it is possible for us to be alive even [if] this mind of your[s] is cut off from the yin mind here. What do you call the center of, you know, nervous system in your-?

Student F: Solar plexus.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student F: Solar plexus.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. I don't know where, but-I understand it is some-center is here or here [gestures]. And Chinese people called our navel, God-"gate of God." This is very important, you know. So I don't know where, but according to Chinese-old Chinese people, we have five minds which has various different function. We have five organs here, and we have five function of mind here which is more autom- [partial word]-automnal-or what do [you call it]-au- [partial word]?

Student G: Genetic.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student G: Genetic?

Student H: Autonomic?

Suzuki-roshi: Automatic-yeah, autonomous, maybe. Like blink of your eyes, you know. When I do like this [gestures], maybe this mind is, you know, working. But mostly this mind is not working when you blink your eyes or-nothing to do with this mind when our heart beats or movement of tummy. And 99% of our nervous activity is more autonomous or vegetable-like nervous system. And center of those vegetable-like nervous system is here [gestures]. And this is, you know-when we human being became more and more human-like, we started to form some mind here [gestures], which is thinking mind. And we started to talk, you know, to communicate, to give some idea to others. We started to have this mind which is branch of-maybe more fundamental one is [pats himself three times] this mind.

Why did I started to talk about [laughs, laughter] something like this?

But, anyway, we put more emphasis on here [gestures], you know. More original and more basic activity rather than limited thinking mind, which will, you know, be the disturbance, or which will give some strong disturbance or change [?], you know, to the original activity of life. The more you think, you know, the more your mind become busy, you cannot digest, you know, or you will have some trouble in your tummy. So when your mind is open, this mind [gestures] is more open and natural, you know, in its true sense, you will have more active, more natural, good activity of your emotional activity.

So, anyway, in our practice, we sh- [partial word]-we put more emphasis on to get rid of various-to free our physical activities from our mental activity. So physiologically, you know, you can explain why we put emphasis on to attain more, you know, natural function of our mind and body. Usually, you know, this mind has too much authority, you know, to your emotional activity. "You should feel this way" [laughs, hits stick on table twice], you know. Or "Even though you feel in that way, that is not possible," you know, this mind will tell, you know, your emotional activity. "That is just superstition," you know. "Even though you feel good, that is just superstition." Or "It is-you have-we have no time to do so. Even though you feel sorry for him, we have no time to save him." So in that way, you know, our-this mind has, in our life-this mind has more dominating power over our activities of life, which is not, you know, so good.[2]

So naturalness, usually, is not true naturalness, you know. Maybe naturalness of your mind [laughs] maybe, mind only, which is not so natural in its true sense. Do you have some other questions? Hai.

Student I: You mentioned some practices which we could use in our daily practice besides zazen-formal practice-zazen, which might help us

rid ourselves of this thinking mind or less addictive [?], our mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Although I said, you know, in that way, I rather put emphasis on-right now put emphasis on more emotional activity rather than thinking mind, you know. But it does not mean thinking mind is not, you know-is bad, you know. It is important too. So in our daily life, you know, if we know this point, it will be help. But actually the best way is to practice Zen and to-to have this kind of naturalness in your-this kind of naturalness which you have in your practice should-could be-should be extended to your nat- [partial word]-everyday life, you know, usual activities. That is, you know, what we try to do more.

Student I: The difficulty seems to be that I use my thinking mind to rid myself of the influence it has on my thinking mind. [2-4 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: But-that is more, you know-that will be the-I think, you know, even just to know, you know, this kind of thing actually doesn't help so much, you know. Even though you know it, you know, even though you know you have a lot of, you know, money in your bank, it doesn't help so much [laughs], you know. When you actually use it, it will be a great help. But just to know something about it-this kind of teaching or explanation-is not much help actually. So best thing is to have actual, you know, practice to control your thinking mind and to free your everyday life from thinking mind, and just to use your thinking mind when it is necessary. That is, you know, that is important, but how you do it is not just to know this kind of thing. And only way to do it is to have actual power to do it. And how to obtain this kind of power is [to] practice zazen.

So, you know, when you practice zazen, that is why you must have strong determination or confidence in your practice. The way you practice zazen is not-should not be like to read some book, you know, to find out something good [laughs]-something good, you know, or to be fascinated [by] some beautiful experience. This is very, you know, shallow, and your determination is not strong enough. So when you practice zazen, you must have strong confidence, like: "Whatever happen to me, I will not stop s- [partial word]-my zazen." This kind of-so your-you should be dead, you know [laughs], on your practice. That kind of, you know, attitude is necessary. It is not just to think something or to find out something. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Student J: ... So there's many types of work that we can do. We can do work that involves thinking, we can do work that involves teaching like with children, do work which is nothing but physical work, you know. Power [?] is very tiring. And all of these different kinds of work-it all takes some consideration, it seems. And lately I've been giving it quite a consideration, and sometimes I don't really know what kind of work would be most beneficial for a frame of mind which would be good for zazen. I wanted to ask you if there are certain types of work or

employment that should be avoided and certain kinds that are more beneficial.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. Right is, of course, better to choose your work. But I think there will be two kinds of work, you know. It is just physical work, you know, without using, you know, your mind so much. And the other is opposite, you know, like office work or counting something-calculating something. This kind of work is just, you know, mental work in which you cannot, you know, practice koan study, you know [laughs]. You cannot practice koan study when you are counting something. But if that is just physical work, you can do it. But mostly I classified in this way, but most work is not purely mental or physical-maybe mixture of both. So I think best way is to be concentrated on what you do-what you are doing. That is mostly [how] we apply our practice in our everyday life. Not to-to be concentrated on what you do. Maybe most work is more mental than physical. Don't you think so?

Student J: I think it's better if it is more physical than mental.

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student J: It should be better for us if it was more physical than mental.

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know which is better. Physical-physical one is also difficult, you know, and you will be very much tired of-physically tired. And it is not so good-if you are tired out too much, I don't think you can practice zazen after your work. So even though you practice zazen, it will not help, you know, immediately, you know [laughs]. Little by little you will gain the power, but it will not help, you know, like to drink some honey, you know [laughs]. When I cough, if I take some water it helps a lot, but zazen will not help so-so well immediately. But, you know, it will-what you gain in zazen will not, you know, go away. That is advantage of our practice.

Our practice make your mind clear, you know, and make your physical and emotional activity natural and stronger, and make your character more, you know, like this [gestures?], more natural and-so you will give good feeling to others. This is very important too. When you are-when you give good feeling to others, at the same time you will have good feeling too. Do you agree with that? [Laughs.]

Student K: What is the place of love and devotion in our practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Love and devotion in our practice? Both love and devotion is very important. But, you know, love or devotion should be, you know, defined. It is not-love or devotion in its usual sense is not so, you know-is not polished up-love or devotion. We do not believe in some label, you know [laughs]: "love", "devotion," or some beautiful words. That is just paper [laughs], you know, picture. So we are not so interested in just picture. What it means is, you know, more important. Love or devotion

is-must be something which is-which could be recognized by others, rather than to-or-to have some confidence in it, you know. Even though you say, "I love you," you know, or "I love practice" [laughs]-but if practice doesn't say, you know, "Oh, thank you," [laughing] it doesn't mean much, you know. Maybe that is your love, but it doesn't help-it doesn't mean so much for others, you know. So, again, naturalness is important: something which comes out from the source of your, you know, character. That is more important things than some idea or some beautiful words. Hai.

Student L: For about the last hundred years, in Western culture, I think the idea that maybe we're too civilized has come up a lot. And with Sigmund Freud, the discovery that the suppression of many animal instincts such as anger, may lead to mental illness, may lead to more problems-that on the one hand, if you allow complete freedom of animal impulses, you know, chaos [results]. But if you suppress them too much, people become unhappy and even destroy themselves in other ways. How would Zen Buddhism look on that problem and how would it resolve that seeming conflict which Freud could not see any resolution in that? He thought men must be always somewhat neurotic, somewhat sick because of that conflict.

Suzuki-roshi: I couldn't clearly follow you, but Zen, you know-I cannot say, you know, our way is like this or like that, you know, because I- And we don't like to say, "this is Zen" or "that is Zen," or "This is the true way" or "That is not." But we-tonight I have no time to explain it, but we have some formula, you know, to avoid from going to extreme, you know, and to have always right judgement about things you see, about what you do, or about what you want to do. There is some, you know, not teachings, but some way to observe things more effectively and more clearly-to know what is wrong with it, you know, with your activity, or with what you did, or what you want to do.

So, usually, you know, I'm sorry to say that, but when you ask questions, you know, you want to know exactly what is Zen, you know, but we don't want to say, you know, what is Zen because something which was said will create some problem. Hai.

Student L: My question really wasn't, "What is Zen?" It's more, just, how to live.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: Maybe it would be simpler [?] if I give an example. If I am angry at something-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: -if I completely suppress my anger-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -but it stays in me-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -it may be bad for me. It may-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student L: -be very bad for my life-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student L: -for my practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student L: -say, sitting. If I express it, I get rid of it-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: -but I may hurt somebody else.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student L: So what am I going to do?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] I think it is more harmless to express it, you know, than to suppress it. But at that time you know-you must know what is anger, you know. Anger is not something which, you know-actually, we cannot be angry with anything, you know. [Laughs, laughter.] Actually, when you are angry at it, something wrong with it-with you, yourself, you know-or your understanding of you about something. But to show, you know, "I am so foolish," you should be angry. Not to, you know, not to stop someone, you know, to do something or, you know, to suppress something, but to show your foolishness you should be angry. "Oh, I am sorry. I must be angry!" [Thumps table dramatically at "angry." Laughs.] Then it will-it will be [a] help [to] you yourself and others too. So at that time you are free from anger, actually, and you-being angry you will be helped, you know, because you don't suppress your feeling.

We have precepts: "Don't be angry," you know [laughs]. And Dogen-zenji's explanation to it is: Anger will be the beautiful cloud in the sky, or beautiful, you know, waves of water. When the sun lights or the moon lights, you will-we will have, you know, water in the sea, in the wa- [partial word]-moon in the-on the water. The anger is something like that.



So according to him, there is no need to suppress it because it is so beautiful [laughs]. But when you say it is so beautiful it is not so beautiful. When you [are] just angry, you know, like a boy, like a naughty boy, it may be very beautiful. That kind of humbleness is more important, and if we practice our way you will understand how difficult it is to be humble. So maybe better to be just honest. Whatever you do, you know-we should know that whatever you do or whatever you did is not perfect, so you should say, "Oh, excuse me" [laughs]-whatever you do, "Excuse me."

If a master slaps his student [makes mock scolding noise], and you should say-he should say, "Excuse me" [laughs] to himself. [Whispers:] "Excuse me" [laughs, laughter]. But usually, you know, after you hitting someone, and you should kick him [laughs], and toss him, and he would be tired out [laughs, laughter]. That is not so good. Some other question? Hai.

Student M: You suggested to us that as students we should try to steal our teacher's way.

Suzuki-roshi: Ohhh. [Laughs.] [Mistakes "way" for "wife."]

Student M: I-I-[you said] something like that.

Suzuki-roshi: Did I? Did I say so? No. [Laughter]. I have no idea, you know, being stolen my wife. [Laughs, laughter.] Okay.

Student M: Do you-will you please explain how we commit that crime?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] How? [Asked with astonishment.] Do you want to commit that crime? [Laughter.]

Student M: To steal your way.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Way?

Student M: Your way.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh! I thought you said "wife." [Laughing, laughter.] "How-how I should steal my teacher's wife!" Way! I see. I shall be very glad to be stolen my way.

How you steal teacher's way may be not difficult, but may take pretty long time. But even though you are-if you are patient enough, or if you like him, naturally you will-eventually you will steal his way completely. That is true. It happens in that way. Even though you don't try to imitate his way. Or even though you hate to, you know, to steal his way, it is quite- I don't know why it happens in that way. So, you know, to be a teacher is awful, you know [laughs]. We don't know-because we don't know who is stealing-who or when, you know, stealing our way.

So it is-you should-you reminded me [of] a[n] awful thing I was almost forgotten. And students will learn something a teacher, you know, want him not to, you know, steal or learn. If, you know, his teacher is forgetful, his student may be forgetful easily, quite easily. But even though his teacher is patient it may be difficult-it may take long time when his student become patient as his teacher. So something what, you know, teacher want his student to steal something, he may not steal it.

So we say-Dogen-zenji says, "You-we must practice hard for our descendant, for our disciples," you know-not for himself but for-if he-if we know how important it is to have good disciple, then he must practice very hard. That is very true. When we come to this point, you know, our practice is not just for us-or our practice is just for disciples, or for others, rather than for ourselves.

So when we have real relationship of teacher and disciple, that relationship is much deeper than the relationship between your children and you, or your wife and, you know, you or husband and you. It is much deeper than that.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (2/1/01).

[1] From the formal meal chant: "Desiring the natural order of mind, we should be free from greed, hate, and delusion."

[2] The transcriber believes the antecedent of "which" is "activities," not the relationship of mind to activities.

## **5 - Form and Emptiness II**

Wednesday, December 31, 1969

Form and Emptiness II  
Tassajara

In our previous lectures we have studied the relationship between-relationship between real and seeming, or emptiness and forms. [By] "real" we mean something beyond our thinking. This is, you know,-there is no way to-whatever, you know, we say about it, it is the expre-[partial word]-just suggestion, you know, not real or emptiness itself. It

is something beyond our thinking mind, so we call it "emptiness."

It is not actually something which we can understand in term of good or bad, real or not real. And seeming and all-whatever it is-all what we say, you know, everything what we say or what we see is forms. And we actually live in the world of forms and color, you know. And we don't know, actually, what is emptiness itself. Even-we call it "emptiness," you know, there is some rules, you know, how emptiness takes various form. So according to some rules, emptiness take its form and color. And we are explaining about the relationship between emptiness and form which we can see.

Right now we have been mostly discussing rather philosophical way, but tonight may be better to explain it more psychological way or physical way. According to Buddhist psychology, you know, of course, we have five senses, and thinking mind, and to-some faculty to lead our thinking mind in false, you know-to make our thinking mind mistake, you know. That kind of faculty we have. And there is also some faculty to point out the mistake of the seventh mind, you know. Five senses and thinking mind, that is six. Seventh one is, you know, to make our mind made-make mistake. That is the sixth one-the seventh [corrects self] one. That is the mind which let our thinking mind stick to something, you know. There is [laughs] no need to stick to something, you know, actually. But seventh mind, you know, make sixth mind to stick to something.

The truth we think-idea we have is not always-should not be always same. It should change. But we [are] liable to stick to some-some idea. Why we do so is because of the sixth mind we explain. And that sixth mind is, of course, mistake, you know. We should not stick to some idea always, because everything is changing. If things in reality [are] changing, our mind should change also. But we [are] liable to think, you know, something always exist, something which we see-which we saw always exist and some conclusion we reached is always true. But it is not so. Today's, you know, conclusion will not be true anymore tomorrow, maybe. But we [are] liable to stick to some conclusion or idea. That is the seventh mind.

And eighth-eight one-eighth one told us-tell us, you know, that is also mistake. And eighth one-eighth sense is at the same time the storehouse of various, you know, ideas and knowledge. And eighth-eighth sense is just the purpose of-motto [?] of the eighth sense is just to keep things as it is, old and new. Everything is mountain and river, whatever it is, you know. What we see is always kept in our mind. That is eight-eighth one. And it include also not only knowledge or ideas but also outward object-so-called-it outward object: objective world, including mountain and stones and river and water. Everything, you know, which we call "objective world" is included in our eighth mind. So eighth mind or sense is both subjective and objective, and material and spiritual.

But most of us-most of us are very much involved in thinking mind, and we do-we ignore the more fundamental minds-mind. Because we put more emphasis on thinking mind, so we ignore, you know, our tummy [hara], you know, which is the center of more vegetable-like nervous system. We call it-I think you call it "autonomous [autonomic] nervous system," you know. This is the center of the autonomous system. And, you know, our brain is the center of thinking mind, you know. And it-our nervous system connect both center, you know, like this [probably gestures].

We know many things about our brain system, but we don't know whether have mind here or not. But from ancient time, Oriental people studied a lot about this mind. Just very-you ca-[partial word]-I don't think you-you have any idea of having some mind here in your tummy [?]. And to our great surp- [partial word]-astonishment, you know, the most, you know, maybe 99 percent of our nervous system [consists] of more vegetable-like system, not, you know, smart thinking nervous system. And we-Chinese people call mind here [points to brain?] is yang; and this mind here [points to hara?] is yin. Some people understand yang is better than yin or powerful-more powerful than yin, but that is not right. Both yin and yang is important.

So yin means, you know, some-something which produce many things. That is yin, like earth, you know. Earth is yin, and the sun is, you know, yang. And yang, you know, help producing us many things. And woman is yin, and man is-a man is yang [laughs]. I-we don't know which is more important [laughter, laughs]. Anyway, both is necessary, yin and yang.

And Chinese people thinks this mind we have here is-or this mind or nervous center-center of vegetable-like nerves is here [hara?], right here. And this is actually, you know, a branch of, you know, this nervous system, according to Chinese understanding of mind. So even though you cut off our mind from this mind, you know-cutting off the connection between this mind and this mind, still, you know, you can survive. And you-still you can-you will have children, you know. Still you can eat. If you cut off this mind from yin mind, this center, you know, exist, but this center stop, you know, working. So that is why, you know, we put emphasis on practice of here [hara], you know. If you practice-if you practice zazen, you will have more active autonomous nervous system. On the other hand-on the contrary, if you use too much thinking mind, it will affect the activity of your nervous center here and will create some indigestion or some-will create some trouble to your tummy or lung which is in-in your tummy [hara].

We, you know-by the way [sounds of Suzuki-roshi writing on a blackboard], it [niku] means "flesh," you know, and this [do] means earth, which is in.[1] And this character means hara. This is hara.

The flesh-earth-or in nature's flesh, you know, here [in the hara]. And it is-so this is very important part [laughs]. It is not just to-tummy is not to just to keep your various things, you know-bag to keep it-various thing in it. It is very important, you know. Hara.

So in our practice we rather stop our thinking and encourage our activity of more vegetable-like nerve [nervous system]. And this is nearer to the understanding of reality. We-we analyze things for some purpose, you know. But more important thing is to support ourself, you know, in healthy condition. And you can analyze things, and think about something, and try to make our life easy-easier. But first of all, we have to keep ourselves healthy.

So even though-so maybe, you know, that is why we are now more interested in medicine or medical science rather than philosophy nowadays, I think. And when you become more interested in medical science, eventually we will [become] more interested in study of our own hara. And Chinese people say-according to Chinese people, we have five, you know, five organ in our body. And each one of us-each one of them has some special-not thinking, but nervous activity. My friend is very-now in Japan, authority of Chinese medical-medicine, and he has been-he was a good student when we were studying together. But he started to-he became interested in herbs and Chinese medicine. And he is still continuing reading many books, and [studying] relationship between Zen and Chinese medicine. It is so voluminous that I have no time to follow his books, you know.

But what he describe in those magazine or books is very interesting. And he has big confidence in our future medicine, which is almost, you know, vanished from China and from Japan after Meiji period, when we are more interested in Western medical science. So, according to our law, we cannot be a doctor unless we study Western medicine. That is only way to be a-to have license, you know, as a doctor. And we have still therapy, for an instance-what you call it?-to burn our skin,[2] you know, on some point, you know, or to put a needle,[3] you know-by needle here we help some people. But they are just popular therapists. They have no-they have license, but they have no license to diagnose-diagnose a patient. If y- [partial word]-if they come, they will see him, and, of course, you know, unless he knows what is wrong with him, he cannot use his therapy. But by law it is prohibited to make some prescription or [to] diagnose a patient. But if you study more-nowadays it is very difficult to have-to read books-to collect books because we haven't not much books even. In China, also, those valuable classics is no more. So he has very difficult time to study Chinese medicine.

This is not what I wanted to talk [about] tonight [laughs], but anyway

what I want to say is, you know: Thinking mind-in our practice, you know, we stop-rather stop our thinking mind to make our more fundamental activity active. Sometime we say "direct experience." What does it mean physically or psychologically? More to stop our thinking mind and to open our basic mind-our practice, physically speaking or psychologically speaking. Anyway we-Western p-[partial word]-Eastern people or Oriental people-our base of-for Oriental people, base of our thinking is oneness, you know, oneness. And that one will be divided yin and yo-yin and yang. There is no yin and yang, or seeming or reality, quite separate element, you know. One-originally it is one element, and yin or yang is two side of one element.

So we catch, you know, our things in the picture of yin and yang, or seeming or reality, you know. That is just picture of one reality, you know. It is not-we don't think, "Here is seeming, and here is reality," or, "Here is yin, and here is yang," you know, and, "Yang is better than yin," or "Yin is better than-more powerful than yang." We don't think in that way.

And-our world will be divided [into] yin and yang, will be divided, you know. Our world will be divided in two. But temporary we can divide it in two, but it does not mean our world is consist of yin and yang. Yin plus yang is not our world. But we, you know, tentatively divide or analyze our world in two: yin and yang. Do you understand the difference? So it is difference of-base of the thinking mind. Your thinking mind is based on duality and our Oriental thinking is based on more oneness.

So even though we use those-this kind of formula, this is a picture of reality, you see? Just picture of reality. We understand reality in this way, that's all. It does not mean there is, you know, form and co-[partial word]-emptiness, something which is called emptiness and which is something called form. Form and emptiness is originally one. But because of our rigid, limited thinking mind, or to destroy our thinking mind, we use this kind of tools. This is a tools to destroy our thinking mind, or destroy-by "destroy" I mean to be free from thinking mind.

And tonight I think I have to explain this one: "Form is emptiness." Oh-excuse me. "Form is form." When we call "form," there is nothing but form-form-world of form only. After we understand or accept the formula of "form of emptiness, emptiness is form," and "emptiness is emptiness," we will reach the understanding of world of form only-form only.

I think you will understand the world of form only. Actually, you know, whether you understand Buddhism or not, maybe we are actually living in the world of form only. But this form include thinking mind too-everything: physical and spiritual. Whatever it is, what we think is world of form only. So actually we live in world of form only, but there is difference between Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Buddhist also live in

world of form only, you know. But there is difference. The difference is, you know, Buddhist understand "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form, and emptiness is emptiness, and form is form," you know. But usual people understand-do not understand "emptiness is form, and form is emptiness, and form is form, emptiness is emptiness." That is the difference. Usual people, you know, in short, do not, you know, have any experience of zazen practice, any experience of stopping thinking mind to reach the world "form"-[corrects self] "emptiness is emptiness."

So for usual people, you know, to lose something is very discouraging, you know. Like the old Indian-Indian old woman, you know, who happened to see in her mirror no head [laughs]. [4] She couldn't-see, one morning, her own head in his [her] mirror, so she was very much discouraged, you know. We Buddhist will not be discouraged, even though, you know, we die because we know form is emptiness. Originally we are empty. Originally we are not here, you know, because we are changing moment after moment. I am here, but tomorrow I shall be quite different person because I am changing always into someone-something else. I cough a lot tonight, but I may not cough tomorrow morning [laughs], so I'm not same person. So [if] I die in two days, you know, Suzuki and new Suzuki will be born in tomorrow morning. That is, you know, our understanding of ourselves. That is the difference.

But I am right here, you know, and I am doing something. I am talking to you and you are listening to me, so we are involved in same activity. So we are doing same thing, but our understanding of life is different. Actually difference is, you know, whether you understand our life in this way, you know, with five ways or with one way is the difference.

Usually we understand things-as I said, "Form is form." [Laughs.] "I am I," you know. "Table is table." "Fire is fire." That is our usual understanding. And that understanding is called "dualistic understanding." So in one way, Western culture is enemy of [laughs] Oriental culture, or good husband of Oriental culture, maybe. Enemy and, you know, good husband is same thing [laugh, laughter]-not different at all. Good, you know, good couple are always fighting [laughs]-quarrel-get into quarrel. So we say, "You should not try to," you know, "[get] involved in the quarrel of husband and wife." He may be very good friend, you know. He is so good to continue their quarrel. But, you know-so whatever the relationship may be, it is all right, you know. For Buddhist it is all right. For non-Buddhist it is, maybe, big problem [laughs]. So we must be able to, you know, have various picture of same reality.

[Sound of papers being shuffled. Long pause.]

Do you have some question? By the way, can you hear me? [Laughs, laughter.] [Turned tape over here.]

Student A: You mentioned a part of the Shobogenzo that we should

read? The "Shakokate"?[5] And I didn't hear what it was, and I'm getting very curious.

Suzuki-roshi: Shakura practice?

Student A: Yeah. You said that if it didn't sound absolutely right, there was something wrong with our practice. Something that we should read-some part of the Shobogenzo .

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. [Laughs.]

Student A: Do you remember?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I don't remember [laughter]. Shobogenzo?

Student A: I think so; I'm not sure. Shobogenzo maybe-

Suzuki-roshi: When? Recently?

Student A: Oh, maybe a month ago. Is that-

Suzuki-roshi: When I was talking about counting-breathing exercises?

Student A: Uh-huh.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Chakra.

Student B: To check our practice. He said to check our practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, check.

Student A: Yeah, to check our practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, check.

Student A: -to see if it's all right, you know. To-if-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student A: You said that if we read it and it didn't sound right, if it didn't sound all right, then there was something wrong with our practice? Do you understand?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. You know, when you think, you know, your practice [is] all right, you know, that is not all right [laughs, laughter]. So you just, you know-you should just sit. Whether it is all right or not all right doesn't matter [laughter]. Do you understand? But difficult, you know. When you say "This is all right, or this is not all right," that is here, right here-not here [probably alternately pointing to head and hara]. So we should not be bothered by this one, you know [tapping-



probably pointing to head].

Student B: Roshi, could this mind be received by this mind [probably also pointing to his head and his hara]?

Suzuki-roshi: By this mind? No. No, no. This is very limited mind.

Student B: Can this mind be perceived by this mind?

Suzuki-roshi: This mind is supporting. This mind is supporting this one. This is branch office, actually [laughs, laughter]. So he doesn't know, you know, what is going on here.

Student B: Can this mind perceive itself?

Suzuki-roshi: No [sounding tentative or qualified]. The mind perceive something is here [hara]. This is-so you call it "autonomous," you know, autonomous-autonomous nerve-nervous system. And anyway some American doctor, according to him, you know, some American doctor put emphasis on mind here. I don't know who he is, but- Hai.

Student C: Why do we need to study about Zen and listen to lectures about Zen if we're not going [?] to be bothered by [1-2 words unclear]?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Because, you know, we are always involved in thinking mind only, and we have not much ability to free our mind from thinking mind. That is why. So those formula is to, you know, to destroy the attachment to thinking mind. This is a kind of thought. Because we are intellectual being, so the thought should also be intellectual or else it doesn't work. So we use this kind of, you know, logic or thinking formula. So this formula itself-themselves doesn't mean much, you know. This is just thought to cut off something-something we should not [be] involved in too much. That is-that is why we study this kind of thing. And because we are intellectual-excuse me, because we are so intellectual, it is necessary, you know, to intellectualize our intellectuality [laughs, laughter] to be free from it, you know. That is why we study those things. But actually if you practice zazen, that is enough. But what is real practice is-will be the problem, you know. So to know what is right practice also we use this kind of suggestion or tools. Hai.

Student D: Once you said in a lecture that if we are thinking while we are eating, we are not doing good practice of eating, but we're doing good practice of thinking. Should we as Zen-as beginning Zen students, try to avoid occupations that require using the thinking mind, or is there a way to keep up our practice in jobs that-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student D: -make us think?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. And, you know, there may be, you know, -if you, you know-maybe tentatively you can classify our work in two ways, you know: physical work and mental, you know, work. So physical work, when you, like when you scrub floor, you know, we don't have to think. In that case, a student who is practicing on koan mu he can, you know, practice koan study even [when] he is scrubbing floor because he is not, you know, using his head. And koan practice is mostly-the purpose of koan study is to give up thinking mind. Anyway, it is practice of mind. So you can do it-do that, you know.

But when you are counting something, you cannot, you know, study koan practice. So in that case, I think it is-your practice should be to-to do your job, you know, or to think only your job and without thinking some other things. That is, in that case, our practice. We say, "one-thing-only practice," you know. When we-why this is practice is when we are involved in only one thing, you know, it is only one activity, only one kind of activity. Then your mind will not be disturbed because you do not-you are not involved in some other things. So it means that your thinking activity include everything, or there is nothing but your thinking world at that time. That is, you know, the world of "form is form" only. There is no other thing. Just exist is your-your thinking activity at that time. So if that kind of thinking activity continue, that is the world of form only. That is one-a kind of practice.

Student E: Is it possible for Zen monks to disagree among themselves?  
[Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughter, laughs.] It is possible. But, you know, at the same time, you know, you should, you know, understand some others' understanding too. You know, there are so many formulas, you know [laughs]. So you shouldn't be, you know-although there are so many formulas, you know, it is-actually it is just one formula. One formula will be, you know, understood in five ways, that's all. So not to disagree is, maybe, agreeing with it, you know [laughs]. To agree with it may be not to agree with it, or whether agree or whether or agree or not agree or not not [laughs] not disagree. We don't stick to it, that's all. You can say no, but that's all.

Student F: Since we are constantly changing, is there anything you know that doesn't change?

Suzuki-roshi: No. Nothing. Nothing. [Pause and slight laugh.] If there is something, point out what it is. You cannot. This [thumping desk or floor] doesn't change, you cannot say. That is, you know, our understanding, you know. For you, you know, there may be "something changes and something which doesn't change," but that is not true with Buddhist. Everything changes, including Buddha himself. Hai.

Student G: Well, if we are constantly changing, moment by moment,

what gives the continuity of being the same person?

Suzuki-roshi: Continue-same person?

Student E: What seems-what gives the appearance of being the same person all the time-the quality of that same person?

Suzuki-roshi: Continuity, you know. Continuity is like some, you know, some current, you know. "Continuity," we say, but that continuity is like something-some thread, you know. You may think this world consist of, you know, long, long thread [laughs] like this. Continuity may be the thread, you know. And that thread will be-if you roll like, you know, this [gestures] will be a big ball. That is our world, maybe. That is not our understanding.

So we say-as some-as Nishida[6] said, "If we understand our world is unfolding of the-a truth," you know, "we will lose one side of the truth." The one side of the truth is, "What is the relationship between long thread," you know. This is just one thread. It means the unfolding of one truth, you know, "just thread." [Laughs.] What is the, you know, relationship between A and B? This side is missing in this understanding. So when we say, "Everything changes," you know, it means that we are related to everything, you know, this way. And we are related to future, you know, to the future being and past being. So this is rather difficult to explain, you know, how this world is consist of. And your questions is, you see, when you ask that question, your understanding is based on, "This world is," you know, "consist of long, long thread." But it is not actually so, you know. This kind of lecture is, you know, to the-for the training of our thinking mind, to get-to be free from our thinking mind, and to utilize thinking mind fully, we study this kind of thing. Did you understand? [Laughs]

You-it-what I want to say is you are still, you know, stick[ing] to [laughs] thinking mind, and there is something, you know, which I should explain, you see? Your question is based on the understanding of-unfolding of the truth about this reality.

The reality is something which is not possible to explain what it is. If we say, you know, "We are part of reality," you know, that is also mistake. As you said, you know, as you said, if we are a part of it, you know, what is the relationship between, you know, "you" in this moment and "you" in next moment? [Laughs.] We don't know what to think [laughs], you know-what to say, you know, that is right. And I-we don't know what to say is the last one here. "Say something!" "No." [Laughs.] We say, if you say something you will get thirty slap, and if you don't you will get [laughing] thirty slap.[7] That is, you know, true understanding.

Student F: When we listen to your lectures, should we-I find it very hard to listen to the balance to my thinking mind and my hara mind-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: -and if I just, maybe, count my breathing during lecture, I don't hear anything [laughter]. If I-if I use my thinking mind, I find in my eyes [?] a lot, I start-I have some question-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student F: -and then I start following that, I lose-I lose your lecture again. So should we listen to a lecture-to your lecture with-

Suzuki-roshi: With thinking mind, yeah. This is, you know, the training of our thinking mind. And if you give lecture like this, it will be good training. Following the thinking mind and giving freedom to thinking mind-that is how you give-how you make teisho.[8] Teisho means, you know-does not mean to give you some idea, you know, but to give good suggestion to the reality. That is-tei is "to take up something," or to, you know-"This is it!" is teisho.

Student G: Roshi, if everything is always changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student G: -would that not mean, in effect, that nothing ever changed?

Suzuki-roshi: Affect?

Student G: Well, would not that-if everything is always changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: -then nothing is changing. Then there is no change, if everything is always changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: -the change would in effect cancel the change, making nothing change, wouldn't it? Everything is always changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student G: -then nothing is changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Nothing change.

Student G: -because everything is changing-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, nothing change.

Student G: -nothing changes.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That's right understanding. So this is just game of the word. Everything changes. [Laughs.] It mean nothing changes [laughs, laughter]. You know, everything change, you know, so, you know, nothing change. But if you-because you see, you know, just one part of it, you know, it changes. But if everything changes, you know, one before big thing is-is not changing. Something is always there, but it is changing. [Laughs, laughter.]

But as Prajñāparamita-sutra it said, "Doesn't," you know, "increase, doesn't decrease. It doesn't be tainted, or it doesn't be-it will not be pure, or it will not be impure." And this is, you know, actually-there are two ways of listening to the lecture. One is to listen to it as a exercise of your thinking mind, and the other is, you know, to know-to know our practice precisely, you know. How much we, you know, we have-how much freedom we have from thinking mind.

So if you are disturbed by my lecture, you know, there is something that is-it means you still stick to some idea, you know, some way of thinking. So how you-I answer to the question is to, you know, to find out what kind of thinking mind he has, and explain his, you know, own thinking mind, and let him realize his thinking mind is not always right so he will give up his own thinking mind-his way of thinking mind which he always stick to.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican (4/10/01). One previous lecture that Suzuki-roshi may have been referring to at the beginning of this lecture is SR-69-07-03. A note included in the original reel backup tape for this lecture stated that SR-69-07-09 was recorded July 5, which would place it closer to the July 3 lecture.

[1] That is, "earth is in our flesh or body." Sources of Japanese characters: Andrew H. Nelson, *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, 2nd edition, pp. 738 (niku), 264 (do), and 740 (hara). See also character No. 3800.0 for hara.

[2] Moxibustion.

[3] Acupuncture.

[4] The tale of Enyadatta. See SR-69-07-03.

[5] Phonetic guess only. Possibly "Shukke" or "Shukke-kudoku."

[6] Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945): an important 20th-century Japanese

philosopher. In *Zen no kenkyu (A Study of Good, 1911)*, he discussed his theory of "pure experience." In *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e (From the Acting to the Seeing, 1927)*, he discussed the meeting of Western and Eastern thought. He also wrote about the Buddhist concept of emptiness from a Western standpoint. Suzuki-roshi entered Komazawa University, Tokyo, in 1926, at a time when Nishida Kitaro was probably widely discussed.

[7] Quoting Deshan Xuanjian (Te-Shan Hsuan-chien, Tokusan Senkan): 782-865. "Thirty blows if yes, thirty blows if no."

[8] A lecture by a Zen master conveying some aspect of the essence of Zen.

## **6 - Eulogy for Trudy Dixon**

Friday, July 11, 1969

Eulogy for Trudy Dixon  
Given During Her Funeral Ceremony

Soko-ji, San Francisco

Go, my disciple Sesshin Baiho [?].[1]

You have completed your practice for this life and acquired genuine warm heart and pure and undefiled buddha-mind, and joined our sangha. All that you have done in this life and in the past life became meaningful in the light of the buddha-mind, which was found so clearly within yourself, as your own.

Because of your complete practice, your mind has transcended far beyond your physical sickness, and it has been taking full care of your sickness like a nurse.

Dogen-zenji, the founder of our sect, says buddha-mind differentiates itself into the three minds: the joyful mind, the kind mind, and the magnanimous mind.

The joyful mind, he says, is the joyful frame of mind. A mind of joyful mind-a man of joyful mind is contented with his lot. Even in adversity, he will see bright light. He finds the Buddha's place in different circumstances, easy and difficult. He feels pleasure even in painful condition, and rejoices. For us-for all who have this joy of buddha-mind, the world of birth and death is the world of nirvana.

The compassionate mind is the affectionate mind of parents. Parents always think of the growth of their children and welfare of their children, to the neglect of their own circumstances. Our scriptures say the buddha-mind is the mind of the great compassionate.

The magnanimous mind is the mind which is as big as mountain and as deep as ocean. A mind of magnanimous mind-a man of magnanimous mind is impartial. He walks middle way. He is never attached to any side of extreme or aspect of things. The magnanimous mind work justly and impartially.

Now, you have acquired the buddha-mind and become-and became really a disciple of the Buddha. At this point, however, how I express my true heart: [Suzuki-roshi makes a GREAT ASCENDING SOUND].

At Tassajara, outside of your cabin, at first you made your trip with the moon and stars, and then followed ever-flowing stream of Tassajara.

July eleventh, nineteen sixty-nine.[2]

-----

FOOTNOTE FROM WIND BELL, 1970, IX (1), p. 3:

On July 1st [1969] Trudy made the difficult trip to Zen Mountain Center with her brother Jack who had come from Wyoming to see her. She wanted him to see Tassajara and to meet Suzuki Roshi. At night, she slept outside of her cabin in the moonlight. On the night of the 3rd, she shared a cup of water from Tassajara Creek with Roshi and her brother, and the next day was driven back to a hospital in San Francisco. She returned to Tassajara and zazen two days later and, on the 8th, she again left for the hospital where, early the next morning, she died.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 9/6/00.

[1] The second name was hard to understand. It may have been something like "-daiosho." Two Buddhist names were given to her at her lay ordination in 1967: Baiho Sesshin ("Fragrant Plum, Pure Mind").

[2] Date was spoken aloud by Suzuki-roshi.

## **7 - Shikantaza**

Tuesday, July 15, 1969

Shikantaza  
San Francisco

Again, I have nothing in my mind [laughs, laughter]. I think I want you

to hit my head, you know, like this, and try what kind of sound I make-my head make-makes. Would you hit my, you know, head like this? If possible, you know, hit my head with long, long talk, maybe one hour long. It will be a great help. Do you have some long, long stick to hit my bell? If you have some long stick-longer the better. Do you have some question? Long, long question [laughter]. No question? Some question? Hai.

Student A: [4-6 words unclear] on shikantaza?

Suzuki-roshi: Shikantaza? Oh. Practice of shikantaza or-? We say there is no such thing like shikantaza, you know, actually. But in comparison to koan practice, we-because we don't use, you know, koan, people say that is shikantaza.

Shikan means, you know, to be involved in zazen completely. That is shikan. Taza is zazen. So to-if you practice our way, even without any gaining idea, or even without any idea of enlightenment, that is shikantaza. So sometime it may be actually-koan practice may be also shikantaza. When you are completely involved in koan practice, that is actually shikantaza.

And there is-there may be various misunderstanding about shikantaza. If you think shikantaza is just to sit, you know, without making not much effort, you know: just sit, like this, is shikantaza. And we say, when, you know-sometime we say when some im- [partial word]-you have some image, you know, let it come and let it go away. That is shikantaza, we say. It looks like, you know, if you just sit with some idea in my mind, or without some idea in my-in our mind-if you just sit, you know, that is shikantaza. But that is not actually shikantaza.

Why we say, "Let the idea come in, and let it go away" means don't sit, you know, to-it means that, actually, don't sit with some purpose, you know, some purpose of to free yourself from various idea. You know, to free yourself from various idea-actually not to be bothered by various idea you will have in zazen.

That is true, but even though you are able to do it, that is not shikantaza. If you think this is shikantaza, that is not shikantaza anymore. So shikan-if I explain what is shikantaza. In this way, to sit, you know, with some idea which may come to you without, you know, being bothered by it, and just to sit is shikantaza. That is, you know-sometime that is shikantaza, but it is not always so. Do you understand [laughs] what I am trying to say? It is rather difficult, but-. So if possible, of course, if you are able to sit without any, you know, image or thinking mind, that is, of course, better, you know. But if I say, "When you practice shikantaza you will have many ideas, you know, so let the idea come in and let them go away. That is shikantaza." If I say so, it does not mean-it means that, for a beginner, that is shikantaza.



But for more advanced student or for student who sit for two, three years, you know, if he remain in that practice, you know, it is not-I don't think he is practicing shikantaza in its true sense. That was very lazy practice, you know. "Oh, this is shikantaza. I am practicing shikantaza [laughs]," you know. "Roshi said," you know, "even [though] you have various idea in your mind, that is all right. Let them come in! [Laughs.] Eventually it will go away. That is shikantaza. So I am practicing shikantaza every day!" If you understand in that way, that is not shikantaza.

So I think if you-that is why, you know, I am-I want you right now to practice counting breathing practice, instead of, you know, just to sit, because you will have very lazy idea of shikantaza. So if you try to count your breathing, you know, you will find out it is pretty difficult [laughs] to practice counting breathing practice. Even though in counting your breathing, even though you are successful in counting breathing, just to count your breathing without mistake-that is not also shikantaza.

So when you practice counting breathing practice you-of course you have to count, but at the same time you should be very careful with your posture. The-about your mudra, with straight back, and your mind should take care of every parts of-every part of your physical condition. And you have-you must have good breathing, you know. So with all of your, you know, effort-physical effort and mental effort, you should count your breathing. That is shikantaza.

For an instance, there is, you know, flower vase like this, you know. It is possible to hold it like this, you know. And it is-at the same time you can hold it like this. So if you-if I say "counting breathing practice" or "following breathing practice," it is same thing to hold the vase this part-by this, by the handle, or by the mouth, you know. Anyway, you should hold all the vase, you know [laughs]. If you take hold of this part, it doesn't [make] much difference, you know, whether you take hold of this part or this part. Anyway, you take hold of whole vase. So shikantaza points out-means to take hold of whole being, or all of your mind and body, which include all the world, you know. That is shikantaza.

If koan practice [is] to take hold of this part, you know-people say this is koan practice. But for us, this is shikantaza,because in perfect koan practice he is taking hold of whole vase. And counting breathing practice may be to take hold of this vase by your-by the mouth of the vase. Do you understand [laughs]? No?

So most teacher may say shikantaza is not so easy, you know. It-it is not possible to continue it more than one hour, because it is intense practice to take hold of all our mind and body by the practice which include everything. So in shikantaza, our mind should pervade every parts of our physical being. That is not so easy. Did you understand? If

you actually practice zazen you will understand it, you know. As I always say, to count your breathing like this is not zazen [laughs], you know. Just to count our breathing is not counting breathing practice, actually. With, you know, with your whole body and mind, you should count your breathing.

You know, for an instance, we say when you put your hand together or when you sit, you should feel as if you have one egg or two eggs under your arm like this [gestures], you know. Don't crush it, don't drop it [laughs]. That is how you put your arm, you know, in right position. It means that-just, you know, try[ing] not to drop it is not, you know, practice. But that-it means that in that way, you know, your arm should join our practice. Do you understand? In that way, your arm should join our practice. If you are like this [gestures], you are holding eggs under your arm, you know. If you are like this [gestures], you are not holding eggs. So your mind should be free from the idea of holding eggs or not holding eggs [laughs], you know. And join-let our arm join our practice. If you are doing like this [gestures], you know, your arm is not joining your practice, you know. Maybe all of your body is joining the practice of your holding-eggs practice [laughs, laughter], instead of, you know, joining-instead of arm joining in your practice. Do you understand?

So in that way you should understand what is shikantaza. Did I explain? Does it make some sense? Your eyes, you know, is not watching anything, you know. Even though there is flower like this in front of you [puts vase down on table with a thump], in your practice, your eyes are not watching it. Even though our focus is around here, like this [gestures]. Now I am watching, you know, you like this, but now I am not watching you [laughs, laughter]. My focus is right there. You may see the difference, you know. You may see the difference in my eyes when I am watching something and when I am not watching anything. The-my eye focus is right there. Do you understand? [Laughs.]

So, you know, if I say: "Shikantaza is to do-or like this is shikantaza," is same thing I say: "To watch you is shikantaza,"you know. But it is not so, actually. Even though people who do not have this kind of experience-maybe look-looks like same, you know. But if you carefully, you know, see my eyes you will find out the difference. Did you understand?

You know, "One is everything," we say. We have a kind of stock term: "One is everything, and everything is one." This is, you know-you can explain intellectually, "One is everything and everything is one." Because everything is changing, moment after moment, one is not always one. It may-it will change into something else in next moment. So actually, one is everything, and everything is also one.

So if you-so we say if you pick up a part of a net, you know, you will have whole-all the net, you know. It-it means that our-it does not mean some intellectual explanation of the relationship [of] one and many, but

it points out actual practice. When I am not watching anything, you know, with this kind of eyes, you know, if someone moves I will immediately catch you [laughs]. If you don't, I-I don't see anyone. If someone move, you know, I-I will feel something, you know. That kind of eyes, you know, covers everything [laughs]. When you don't see anything, you see clearly everything [laughs, laughter]. If you are watching something, you know, you lose the rest of the things, you know. Hai.

Student B: Is that just ordinary-

Suzuki-roshi: Ordinary practice?

Student B: -practice?

Suzuki-roshi: When-usual practice?

Student B: Non-seeing-just ordinary natural mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Natural-yeah.

Student B: Not seeing anything, but covering-still seeing everything.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: Is-that is the natural order of-of mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Natural. Yeah. "Natural order of mind." [1] But as I said, you know, when you are counting something, you know, like in office work, you know, you should be concentrated [starts tapping] on one thing [stops tapping], on what you are doing. That practice is more, you know, the practice of-at Tassajara I explained various ways of understanding of things, and various kinds of practice. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. And form is form. "Form is form" means-oh-"emptiness is emptiness" means to-to use this kind of eyes, you know. This is [laughs] "emptiness is emptiness." Complete emptiness.

And to be concentrated on something like this, you know, without any idea of anything, this is "form is form." But underlying spirit is the same, but way of expressing the feeling of zazen is different. So even though you are strictly, you know, watching something like this, still you have freedom from this. But for usual people, you know, who don't-who do not have any experience of practice, to watch something like this is-immediately he will [be] caught by the flower, you know. So there-still there is difference, but-but even though he is detached from this flower, he will not make any mistake in describing things. His mind will be very articu- [partial word]-articular [articulate]. But he has, at the same time, freedom from it.

So we, you know, when we-this is, you know-eventually, even though we practice zazen, we will come back to the starting point. Form is form, you know. But when you come back from-to the original stage, it looks like you come back to the original state, going around making trip all the way to heaven [laughs], and come back to earth again. But actually this is not the same level, so maybe as Hegelian [?] explains, you know, we are making this kind of trip-like this, you know. It looks like we came to the same point, but level is not the same. But this is, I think, just intellectual explanation of reality. Some other question? Hai.

Student C: What do you mean when you say that we will vanish-or you will vanish?

Suzuki-roshi: Vanish?

Student C: Vanish. Disappear.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Disappear. The idea you have should disappear, I mean. If you-when you say, "Here is flower," you know, but there is no such flower. [It] substantially exists, you know, in some particular way because it is always changing. In other word, it is always vanishing.

Student C: So you've vanished when you've stopped clinging-you're just [1-2 words] without clinging to the self?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. But this kind of-if you really unders- [partial word]-try to un- [partial word]-if you really unders- [partial word]-try to understand what does it mean-everything-by "everything vanishes," you should know the only way is to practice zazen. If you want to bring that idea into practice, you know, the only way is to practice zazen.

So there-there [are] two ways: to have intellectual understanding of it, you know, it should be-everything should be like that, and everything is going in that way, you know. That is-intellectually we can understand that. But real understanding-not understanding, but I don't know-if you accept that truth, actually you must practice zazen. That is the only way to have direct experience of the teachings or philosophy of Buddhism. Some other questions? Hai.

Student D: Could you talk about guilt?

Suzuki-roshi: Guilt?

Student D: When I'm listening to you-when I'm not listening to you, I-when my mind wanders off, I feel bad about it. And then my mind wanders off to my feeling bad about it, and then I think I shouldn't feel bad about it, and the "shouldn't" itself makes me feel guilty. I know what I am supposed to think, but I can't think that way.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah. You cannot think that way. That

is, you know, when you feel bad, you know, about it, it is already, you know, you-you are out of practice, you know. You are not practicing true way, you know. You are just thinking about it.

Sometime you are making some excuse, you know [laughs]. You know, to feel bad about it, you know, means at the same time [laughs] you-you are finding some good excuse, you know. The same-same activity-no, no-different activity based on same, you know, impulse. You don't want to be bad [laughs], so you feel bad. So, you know, in that way you cannot solve-you cannot find out your own way just by finding out some reason why you did it or some teaching to justify your-what you have done. You are far away from the prac- [partial word]-real practice.

So anyway what you have done will create some effect, you know. That-it is inevitable, you know, for some acts to create some result. So it is not matter of bad or good, you know [laughs]. Anyway, you will have the result of it. So, you know, Buddha is very fair to everyone. You cannot escape from what you have done. So it is more than to say you did something bad [laughs], you know.

If you, you know, accept-if you understand your life in that way, there is no more-no idea of good or bad already. You may feel very bad about it, you know, but it doesn't make much difference. You may feel-sometime you will find out some excuse for it, but it doesn't make any difference [laughs]. Do you understand? That much is very true, I think.

If so, what you should do is-will be the next question. So naturally you will be very, very careful what you will do. Not because people say-people may say something-people may be critical with you or not because we have various precepts. If you make that kind of effort, you know, people will have very good feeling ab- [partial word]-with you, I think. And you may feel very good when you accept the truth of cause and effect completely. If you are ready to accept the result of what you have done, that is the only way to be free from what you have done-to go beyond the idea of good and bad. Hai.

Student E: It seems to me that in every one of us there is an animal that lives inside of us, and there is a human being, and there is a buddha. And they all need different food. How do you go about feeding the different parts of you? Zazen is maybe good food for the buddha, you know, but for the animal, he wants some meat!

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] He-he wants meat! But he is not so greedy as human being [laughter]. A human being wants to eat meat and some [of] buddha's food. That is human being, you know. So that is not just human being-Buddha's teaching is not for just human being. Because even though they do-the animal doesn't live [?], they are not so greedy, you know-but they are not so greedy as human being. So we have some special food, you know, because of the human nature. So I don't know which is better, you know, human being or [laughs] animal.

I don't know which is better.

But anyway, everyone has food provided by Buddha, you know. And some special being like human being has some more feed, you know- food to reduce human being like animal, maybe, in some way. So my understanding may be opposite to your understanding, you know. I think human being is worst animal, maybe. That is why we need Buddha's mercy badly [laughs]. Hai.

Student F: Could you speak to us of bowing and taking refuge?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student F: Could you speak to us of bowing-

Suzuki-roshi: Bowing?

Student F: -bowing-and taking refuge?

Suzuki-roshi: B- [partial word]-taking refuge. "Taking refuge" is not, you know, good translation. Taking refuge is to, you know, to protect yourself in Buddha's home, maybe like that. But it-it is so, but if you know how to protect yourself, that translation may work, but "to take refuge in Buddha" looks like to escape from this world and to go to Buddha, you know. But it is not actually so. To be one with Buddha is "to take refuge in Buddha." Or to-to be Buddha, you know, is to "take refuge in Buddha." There is no special home for Buddha, you know, or for us. The home is always within ourselves. So it is not to go to Buddha, but to find out buddha-nature within ourselves is "to take refuge in Buddha."

To bow to Buddha is same thing, you know. To bow to the buddha on the altar is not actual meaning of "to bow to Buddha." To find ourselves as a disciple of Buddha is to bow to Buddha. So Buddha is rather behind you, you know [laughs], not in front of you, you know. "I am your children," you know. "May I help you? [Laughs.] If you-if you have something to do, I will do it" you know. That feeling is, you know, to bow to Buddha-to find ourselves as a disciple of Buddha.

So even though Buddha passed away so many years ago, we are Buddha and we are disciple of Buddha. We should not lose his way. And, you know, so we have to behave. And we should know what he will, you know, tell us, you know, when he is with us right now. With this kind of attitude we should bow to Buddha, you know, as if you help your-your mother or father, you know, as if you serve something to your parents. That is how you bow to Buddha. Bow is just, you know, one of the many ways of expressing our sincerity to him, as if he is alive and he is with us. Do you understand? That is how-why we bow to Buddha.

Student G: It's said that-I think the Buddha said that, "The greatest gift

we can give is the dharma." If that's so, how do we give that gift?

Suzuki-roshi: Dharma.

Student G: That that is the greatest gift-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: -the dharma.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: I don't understand what that means, "to give the dharma."

Suzuki-roshi: "To give the dharma." There is, you know, various-that is very complicated. If I want to clarify, you know, your question, it is necessary to give you long, long lecture, you know. What is dharma? What is buddha? What is sangha, you know? What is the-what is the scripture, you know? What is a building? Or what is equipment to offer something to Buddha, you know? What is priest? Or who is Buddha, you know? There is [laughs]-we have to study, you know, this kind of philosophy, maybe.

Student G: Would you say how to give a gift unselfishly, then?

Suzuki-roshi: How to give gifts is, you know-in short, maybe to practice zazen is-will be the greatest gift you can give to anyone, in short. You know, we practice zazen because just to read scripture, just to understand scripture, and just to give some virtue of, you know-virtuous meaning of scripture to other people is not, you know, good enough. It is not best way.

So we practice zazen because that practice is complete, you know. By our practice, we can experience or we can actually accept the dharma in its true sense. And in that way, we can transmit our dharma to others in its complete sense. Why that is so is-need pretty long explanation about what is dharma, and historically what kind of idea we have had, you know, about dharma. And we could not [be] satisfied with the explanation of the dharma, you know. Or we couldn't [be] satisfied with the written teaching, you know, or dead teaching. We wanted some, you know, some actual, you know, dharma rather than, you know, dead dharma written in scriptures or understood by philosophical mind. I think you must have some idea of, you know, why we practice zazen and why practice of zazen is so important, you know. Hai.

Student H [Reb Anderson]: Does a Zen master suffer in a different way than his students suffer?

Suzuki-roshi: Same way [laughs, laughter]-like to others. If he is different, you know, I don't think he is good enough, you know. "Form is

form" [laughs]. We-we must make that kind of effort. After you understood what is, you know, zazen, and what is practice, what is dharma, what is sangha, and various interpretation of our teaching. So we must try to forget all about that kind of, you know, confusion. And we should be able to just do something as people may do. It is also-it is very important practice. After you understood what is Buddhism. Hai.

Student I: Suffering, then, has something to do with this "form is form"?

Suzuki-roshi: Suffering? Yeah.

Student I: -has to do with this "form is form"?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, we-we have to, you know-some people try to help people in the stage of "emptiness is emptiness," you know, like this [probably gestures], you know, without watching any particular ... [Gap in tape of unknown (probably short) duration.] ... in the form of "form is form" rather than "emptiness is emptiness." [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

[The great poet Basho[2]][3] expressed this kind of feeling through his poem. He is always, you know, crying with people. He is always full of tears in-in his eyes. That is, you know, stage of "form is form." He was a completely good friend of children and poor people. And sometime, you know, once in a while very learned scholar, or he-he was a very-he himself was very learned scholar, but his practice is always in the form of "form is form," rather than "emptiness is emptiness."

Student I: Can you give some examples of this particular [3-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Example?

Student I: Yeah, of the practice of "form is form," or the practice of "emptiness is emptiness"? A master's approach to this-

Suzuki-roshi: To be completely the friend of people is "form is form" practice. And "emptiness is emptiness" is to help people in, you know-to give big encouragement to people or to force some people, you know, to attain enlightenment. If you attain enlightenment, you will not suffer so much, you know, with big slap [laughs]. That is more Rinzai way, you know. Soto way is not to say: "This is zazen," or "You should attain enlightenment." We do not say so. We will be completely with-the friend of ordinal [ordinary] people. We take form of various, you know-if you see a woman is suffering, he will be a woman, you know. If he see-like Bodhisattva, you know, Avalokiteshvara. That is more practice of "form is form."

Student J: I-I thought you had said that you cannot really help people in that way.



Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student J: Yet that's the Soto way.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student J: I don't understand that.

Suzuki-roshi: You know, if you try to, you know, follow Soto way without [laughs], you know, without having this kind of true experience of zazen, you know, even though you give, you know, people something special, that will not help. Unless you have real quality-after you get going through those, you know, practice of "form is emptiness," and "emptiness is form," and "emptiness is emptiness"-and then "form is form," then you can help people. But [laughs] even though, you know, "form is emptiness," you know, but if you don't-if you do not have real experience of actually "form is emptiness," you know, then you cannot help people, even though you have a lot of money to help. That is what I say. Hai.

Student K: What does the word mean, "I vow to save all sentient beings"?

Suzuki-roshi: "I vow to save all sentient being." And "Sentient beings are numberless," you know. "I vow to save them." So it means we will continue our practice forever, in short, because there is no other way, you know. It is not matter of "I will help," or "I will not help," you know. There is no choice, you know. The only way is continue to help others. That's all-all what we can do. And that way is the only way which continue forever. Do you understand? To help sentient beings is to continue our practice through zazen practice as I explained, you know. That is, you know, "to help sentient being"- "to save sentient beings."

Student L: Can a doctor or a psychiatrist help sentient beings?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Sometime you may need him, you know. But he will not save you, you know, in its complete sense. We cannot, you know, help people in its complete sense, actually. But [laughs] we are, you know-we will continue, you know, incessantly to help people, even though our way is not complete. There is-there is some slight difference.

We should know that there is no complete remedy [laughs] for sickness. No complete remedy. If you know that, you can discuss with psychiatrist, you know. He may help-help you, but if you think he will help you completely, it means that you are ex- [partial word]-you are, you know, you are a big burden for-for him, you know. Okay? Hai.

Student M: Is enlightenment a complete remedy?

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student M: Why not?

Suzuki-roshi: Why not. [Laughs, laughter.] Do you think-I said, you know, there is no complete remedy [laughs, laughter]. To think there is some complete remedy is delusion, you know. Cannot be so. Even Buddha cannot help, you know, in its ordinal [ordinary] sense-in its dualistic sense. "He will help us," you know. We are enlightened being without being helped. When this-maybe you can say in this way, too: Even-because we are not perfect, we are Buddha. You may say so. If you are-if you think you are perfect, you know, that is delusion. Perfect one is not-cannot be someone, you know, some special person who has almighty power, you know. That kind of, you know-that is just idea of something. Idea of God. The idea of God but not real God. So toilet paper may be God, you know, in this sense. So, you know, toilet paper, or flower, or everything is God if you understand toilet paper with some idea, you know. But in reality God is God because he is beyond our conceptual world. Hai.

Student N: In one of the sutras, it says the-for a bodhisattva practicing the paramitas, that he should dedicate the merit involved to complete enlightenment. And I am having a hard time understanding what merit is-I mean, what you should do with it. On the one side it seems if you do good works, good works will be returned. But you shouldn't have selfish ideas about things returning-returning back. And the other side is what you said about accepting-what you said earlier about accepting-be willing to accept the consequences or effects of our actions. Is that-is that some kind of definition you have [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: So merit, you know-I don't know what do you mean by merit, you know [laughs, laughter].

Student N: That's what I thought.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. Maybe so. Bo- [partial word]-as Bodhidharma said, "No merit," you know. "No merit is merit." [Laughs.] So we have to get through the idea of "no merit" before we discuss what is "merit." "No merit" means to believe in the strict rules of cause and effect. Even Buddha must suffer his karma, you know. If-as long as he is historical Buddha, you know, he must suffer his own karma. But because we couldn't satisfy the idea of Buddha as historical Buddha, we started to have deeper idea of Buddha, you know. Like Sambhogakaya Buddha or Dharmakaya Buddha.

So, you know, scripture tells us-if you read, you know, scripture without having any idea of zazen practice, you know, it looks like, you know, some myth or, you know, maybe bodhisattva is someone who has miraculous power, you know. But actually it is not so. Those sutra is based on, you know, deep understanding of our practice. That is why, without any contradiction, they can describe Buddha's miraculous

power. It looks like very mystic, you know-a kind of myth. But we cannot criticize it, you know, because it is based on very profound philosophy and very deep experience of Zen practice. You cannot criticize it. That is, you know, why Mahayana sutra is-oh, that is why Lotus Sutra is called "King of the-All the Sutra." Okay? Hai.

Student O: When you say "disease," I think it is an understanding of "no disease."

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student O: By that I mean, I don't think there is a perfect remedy because I don't think there is anything wrong that needs a remedy. If I have what I call a "disease," and I go to meditate and [am] absorbed by pure practice, and I get up and I have no disease, is that a delusion?

Suzuki-roshi: Disease is, you know-if you pick up, you know, some painful, you know, part of your body, you know, thinking that "here is disease," you know, that is disease in its usual sense, you know: if you have headache here, and I have disease here. But why your head is painful is not just because of your disorder of your head-brain, you know. And it means that disorder of your whole body. And our organic system, our body, you know, try to control-try to have more, you know, smooth, harmonious, you know, living activity. So that is why we have pain here, you know. But that is not because this part is in disorder. But maybe your tummy is not so good, you know. Maybe you didn't sleep well, you know. So even though you cut off, you know-you have operation [laughs] on your head, I don't think it will help completely, unless you, you know-you should find out in what way your natural, you know, organic activity is going.

When you realize this point-actually we-even though you have, you know-to have pain is not disease, you know. Still you are in right order. To pain-if you are not painful, you know, when you should be painful, that is disorder. So even though you have operation here, you know, you think for a while it is the remedy. But actually your cause of, you know, trouble is still remain as before. So I don't think-"disease," we say, but it is not so simple, you know, like mechanics, you know.

So to some extent we, I think-when you are-we are ill, we should pa-[partial word]-we should be patient, you know, patient enough to-to, you know, suffer. After you suffer pretty long time, you know, you will understand your physical condition better, and you will find out perfect remedy for it. So in this sense, I think no one is completely healthy. Everyone is sick, you know-sick people. If you say "disease," you know-if we say-you say, "You are sick person," all of us are sick people, I think.

So the point is to find out-to understand your physical condition is very important, rather than to be caught by idea of disease. For an instance,

you know, the stomach is very-is very closely related to your head, you know-brain. So when your mind become calm, your tummy will be healthy without having operation on your tummy. When you think you have disease here [patting self], I think you are actually creating disease here [pointing]. It will make your tummy weak, you know, by concept of disease.

But if you understand yourself better, and if you know how to control your mind, it will be a great help to your physical condition. For an instance, you know, most people, when you are young-when they are young, they have weak stomach, you know. When they become fifty or sixty [laughs]-I don't know why-they will not suffer [from] their stomach so much. For an instance, I was very weak, you know. My tummy was very weak. And doctor told me to have operation on my tummy to cut off [laughs] a part of it. And my friend, you know, who live in-near my temple had also bad stomach, you know, and he had operation. And he told me: "You should go and have operation. I-He [the doctor] cut off half of-one-third of my tummy, and I feel very good," he said.

So I thought if it is possible for him to cut off one-third of his tummy, you know, [laughs], I thought tummy is not so subtle thing. Even though a doctor cut off, you know, one-third of the tummy, it doesn't matter for the tummy operation. If it is so strong, may be better not to be-better not to have operation [laughter]. It doesn't make much difference, I thought. It means that, you know, our tummy is so strong.

So I didn't have operation, and the doctor I-saw me whenever I was weak, you know. [He] was amazed, you know, why I, you know, why I am so-why I have so-why I could survive, you know, without having operation. I don't know why, but soon after that we started building our-mending our temple,[4] and I became so busy that I forgot all about my tummy problem [laughs]. And now, my tummy is not so strong, but I have no problem, you know, with my tummy. And-but I-I have problem of cough, you know [laughs, laughter].

So I, you know, I always tell them to tell people even though your tummy is so strong, you cannot give your tummy to other people after you-you don't want-when you don't need it, you know. In other word, after you die, you cannot give your tummy to other person. So if your tummy is strong enough, you know, to give you some nourishment, you know, until you die, it may be all right. So, you know, the natural-some natural order is more important than to have some strong, you know, to strong-to have some strong remedy for it. Leave it like that, you know. Let it survive as long as possible. So if our body is always in, you know, some harmony, I think it is good enough.

One more question? One more question, please. Hai.

Student P: When we try to practice hard in the city, where we have a lot

of freedom, it seems that sometimes we can become caught by our own way and become too narrow and hurt ourselves too much by trying to practice hard in our own way. What should we do?

Suzuki-roshi: In city, you know, our way looks like very narrow, you know, narrow approach. But actually it is not so. It is basic, you know. Our practice is directed to the basic problem we have, you know, always. So you cannot compare our practice to some other ways of life, you know. It is necessary for you for some time, maybe, to be caught by narrow idea of practice, which is not actually narrow. But if you are concentrated on some-on our practice, eventually you will find out that is not narrow-that was not narrow practice. But before you find out true meaning of our practice, you may think this is narrow practice. So even though you think you are caught by narrow idea of practice, I think you should continue it without some conviction-with some conviction, excuse me [laughs]. Without any doubt, you know.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Carmel Crane and Bill Redican (2/2/01).

[1] A line from an early version of the meal chant used at Zan Center.

[2] Matsuo Basho (Matsuo Munefusa) (1644-1694): The renowned haiku poet of Japan.

[3] The phrase in brackets is from the original transcript (not on tape).

[4] Starting in March 1958, Suzuki-roshi directed the rebuilding of the main structure of Rinso-in temple in Japan. This may be the year he is referring to. And the "tummy" problem may have been a gallbladder disorder. (Suzuki-roshi had it removed in 1971.)

## **8 - Trip to the Moon**

Sunday, July 20, 1969

Trip to the Moon

If you go to some library you will see many books. And those-in those books, we will find out our achievement, our human knowledge, which is almost impossible to study out. And now we are going to arrive to the moon.[1] And [laughs] actually I don't know anything about, you know, how they reach to the moon and what kind of feeling they may have

when they arrive at the moon. To me it is not so interesting a thing.

When I reflect on myself, especially when I feel, on this occasion, I have to speak about the moon trip [laughs, laughter], I have no time to study about those things. So if I try to speak about it, it is nothing but to tell you how foolish I am, you know. That is what I can do, you know. If I talk about the moon trip you may think, "Ah, he is so ignorant about [laughs, laughter] the moon trip." And I think I may see many people today or tomorrow to speak about the moon trip as if he knows everything about it [laughs]. When I hear them speak about the moon trip, you know, how I feel is-maybe because I don't know or he has-he is interested, actually really interested in the moon trip, you know. And because I know that, I may not respect him so much.

The first-even the first one who may arrive at the moon-I don't think, you know, if he is very much proud of his achievement. How I feel is I cannot think he is a great hero. I don't know how you feel, but I don't feel he is a great hero. But on television, you know, he may be, you know, for some time, a great hero. At least he will be treated like a great hero.

And why we treat him a great hero is, you know, quite different reason, you know. He may be very proud of his experience, but reason why he is treated by the people as a hero is quite different. If we think in this way, we immediately know how important it is to practice zazen.

Instead of seek for objective world, in its usual sense, we, you know, try to make our life or make our every moment of life, deeper and deeper. That is purpose of zazen. Someone said-I-I remember what someone say-as someone said-one of your student-our students said: "The more we see many things changes, the more we find out the similarity in it." Nothing changes, you know. Even though things looks like changes, but actually we do not find anything new. I think that is very true.

Nowadays-when I came to America, you know, first feeling I had is-I-before I came to America I thought America may be the quite different country from Japan [laughs]. But when I came to San Francisco, I was amazed because San Francisco was not-there was not much difference, you know, in Tokyo and San Francisco. I think if you make your trip all over the United States, still, you know, you will-I don't think you will find out something different. You will not be interested in the way of life in different states.

And I remember one experience when Marian [Derby], you know, show me-showed me a small stone. I like the stone very much. And she picked up the small-not stone-sand, actually. And she gave it to me. She gave it to me. "This-those are very interesting stones [laughs]," she said. But that was just, you know, a pick of sand. And she asked me to see it through a glass, you know, small glass like this, which-which you use to see jewels or something. And those small stones are not-nearly-

nearly the same as interesting stones I have in office, you know, although the stone is-stone I have in my office is big [laughs]. That is the-difference is just the size of the stone. But I found much more interesting stones in the sand. And I think even though you go to the moon, the moon-the rocks they will bring to us [laughs] may be the same, I think.

If you say, "This is the rock from, you know, the moon," you will be very much, you know, interested in it because it is-it was [laughs] on the moon. But actually I don't think there is a great difference between the rocks we have on the earth.

Maybe in ancient time, long, long, long time ago, the earth and-the moon may be the piece of the earth. I don't know. I think, even though you go to the Mars [laughs], you will find out the same rocks. I am quite sure about it [laughs, laughter].

If you find out something very interesting, you know-if you want to find out something quite interesting, only way is-instead of hopping around the universe, you know, like this-to enjoy our life in every minute, you know, and to-to see-to observe things which we have now. The surrounding-or to live in the surrounding, in its true sense.

Yesterday I went to see an island where there were many kinds of animals: birds and fish and maybe shells, which owned by-which is owned by Natural Conservancy group. It was very, very interesting place, this place. If you live in that, you know, area and really start to see things-see the plants and animals in that area, you will-I think you will stay whole life. It is so interesting place. But we human beings, you know [laughs], what we do is hopping around or driving around the states, you know, by highway, losing [laughs] many interesting things. And that kind of trip will be extended to the moon and to the Mars [laughs, laughter]. It is rather foolish, you know. If you stay that place, you know, you will enjoy your life completely. Ev- [partial word: even?]-that is more, I think, human life, you know.

We are now-I, I don't think we are even human, you know, now. We are just, you know-I don't know what it is [laughs]. Dogen-zenji said when he received the purple, you know, robe from the emperor-although he refused it second time-but the emperor said, "You must receive it." So he at last received it. But he didn't wear it. And he wrote to the-wrote back to the emperor saying, "If I wear this, the birds and monkeys in this mountain will laugh at me [laughs, laughter]." That was what he said to the emperor. "I am very appreciate," you know, "your purple robe, but I am afraid I don't wear it. If I wear it," you know, "birds and monkeys will [laughs], in this mountain, will laugh at me."

I think there we find-find spirit of zazen, you know-way of life we should follow as a human being. In other word, we should not be fooled by things, you know-fooled by some i- [partial word: idea?]-some

particular idea.

Now we are practicing counting-breathing, you know, practice-in comparison to use-using various machine or computer, you know, to count your breathing [laughs]. It is very silly [laughs] to count your breathing from one to ten, making, you know, mistake-"Oh! [Laughing.] Six or seven?"

If you use computer, you know, you will not make any mistake [laughing]. But is very silly to count your breathing just because of this is traditional way of practice. Why it is so-it looks so silly is the, you know, underlying spirit, or thought, or understanding of our life is quite-is the same, you know. If we count our breathing in practice-in our practice-in its-in ordinal [ordinary] sense, as you count the distance from earth to the moon, you know, our practice doesn't mean anything. But it-our-when we count our breathing, you know, in each number we find limitlessly deep meaning of life.

Not only we count our breathing by our whole mind and body, we count each number with the power of whole universe. That is, you know, counting-breathing practice. So when you ex- [partial word: experience?]-when you have-when you experience really the counting-breathing practice, the gratitude you have in your practice is more than to arrive at the moon, you know. [Laughs.] You will not be so interested in, you know, something great, in its usual sense, or something limitlessly small, in its usual sense.

Of course, you may-you may be very much interested in to have some new experience like a small-like a baby. But like a baby, you know, you will-you-you are comp- [partial word]-your basic attitude towards things will be the same as-same-always same.

Babies finds many things, you know. And he is-she is very much interested in things, always. But if you watch her, she is always, you know-she has always same joy. She will not [be] fooled by things, you know. She is always aware of it. And she al- [partial word: always?]-she will be always enjoying her life.

But we, you know, adult has too many ideas-many preconceived ideas because we are not completely free from objective world. Or we are not one with objective world. So sometime we [are] interested in something, but some other time we will not be interested in so mu- [partial word: much?]-things so much.

Yesterday, you know, I experienced-I could see myself quite clearly when I went to the island where there is-there were many birds, you know. Young people are very much excited [laughs], but I was not so much, you know. That is just because I am old [laughs].

Even though we see things, you know-same things, the way-the life we



have is quite different. Even though I didn't enjoy so much, but I was not discouraged [laughs], you know. I know why I am-I was not so much interested in it, you know. One of the reason is because I am old, you know. But that is not just one reason. There-there must be many and many reasons. So I was not discouraged. And I think I had some other joy which is different from young people may have.

So, you know, if you observe things and everything is changing, you know, that is not what I meant when I say everything is changing. Everything is changing-when I say everything is changing, I don't-I don't see the similarity in change. I feel always difference in change, instead of similarity. So to say: "The more we see the changes the more we find out the similarity of things"-it may be so, but what we mean or what we find out in the things which changes is to find out complete change, you know, in everything. In other word, to enjoy our life moment after moment [taps stick on table after each of previous three words] in its true sense.

The life we have cannot be the same. The life I had yesterday is-cannot be the same as my life today. And we-we will enjoy completely new life in each moment. Before you become Buddhist, you know or-most of us become Buddhist because we find out evanescence of life, and we seek for the life which is more stable or which is more meaningful.

So things changes, you know. For usual person [it] is very much discouraging, you know. You cannot rely on anything. You cannot have anything. And you will see which you don't want to see. You will meet someone whom you don't like. If you want to do something, you know, you will find out it is impossible to do something.

In this way you will be discouraged by the, you know, the w- [partial word]-by the things-by the way things go-is going-are going. That is why most people, you know, become Buddhist or seek for religion. It means that actually you are trying to, you know, change-you are trying to change the foundation of your life-or understanding of your life.

Before you have-when you haven't right effort to enjoy-right understanding or right effort to enjoy your life, you know, things-that things changes will be the reason why you suffer in this world or when you are-why you are discouraged by the change-by the evanescence of life. But after-when you change the understanding of life or way of life, then the evanescence of life is the reason why you enjoy your life.

So the point is, you know, to change your understanding of life. And the point of practice is to practice our practice with right understanding of it. To arrive at the moon may the great-the historical event, but if we don't change the understanding of life, it doesn't make much, you know, meaning. It doesn't make much sense. What we should do right now is to have deeper understanding of life-to make effort with right understanding of life.

You may say "Rinzai way or Soto way" [laughs], you know, "Hinayana practice and Mahayana practice." Whether it is Rinzai or Soto, you know, if you practice it as you drive your car or as you hopping around whole universe, you know [laughs], it doesn't-it is same thing, you know-Rinzai or-there is no Rinzai or Soto. Mostly people, you know, who say Rinzai or Soto are the people who want to practice zazen as they drive their car-as they choose their car: Chevrolet or Ford [laughs] or-you know-I, you know-that is their understanding of zazen. A train or, you know, airplane.

If you understand-if you have right understanding in your practice, you know, that doesn't make much difference, you know. Train or airplane or ship or-doesn't make much difference. You can enjoy, you know, trip-your trip anyway.

If you go to Japan by boat, it may take ten days. But you will-and by airplane, maybe ten hours. But if the point is to enjoy your trip, you know, it doesn't, you know, make much difference. Time is not the point because you don't-even though you make a trip by airplane, you cannot live a thousand years [laughs]-same thing. You only live, you know, maybe one hundred years at most. So it-it-it is the different way of enjoying your life. It is. And you cannot repeat your life, you know. So you cannot compare your life to someone-some other's life. You have your own life.

So the only way is to enjoy our own life. So even though you are practicing zazen, you know, counting breathing like a snail [laughs], you can enjoy your life, you know, maybe much better than to make a trip to the moon.

That is, you know, how-why we practice zazen. And we should-whatever-what kind of life you may have is not important. The most important thing is to be able to enjoy your life, without fooling by things.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields (6/27/00) and Bill Redican (7/27/00).

[1] Apollo 11 was launched July 16, 1969, at 9:32 am EDT. It landed on the moon on the day of this lecture, July 20, at 4:17 pm EDT. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon later that same day at 10:56 pm EDT.

## 9 - Blue Cliff Record #43

Saturday, July 26, 1969

Blue Cliff Record #43

Tassajara

A monk asked Tozan-Zen Master Tozan[1]-can you hear me?-

"It is so hot," you know. "How is it possible to go somewhere where it is not hot?"[2]

Tozan asked to the monk: "Why don't you go," you know, "somewhere it is not so hot?"

And Tozan said-Tozan asked him-told him, "Why don't you go somewhere it is not so hot?"

"But wherever I go, when it is hot, it is hot," he said-the monk said.

Tozan answered the question and said: "When it is hot, you should kill the hot; when it is cold, you should kill the cold."

To kill cold or hot-it-I don't know how you understand it. Maybe for beginner it is pretty hard to sit when your legs are painful. I think it is more difficult for the-for someone to sit with painful legs in hot weather. But how you, you know, practice zazen in such a difficulty-with such difficulty, is something you should understand.

Whenever I had some pain in my legs I used to think about this koan, and I try-try not to move, even though my legs are painful. When it is hot, I-when I went to tangaryo-entered tangaryo-it was summertime. [3] So it is very hard for me to sit, although I practiced zazen before I go to Eihei-ji monastery. But still it was pretty hard to sit all day long in crossed-legged position. When it is very painful and when I felt very hot, you know, the big cryptomeria[4] tree started to swing [laughs]. That is-it is not the big tree that started to swing. My mind started to swing this way [probably gestures]. All the big trees started-started to move like this. And I found out that I didn't-I couldn't allowed to see my watch in tangaryo, but I-I thought in every-in ten-every ten minutes, you know, peak of the pain comes [laughs], you know, like this. And-and the cryptomeria trees start to move like this.

When the pain come to the peak of the-peak, it, you know, start to calm down. Every-maybe every ten minutes, you know, like wave it comes and goes. But pain in your legs doesn't hurt you, so it is all right, you know, even though you feel painful. This kind of practice is necessary. And if you try to sit, you know, you must have the strong confidence that you do not stand up or move. Even though what kind of difficulty you may have, you should try your best.

To kill the pain or cold or hot, means to become one with, you know, pain. You should-you should forget, you know, about your legs, you know. You should become one with pain, not your body's pain, but pain. And it is not "you" who feel the pain, because you are one with the pain. That which exist is the-just pain. Nothing exist but the pain. You have no legs or no body. No body. Or no feeling. Then it means that you, when we say to kill the pain, it means that you become one with the pain.

At first, you know, it is pretty difficult to wear many clothes in hot weather, when it is hot. But, you know, even though you take off all of your, you know, clothing, it is still hot [laughs]. So as long as you are trying to, you know, take off, you know, your dress one by one, you may be still hot. So if you fix-when you fix your mind not to take off your dress even though it is hot, then there is some possibility for you to stay in hot weather. But most people, you know, when you feel hot, you start to take off your suits. But that is not way. Most people, you know, seek for some shady place, you know-start to seek for some-try to go [to] some cooler place.

That is all right, but if you [are] determine to sit, you should not try to find out some easy way. The only way is to sit where you are, and to find out the complete absolute composure where you sit. That is how we sit, and that is so-called-it shikantaza.

So Soto priest translate-may translate "to kill cold or hot": "When it is hot, you should be hot buddha. When it is-excuse me-hot you should be hot buddha. When it is cold, you should be cold buddha." Literally it says: "When it is hot, you should kill." Kansatsu jari [5] means: jari means, you know, a priest or monk. "You should kill the monk by cold or by hot." But the actual meaning is "to be cold buddha or to be hot buddha." So it may be better to translate it in this way: "When it is cold, you should become cold buddha or cold priest or cold monk. When it is hot, you should be hot priest or hot monk." That is the stage we should attain, you know. "When it is cold you should be cold buddha."

When you are trying to seek for some attainment, it is the stage "form is emptiness." But after you attain-you start the practice of "form is emptiness," you know, you should find out that everything should-is buddha. Buddha is everything. So that is "emptiness is form."

And "emptiness is emptiness" means to get rid of the attainment you attained. And when you bec- [partial word]-are quite free from attainment, that stage is "form is form." Where there is no-when it is hot, you should be hot buddha, you know. That is "form is form"-the stage of "form is form." As long as you, you know, stick to your attainment, your attainment does not work. So when you are free from your attainment, your attainment will start to work.

So if you say, "I attain this kind of stage," you know, as long as you say,

"I attain this kind of stage," you are not ordinal [ordinary] person. So you cannot communicate with ordinal [ordinary] person. You may be- you may be something different person from ordinal [ordinary] one, but that is not our stage to attain. When you become completely ordinal [ordinary] person, after your attainment, you are said to be perfect-you are said to have perfect attainment.

Maybe this is the characteristic of Zen. We do not stay [in] some certain stage. For us there is no stage to stay [in]. When it is cold, we are cold buddha [laughs]. When it is hot, we are hot buddha. We may say: "Oh, it is hot!" [Laughs.] But we do not [say] any complaint.

"Oh, it is hot. Oh, it is cold." To say so is all right, but if-if you don't try to escape from [it], it is all right. That is the stage [in which] you can help people in its complete sense. Sometime, you know, if you have-if you are respected, or when people respect you, you know, because of your attainment, you will find out some-you will find out some way to help them. That is true. But that is not perfect. When you completely forget about your attainment, and you become completely good friend of others, I think you can help people in its true sense.

The people may not, you know, even [be] aware of being helped by such person, but actually they are helped by him in its true sense. It is-maybe, you know, for an instance, if I try to help people as a priest like this wearing okesa and robe, you know, sometime it is easy, but I cannot help all of them. You may say: "Oh, you are priest," you know [laughs], "so that is why you-you can say so. But I-I have various," you know, "commitment. I have my family. I cannot give up my business. So you cannot be good example of layman." You may say so. It is same thing if you are rich: It is rather difficult to help people. "Oh, you are so rich, so that is why you have no problem. But I have no money. [Laughs, laughter.] I have-that is why I have so many difficulties." So it is rather hard for a rich man to help others.

Without money, if you are happy, you know, then you will be a good example of people. The people may try to, you know, try to be like you if you have nothing to give him-give them, or if you have no particular status. I think this is, you know, best way to help people. I think so, you know, because I belong to Soto school [laughs]. But at the same time, it is not so easy. That is why I am wearing robe like this, always. I feel, you know, I feel always protection, you know, by my robe. I know that is not so good, but [laughter] as Soto priest I should be like Ryokan,[6] you know, who-who is-who was almost a beggar. And yet he-he was a-a famous, you know, poet and scholar. But after, you know, he died, we found out he was so great. But when-I think, when he was alive, no one, you know, knew that he was such a great person.

Wherever he is in his trip, lonely trip, he, you know, he-always, in his mind, there was Dogen-zenji. And he left many poem about his adoration to Dogen. I think I-as long as you stick to some position, we

are not really, in its true sense, we are not Dogen's descendents. So even though we wear those robes, you know, we should forget about those robes. Although we observe strictly, you know, the way of wearing those things-how-there is strict manner to wear those robes-even though we are observing strictly our way, at the same time, we should be completely detached from the rituals and robes. Do you understand? Maybe, you know, if we are-if I am very strict with the manner or rituals, usually you think, "He is very rigid," you may say-you may say so. But actually it is not so. This is, you know, something which is difficult for you to understand. That is why we have so many, you know-we repeat:

Form is emptiness.

Emptiness is form.

Form is form.

And:

Emptiness is emptiness.

Even though you study those four lines or statements as a whole life study, you will find-you will have something more to study. Most of you, in [at] your age, I think, that you attained is-will be the stage-may be "emptiness is form." Most of you may be "form is emptiness." When you, you know, see some, you know-when you at- [partial word]-you have some attainment or some understanding [of] what is emptiness, you feel as if you attained something pretty well-not completely but pretty well. And you feel you are something different from usual person. "Oh, they don't understand what I attained. But I know what it is, you know. I am something different from ordinal [ordinary] person." You will be-most people will stay forever in this stage. And you will be very proud of your attainment. And you will behave quite different way from usual people. But that is, you know, the second stage or-first stage or second stage. And there are many things to study after you attain that kind of attainment.

Why you st- [partial word]-why you stay without ma- [partial word]-without making any progress at the first stage or second stage is mostly because you don't know the real practice-what is real practice, and because you do not have real teacher.

Dogen-zenji says: "Most people," you know, "thinks real teacher is someone who has a great knowledge, or someone who has a mysterious power, or someone who is different from ordinal [ordinary] people. But you should-even," you know, "children of seven years old may be your teacher," he said,[7] if you, you know, after you attain first stage or second stage.

So great scholar or great Zen master can be a good-will give you-will give us a great encouragement. But as long as you accept him because of his knowledge, because of his power of practice, then he is not it [?]-he is not, you know, for you right teacher.

It is, you know-whether he is good teacher or not is not only because of his ability, but because of real understanding of practice, or because you have true understanding of our way. When you, you know-when you know what is our practice and what is our ultimate attainment, you will start to respect [a teacher], you know, even [if] he is-is a child, you know. You will start to respect him. So it is not matter of "he is great" or "he is ordinal [ordinary]," in that case, if you know what is our practice.

If you don't know, you know, what is real practice, you should have some teacher who knows what is real practice, even though he is not real teacher. But if he is striving for the ultimate attainment, he will be a good teacher and he will practice with you forever. Or else I don't think I can be a-I can be your teacher, you know [laughs]. I know what is right practice, but I know, at the same time, I am not, you know, perfect teacher. I know what is real practice, and I know I am not perfect. But I know how to help you and how to be a good friend of you. I think even though I am not perfect, I can be a teacher, you know, especially when a child of seven years old could be your teacher [laughs, laughter]. I am not making some excuse for me, [but] that is true, I think. That is why Dogen-zenji says: "There is no problem for us to study our lofty way. People may say 'lofty way,' but the-our gate is widely open to everyone. Everyone could be a teacher." Every one of us could be a teacher if we know what is real practice.

I have ten minutes more [laughs, laughter]. If you have question, please ask me. Do you have some question? No? Hai.

Student A: Could you explain more how we should practice our way strictly, without being attached to it?

Suzuki-roshi: Strictly. Yeah. You want strictness [laughs, laughter]. I think if you want strictness, it may be enough, you know. If you meet, you know, some strict-if you find out how strict our human life is, you know, you will be encouraged by the difficulties you have in our human life. Even though you come to-enter into the deep valley of Tassajara, you know, you cannot escape from the human life. And our human life is pretty strict. It looks like very easy, but actually it isn't.

Hard practice in monastery is not so hard, but to practice our way in the city is much difficult. So I understand, you know, why you want strictness in your practice. I understand that. But if I am very strict with you, you know, I must be dead, you know, with you [laughs]. Maybe before-before, you know-in-in-maybe in one or two months, I will be dead-trying to be very strict with you [laughs, laughter]. So let's, you know, make best effort, anyway [laughs, laughter]. Some other

question? Hai.

Student B: Roshi, you spoke in one lecture about-you got to the Seventh Mind. But you didn't tell us where the Eighth Mind was. Where is the Eighth Mind? [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Eighth Mind-Eighth Mind is "no mind," is Eighth Mind. The Seventh Mind is, you know, "some mind." [Laughs, laughter.] "This is mind," you know. "I understand it. You are good teacher." That is Seventh Mind. Even though Seventh Mind say so, you know, you shouldn't trust him [laughs]. Do you understand [laughs, laughter]? Seventh Mind is ego-ego-centered mind, you know. "I understand it. I think he is a good teacher. I think he is not so good." So you should always ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

Student C: ... "emptiness is form" and "form is emptiness." Is that the English of yu soku mu and mu soku yu?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah-you-wu soku-yeah, you can-yeah, that is-that is correct. Mu means "not"-we say "emptiness" but actually it is not-it may not be good translation [laughs, laughter]. So whatever you say, that is a kind of sign, you know. Mu. Do you have some more question?

Student D [probably Bill Shurtleff]: Sometimes when we're sitting and pain starts to come-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student D: -we have a choice of becoming one with the pain or of escaping from it-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student D: -by unfolding our legs.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: And I find that when I become one with the pain or continue sitting with the pain, afterwards I feel, somehow, proud. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Mm. Yeah.

Student D: What do you think about that? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Afterwards-you [think], "It is good. It is [1-2 words]," you know, because you think-afterwards you think, you know. When you are practicing, you know, you don't-you will not be proud of it. You will just do it. When, you know, you become proud of it, you know, all at once your legs start to ache.



It is that kind of time when you, you know, attain kensho experience, you know, before you become proud of it, if you hear something, you know, or all of sudden, or if you receive a big slap or something, you know, all of sudden you will lose everything. Anyway, you know, the important point is to become just one with it, whether you become aware of it by outward stimulation or not, you know. When something happen to you, you know, you will-you have no time to become proud of it [laughs]. Whhht! All of a sudden, everything bounced up, and you will lose everything, so that you have no time to be proud of it. That is so-called-it kensho experience. But even enough you have that kind of experience, because of lack of outward stimulation, we cannot say you haven't that kind of practice.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Judith L. Randall and Bill Redican (12/27/00).

[1] Dongshan Liangjie (Tozan Ryokai): 807-869. Chan master in Tang China. Dharma successor of Ungan Donjo; master of Sozan Kyonin. Co-founder of Soto school of Zen.

[2] Case 43 of Hekiganroku (The Blue Cliff Record), "Tozan's 'No Cold or Heat.'" Also cited in Shobogenzo "Shunju," in a translation that is more similar to Suzuki-roshi's usage.

[3] September 17, 1930.

[4] Japanese cedar.

[5] kansatsu (Jap.): "cold is nothing but cold"; to give oneself up to cold [when it is cold]. jari (Jap.): abbreviation of ajari (acarya, San.), a senior priest or monk.

[6] Ryokan Daigu (1758?-1831): Soto monk and renowned poet.

[7] Shobogenzo "Raihai-tokuzui."

## **10 - Question and Answer**

Monday, July 28, 1969

Question and Answer  
Tassajara

[1]... mind. That is the purpose of counting. Not just count, you know.

Student A: But, like, in daily life, are we to count when we are walking, or would you just walk?

Suzuki-roshi: In daily life if you walk as a practice of Zen, you know, you, you know, you steady [steadily] walk step-by-step like you count your breathing. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, I found in the past three months at Tassajara that I've uncovered tremendous anger in myself from time to time-

Suzuki-roshi: : Uh-huh.

Student B: -with no fixed object, just great force of anger.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: Can you tell me what the root of that is and how to deal with it-that anger?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe your confidence is not strong enough. That is why you become angry. You see, you have, you know-I think most people, you know, try to solve psychological-special conditions by psychology, you know, by knowing why, you know, and by knowing how to treat it, you know, like a mother treat their children, you know. But our way is a little bit different from that. Actually, you know, for an instance, I am very impatient, you know. But sometime I sh- [partial word]-I may-I shall be most patient person. Why is it? [Laughs] Same person, you know, sometime became-become very patient, and sometime very impatient. When I think I should not be angry, I am never angry. [Laughs.]

That is possible, and that will not create any trouble-psychological trouble to you. If-if you have a kind of wisdom, you know, you do not-I-I'm not trying to control my anger, you know. But I know, you know, I shouldn't be angry, you know. My wisdom tell me, you know, you shouldn't be angry for one year or two years [laughs]. And it may be foolish to be angry. Then I don't be angry. And when you say it is difficult to control, to me it sounds like you-you want some help, you know [laughs]-help of psychology or psychiatrist or teacher. But he-they will not help you. Buddhism will not help you [laughs]. You must help yourself. Hai.

Student C: You spoke a minute ago about direct experience-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -of truth-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: -through practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: It seems like most of us today don't believe in absolutes-in absolute truths-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -or in absolute truth. And you said also that, like, this truth cannot be apprehended, you know, through understanding.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: It must be direct experience.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: I mean, this is a standard thing we hear that now, I think, anyway-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: -that there are no absolutes. Everything is, you know, must be seen in the context of the time-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -and the place and the situation-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student C: -and that sort of thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And this makes me wonder whether this may be connected to what you said earlier about our seeking meaning, because if we firmly believe that there are no-you know, nothing is absolutely true or right-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -or good-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -then what, you know, I-then what is the meaning of-of a-of-of this? And so you-I'm just sort of thinking this out loud.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That's a good question. And that is the point. You should make effort. Usually absolute truth, you know, means something you cannot change. That is absolute truth. But we don't think there is such a thing like you say "absolute truth." When I say "absolute truth" means, you know-the meaning is quite different. Absolute truth is the truth which reveal itself on various form and color. That much, I think, everyone will understand it.

Student C: I don't understand, because all-if all I see are the changing forms and colors-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Student C: -always changing and all. And-and I can't see the absolute truth that-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, you cannot see [laughs], so still you are seeking for, you know-

Student C: To see, yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: -something you can understand.

Student C: Yeah, right, right.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is not the way to understand the absolute we mean. So, you know, maybe only way is to know nothing is permanent. Nothing is completely right [?] or [?] good [?]. We should know this fact completely. And you should not, you know, try to seek for something absolutely right. And you shouldn't try to depend on something. Then, you know, you-what you will do is, you know, to appreciate things you see or you have now, right now. If so, the thing you have has the absolute, you know, meaning to you whether it is beautiful or ugly doesn't matter. You don't compare one thing to the other. If you-when you compare something to some other thing you have, you must have some standard or measurement. That measurement is not completely right, you know. This is just tentative, you know, measurement to help your ego-centered purpose [laughs].

So you cannot, in its true sense, you cannot compare one thing to the other. When you ignore the meaning of-various meaning of something, you know, you can-the things will have comparative value, you know. You can exchange diamond, you know, for some big property [laughs], you know. But actually you cannot do that. When you limit the value of diamond or property to serve your purpose, you know, you can exchange it. But originally diamond is diamond, and piece of land is piece of land.

So in this way, you will find out what do we mean by absolute. So when you give up your thinking and when you, you know, without thinking

you hear something-you will hear the true voice of a bird or flowing water. That is what I mean.

So we say everyone is self-supported, you know, or everyone is full-fledged, you know. Everyone is grown-up person. We don't want anything from others. Each-each one of us has his own value and meaning which you cannot ex- [partial word]-no one-which no one can take your place. That is "absolute."

Student C: Then you are using absolute or truth in a different way. Wouldn't it be better-

Suzuki-roshi: Completely different way!

Student C: -wouldn't it be better not to-not-not to use that word, then, or-or I guess it-

Suzuki-roshi: We have to use it.

Student C: Why?

Suzuki-roshi: Why?

Student C: Yeah, why-why can't we use some other-

Suzuki-roshi: Comparat- [partial word]-to destroy the-to exchange, you know, to make your relative understanding clear, you know? The absolute you use, is-to me is relative, you know. So-and you stick to the relative as absolute, you know, as if you-we stick to something real-really absolute [laughs]. So we have to use it. So actually I am giving you some completely new words. If you want to suffer forever, you don't need it [laughs]. Some other question?

Student D (Bill Shurtleff): Some ways of practice emphasize the body energies, such as the Buddhism of Tibet and yoga, and they try to awaken these energies in the body and then somehow direct them or control them toward the same end I feel that Zen does. However, Zen seems to neglect this or not to mention this.

Suzuki-roshi: Physical-physical what? Neglect what?

Bill: This-awakening the energies of the body and deliberately controlling those energies in the body toward understanding our true nature with, as a means-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: -for an understanding of true [?] nature. Why is it that Zen simply doesn't mention these things? For example, Buddhism of Tibet talks about the chakras in the body, and use of breathing, and awakening the

energy at the base of the spine and rising it up the spine. It seems to talk a lot about this and practice it a lot. Why is it that Zen makes no mention of this?

Suzuki-roshi: That is also more-we-it is possible-it is-you can use various way, you know, but in that direction you cannot find out complete composure, you know. The direction is wrong. The way may be help-may be helpful. But if you use those thing-those practice for, you know, another direction or opposite direction, you will not find out complete composure. Do you understand? This is nearly the same question, you know.

We-as Soto Zen we do not say to practice zazen to attain enlightenment. Even to attain enlightenment, you know, is not our way because direction is opposite. Did you understand? We are, you know, aiming at emptiness [laughs]. You are aiming at somethingness, you know. But both is necessary, of course, but when you aim at something, you should know that, you know, that is in that direction, you know. It may be helpful, if you know that, but if you attach to it, you know, if you [are] bound by it, you will have another burden on your shoulder which you didn't have.

So, you know, because almost all of us is, you know, practicing our way, facing, you know, the other direction, so we always talk about to face this way, this way, this way. But, you know, both is necessary, of course. One more question, please.

Student E: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student E: You said before that we should look at our experience absolutely and not relatively, not compare ourselves with-compare our experiences or compare ourselves with others. But to me, when I see you, I say, "Oh, Roshi. He's good." And I say, "Oh, I'm not so good." And by saying that to myself, it-it seems to stimulate my effort. It wakens my way-seeking-mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: Should we-what-what would you say about that?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Right now I explained there is two ways of understanding of reality or emptiness or enlightenment, you know. Enlightenment is sometime is goal of practice, and sometime enlightenment is not goal of practice. It is something which we have already. And in this sense, whatever you do, there is some reason, you know. Because there is some reason, we cannot say that is bad. But if the goal of practice [is] to-to attain some attainment where we have complete freedom from things, you know, for human beings there must

be some way, but for animal or a baby, you know, there is no need to follow this kind of steps or way. Do you understand? There is two ways, you know, of-when-even though we say "enlightenment," but the meaning-sometime is original enlightenment. And sometime it is goal of practice for usual person who stick to something.

Student E: Should we-are-are there different paths for different people?

Suzuki-roshi: No, no. Original-for original attainment there is no teacher or no disciple. It is-

Student E: There's no goal-there is no goal of enlightenment, then.

Suzuki-roshi: Goal, you know-same-we-sometime we talk about, you know, like philosophy or, you know, like a drama, you know-talk about like Lotus Sutra, you know. We talk about enlightenment in various way. That is the description of original enlightenment which isn't-I cannot say "nothing to do," but "something to do," but not much to do with attainment for human being. Truth is truth whether, you know, we reach to the moon or not.[2] Truth is truth. But for human being, there must be some way to go, you know. We enjoy the trip [laughs, laughter]. Whether we enjoy our trip or not, moon is there. [Laughter.] So there is two ways of talking about the moon. That is what I meant.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker.  
Checked by Bill Redican (2/23/01).

[1] Opening words were not recorded on tape.

[2] Apollo 11 landed on the moon just over a week before this lecture, on July 20, 1969.

## **1969 augustus (8)**

### **1 - Truth and Liberation**

Friday, August 01, 1969

Truth and Liberation  
Tassajara

As a Buddhist, of course, the most important precept is to-to believe in Buddha and his teaching and his disciples. Buddha, you know, for us is someone who attained enlightenment-not only historical Buddha but also Buddha's disciples who attained enlightenment is buddha. And still

this is its-in its narrow sense. In its wider sense, whether we attain enlightenment or not we are buddha-not only human being but also various beings, animate and inanimate. Even something like stone is buddha, in its wide sense. So everything is buddha in its wide sense.

But the religion is mostly for human being who saw-when we said "buddha" usually someone who attain liberation is buddha. It may be better to understand in this way to avoid the conflict. And "his teaching," we say, but when we say "his teaching" we do not mean something which is written in scriptures. Mostly, you know, even though you read so-called-it king of the scripture Lotus Sutra, it may be difficult to understand for you because it is written pretty, you know, in ancient times.

And we know that it is not directly told by Buddha, so this point makes us more difficult to-to have faith in that scripture. So nowadays or from ancient time, when we say dhamma,[1] dhamma is truth in its wide sense. So which is written by-written in scripture is not all the dhamma we mean. It is a part of dhamma, or it is dhamma in its narrow sense. In its wide sense, truth is the dhamma, especially in Zen, you know. We believe in no teaching [laughs]. [Coughs.] Excuse me.

Not only-it is also up to our attitude of living, you know. If we attach to some teaching or if we [are] bound by teaching, that teaching, even though it is good-if we think "This is the best teaching," then that is not Buddhist teaching any more. When we read it, we should be completely free from and appreciate the meaning of the teaching. That is how we understand dhamma. And sangha is, of course, his-Buddha's disciples and those who practice Buddha's teaching is sangha.

I think tonight I want to explain mostly what is dhamma, especially, and what is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism.

Teaching will be classified in two: pure teaching and teaching for human being, you know. For an instance, you know, science is also teaching for us, but science does not directly related to our human life. Of course it is related, but not directly. You may think science is more helpful than Buddha's [laughs] teaching, but it is not so. For an instance, Buddha said, "When you are shot-shot by a poisonous arrow," you know, "do you discuss the nature of poison?" you know, "What poison will it be? Is it acid or some other poison?" you know. No one discuss, you know, about the poison. To discuss what kind of chemical it is, you know, is science, and to pull out the arrow is [laughs] Buddha's teaching. So teaching how to pull out the poisonous arrow is another teaching. And what kind of poison it is, you know, to know what kind of poison is it is another teaching. But both scientific true pure teaching which is not-which is always true whether human being, you know, studied or not is a truth-maybe teaching Number 1. And the teaching Number 2 [is] how to attain liberation for human being-is teaching Number 2.



I think why you become, you know, why mostly young people become interested in Buddhism is because you are tired of the teaching Number 1. And the teaching you study, you know, as a Number 2 teaching, is very old teaching. And especially the teaching Number 2 [is] based on the value over life, like which do we like: money or spiritual attainment, you know. Which is more important person who has, who is learned in sense of science, or who is-who attain liberation in spiritual world? This is a kind of value, you know.

The way you evaluate things is basic standard of the teaching of-teaching Number 2. Nowadays, you know, your way of, your standard of life, your understanding of life change. It's changing little by little. So the old-you are not interested in, you know, old standard of life, which is mostly based on comparative value. For maybe ten or twelve years or more, young people in Japan [have been] interested in Communism because, you know, the standards-viewpoint or standards of evaluating things is different.

So people started to [be] interested in it, but when you-when we study more and more, we found out that this kind of standard is not-not much different from our standard which we have being pride [proud?] in our human life. And Buddhist way of evaluation things-evaluating things is quite different from usual viewpoint. But I'm not-this evening, I'm not talking about this kind of thing because it is-it is necessary to discuss, maybe, discuss our life from various viewpoint, including politics [laughs], you know, and social science.

Tonight I want to explain Buddha's teaching as a Number 1-as a philosophy or as a more scientific viewpoint. As you know, the fundamental teaching of Buddhism is everything changes. This is the teaching, the fundamental teaching, which is always true and, which is true wherever you go. Even [if] you go to heaven, this is true. Even though you go to hell [laughs], this is true. Wherever you go, there is nothing which does not change. We say Buddha is a teacher of all the teacher, or teacher of three world.[2] It means that his teaching is always true, you know, wherever you go. It is true in past and present and future. Even though you go to the moon, everything changes [laughs]. Even though you go to Mars, everything changes. So wherever we go, his teaching is true-always true.

Why this teaching is so important is because actually we do not accept this teaching completely. So for us, it is necessary to know-to make this teaching sure. And it is necessary to-to accept this teaching. So when you want to accept this teaching, it is-it is necessary for you, you know, to have teaching Number 2. When you just talk about Buddha's teaching, like me, you know [laughs], whether you accept it or not, or whether I complete-completely accept it or not, just to talk about like scientist or philosopher. This is teaching Number 1. But most religion, you know, put more emphasis on the teaching Number 2, teaching for just human being.

Of course, we Buddhists put emphasis on the teaching Number 1. But we Buddhist, for a long time, studied our teaching as a teaching Number 1, from historical viewpoint, or from scientific viewpoint, or from philosophical viewpoint. Not only special teachings for human being, but also teaching for every being. So when we say "sentient being," it include everything, not only human being, a dog, or a cat, or a worm-everyone-everything is-every animate being-not only animate being [but also] inanimate being is included. So accordingly Buddhism is-looks like very cold teaching, but on the other hand it is more universal and more scientific teachings.

Now, the teaching "everything changes" could be extended [to] the teaching of selflessness. Selflessness, you know, in its usual sense, you know, [means] don't be selfish. It is something-it looks like some rules. But when we say, "Don't be selfish,"-[it] means you cannot be selfish, you know. Even though you try to-try to be selfish, you cannot be, you know, selfish because everything is changing, you know. Even though you try to be selfish, who is you, you know, when everything is changing?

We should not understand we exist in the same way always, in relation to others. For an instance, if I know, you know, I am always like me in this moment, if I know that, I cannot convince you, you know-I cannot be angry with you so much because tomorrow I shall be some other person. But because I think I am always like me, so I became angry with you. But that is not true. I cannot be angry with you. There is no reason for it-to be angry with you. Or I cannot try-there is no reason why I should try to convince you in some special way because, you know, I cannot be always in this way. I don't know, I-I may change my mind tomorrow. No one knows [laughs] what will happen to me. But when I am trying to convince you [of] something, it means that, you know, I-I am always like this, and what I think is right is always right. But it is not so. Actually it is not so.

Even though I think it is right at this moment, tomorrow I don't know what do I say. That is true-very true. If we know that everything is changing, you know, even though I think here is a cup like this [moves cup across table and takes a sip of water], but this cup cannot be always like this. Moment after moment, the cup is changing. But if someone break it I shall be, you know, disappointed. But if I know that this is always changing, we will-I shall not be discouraged so much because I know someday it will be broken.

And we always expect something to be always same, but that is not true too because everything is changing. So even though we expect something to be always same, or try to-or to expect something always same, is not possible. And if you expect something to be always same, it will be the cause of suffering, you know, because even though you expect something to be same, but it change. When you change some-

you see something changed, you will be discouraged. So to expect something always [to be the] same is the cause of trouble for you.

So same truth-"things always changing"-in one way it is truth itself, and it is the truth-something to do with you. And we do not-Buddhists do not ignore teaching as a teaching Number 1. Even though we say, "Don't be like this," it means that the foundation of the teaching is Number 1 teaching always. This is one of the characteristic of Buddha's teaching.

So meaning-even though we say, "Don't be selfish," the meaning is quite different. The meaning is-what we mean is it is not possible for us to be selfish. And if you try to be selfish, it will be very-it will create [for] you some trouble. And you should know that. So even though no one ask you to be unselfish, you should know whether it is possible to be selfish or not. What we mean is not prophetary [?][3] teaching, but some teaching which you should know by yourself and which you should study by yourself. So our teaching is not, you know, in this sense, [that] which was told by Buddha. The-our teaching is something which you should realize by yourself.

The sangha, or Buddha's disciple, or between-relationship between Buddha and Buddha's disciple is-both is independent, you know. Disciple should not be always dependent on his teacher. We should try to study our way by ourselves. The teacher can help you, you know, in some way. But the teacher cannot help you completely because our teaching is not [that] which you can study literally. And teaching itself is-should be always changing. Today's teaching cannot be applied for tomorrow. Day after day, you should continue study our teaching according to the circumstances.

Famous Zen master Hyakujo[4] was a disciple of Nansen.[5] He said, "If we are like-if I am like my teacher Nansen-if we attain-if I attain-even though I have same power as my teacher, I shall lose half value of my teacher Nansen. So disciples should be better-better than our teacher." [6] That is what Nansen-what Hyakujo said. It means that why we have disciples is because teaching should be changing always and should be extended always. And we cannot apply same teaching all the time. That is why you study Buddhism and you study our teaching. The teaching itself-so teaching itself should be changing as everything changes. The teaching that everything changes is very important teaching for Buddhist.

Nowdays people understand-people are very much interested in [tape defective and unclear for 8-12 words] ..., but we should, you know, know the depth of teaching that everything changes. And we should try to understand this teaching directly. As Dogen-zenji said, "The teaching 'everything changes' is not something-some teaching which you realize after many years' practice. It is teaching you should directly know."

When we, you know, we say "to have direct experience of it." What do we mean is to appreciate things not because of something is useful or not, not because of something is favorable for us or not. Usually, you know-at Eihei-ji there is bridge named Hanshaku-kyo.[7] Hanshaku-kyo means Half-Dipper Bridge, because Dogen-zenji, after using, you know, water from the dipper-half of the water from the dipper, and he returned it to the river always. Half-Dipper Bridge. Usually, you know, if there is-at Eihei-ji there is-it is a valley like Tassajara, and the stream is full of pure water. And there will be no need to, you know, return it to the river after he used half of it. But he always return it to the river.

Usually, you know, water is valuable because when-only when it is not so much, you don't use so much water as we do in sip. But at Eihei-ji monastery we cannot use-we cannot wash our face by-with-with bucketful water. We-we always use 70% of the water.[8] Usually, you know, we evaluate things because [depending on] whether it is-whether we have a lot of it or not. If we haven't so much, the water become valuable. And our economy-economic principle based on, you know, our labor and the things we have. And if, you know, something is-if we don't have some particular things ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... this is, you know-whether you think some other principle and evaluate things or not is the point.

Things are valuable because-usually because the things are, you know, produced by labor. But labor is-of course, we should count labor, but more important thing is the place we stand up with earth,[9] you know. So labor or something which-something which we have plenty of it or not, is not count so much if we know how we exist in this moment like. This is very elaborate intellectual explanation.

But what I want to say is when you sit, you know, you should not think whether this practice is necessary or not [laughs]. Anyway, what I mean [is] you should sit. That is what I wanted to say, in short. [Laughs, laughter.] I go round and round. This is direct experience, you know, to accept yourself as you are. If you always look around like a hungry dog, you know, you will not gain anything. When you are ready to be there, you know, and to accept things which is given to you, then you will be-you will find out everything valuable. This point is missing, you know, in our life.

What we are always trying to is always finding some measurement, and we are trying to measure ourselves or measure our life. And if you don't feel good, you try to change your measurement. That is what we are doing. Now, you know, most of our young generation trying to change all measurement to new one [laughs]. But you don't try to, you know, measurement-measure things by your eyes, you know. You don't have to depend on measurement. You can measure it, you know, by your body, not because someone said this is valuable or this is not so

valuable, bec- [partial word]-not because someone said this is old or this is new.

You must have-accept before you, you know-we don't have to think so much. Mostly you can depend on your intuition. But you-you want, you know, always you depend on something always. And [tape defective and unclear for 8-12 words] ... to accept things as it is and try first by your intuition.

So whether we have plenty of water or not, we should best use of it-you should have best use of it. Whether you can sit-whether you can complete your practice or not, you know, you should try first, and when you returning to do it, you can do it. When you hesitate, you cannot do it. When we are completely [free?] from everything and try to open your mind, then you find your own way. And your, you know, behavior will change, and your face will change. Everything will change-not only you, but whatever you see. Things will change. Then, sometime, you can enjoy your measure to explain [laughs], you know, various way. But you shouldn't depend on measurement.

This is pretty difficult practice, but we will-you will see it [?]-try. This is how we accept the teaching [that] things changes. Because things changes, you should-we should be concentrated on each moment.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker. Checked by Bill Redican (3/1/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi used the Pali pronunciation, so that spelling is used.

[2] Possibly triloka (Sanskrit), the three worlds or spheres that make up samsara.

[3] Suzuki-roshi pronounced it "pra-FEET-a-ree," and he had difficulty with the word. The transcriber's best guess is "prophetary," as in pertaining to a prophet. Another possibility is "profitary," as in pertaining to profit.

[4] Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. Dharma successor of Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu), as was Nansen. Suzuki-roshi may have meant to say "Joshu" instead of "Hyakujo."

[5] Nanquan Puyuan (Nansen Fugan): 748-835. Dharma successor of Mazu Daoyi and master of Joshu Jushin (778-897).

[6] See also SR-70-06-17.

[7] Hanshaku-kyo: a bridge beyond the entrance gate of Eihei-ji. (See also "Nirvana, the Waterfall," in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, p. 92.)

[8] That is, the monks fill their washbasins only 70%.

[9] Possibly an allusion to Dogen's statement, "Those who fall to the earth should stand up by the earth," in Shobogenzo "Inmo." Dogen in turn was quoting the fourth Indian patriarch Upagupta in Keitoku Dentoroku (Keitoku Era Record of the Transmission of the Light), Chapter 1. (See also lectures SR-69-09-00-B, SR-69-09-00-C, and SR-71-08-21.)

## **2 - Change and Suffering**

Saturday, August 02, 1969

Change and Suffering  
Tassajara

I'm afraid I will-I am making you hotter [laughs] because I cough and my lecture is maybe pretty difficult to understand because of my English especially. Last night I was trying to-my skeleton of lecture was like this [laughs]. Can you read it?

The first teaching-the-we-we have four or three series of Buddhist teaching. The teaching-the teaching that [laughter]-the teaching that everything is changing-in Japanese, shogyo-mujo[1]-or Chinese shogyo-mujo-teaching that everything is changing. This teaching can be-could be understand in two ways: the one-the teaching as the law of the truth. This teaching is always true, you know, whether we observe it or not. The-so-if everything is changing, that means non-substantiality. There is no substantial being, you know. We are only composed being from various elements. So we are non-substantial being. (a) Non-substantiality.

(b) As a-as the presupposed teaching of the teaching of the selflessness. Teaching of selflessness is the teaching that everything changes. And teaching of selflessness, the second one, is two of the four important teachings. The four teaching are: teaching that everything changes, and teaching of selflessness, and teaching of suffering, and teaching of nirvana. Those are the four important teaching of Buddhism. So we call it "four seals of Buddhist teaching."

And this teaching is presupposed teaching for the second teaching of the selflessness, because everything is composed being. So there is nothing which is understood to be "self." That is a teaching of selflessness. Usually if we say selflessness, you may understand that that is the teaching, you know, of a few [?] human being who are very selfish, you

know.

But actually, not only human being but also everything it-has no self. So-and the actual, you know, teaching for human being could be this teaching of selfless-no, everything is changing could be applied for the human life: (a) to be free from attachment. If, you know, everything is changing, then [there is] nothing which we can attach to, actually. So this is for human being the teaching of attachment-non-attachment. (b) idea of fate-free from idea of fate. And (c) to make best effort in each moment. So only way for us is to make best effort in each moment because that which actually exist is we in this moment, you know, because we will change into something else in another minute. So the only way to reach the reality is to make best effort in each moment. This is the-actually the framework-fundamental framework of Buddhist teaching.

And the second teaching is extended teaching from the teaching that everything is changing. And this is the teaching of selflessness. (a) in time span; (b) in space span. In time span, because we are changing moment after moment, so there is nothing to be called self. In space span, you know, we are interrelated to many things. We cannot be completely independent from other being. So this-in space span, it is-we should understand that everything has no self.

(a)-(b)-(c): [2] the way of change-in the way of change, nothing permanent involved. It means that, you know, in some religion, you know, something create us, you know. We do not understand in that way. Everything is changing. Then you may ask some-who make us, you know, change? But we do not have any idea of something like God, who make everything changes. So we have no idea of somethingness whatsoever. So [we are] including everything, you know [laughs]. Everything changes. There is nothing which does not change. So that is why people called Buddhist non- [partial word]-"atheist," you know. We have no idea of [a] God which is absolutely permanent and which has almighty power. We have no such idea. So here-in way of change, nothing permanent or absolute is not involved. So, in short, we do not have any idea of deity which is permanent.

This is the teaching, you know-teaching of selflessness as a true law of the truth. And when we apply this teaching to our everyday life, it is also non-attachment-teaching of non-attachment or teaching of emptiness. We studied about this for pretty long time: emptiness, emptiness, emptiness. "Emptiness is form, and form is emptiness." And then put emphasis on this emptiness. And this is what we were studying in hot weather [laughs, laughter] last night. And I was making my best effort, drinking so many-so much, oh!-so many cups of water.

I think let's take it easy [laughter] this morning [?].

The third teaching is-third teaching is actually-this is pretty hot teaching

too. Teaching of suffering. Everything suffers. Even it is not so hot, we suffer. Why we suffer-and if we know why we suffer, we will find-we will have some way to-to be free from suffering. This is important, you know. Because we believe in the theory of cause and effect, you know, so if we, you know-if we can get rid of cause of suffering, actually we will have-we will be free from suffering because suffering has some cause for it. And there is, you know, complete relationship between cause and effect. We cannot change the result. If we have some certain cause, we will have-its effects accordingly. This is our belief. No one can change the law of cause and effect. If you don't, you know-if you eat too much, you will have stomachache, you know. No one can change it. And if you have bad karma in previous life or past life or in past time, you will have bad result. This is Buddhist belief. But anyway, here we should know why we suffer-the teaching of suffering. And when we know why we suffer we will know how to get rid of the cause. And how we change-we will know how to change-how we improve-how we could improve our life.

Why we suffer is, actually, you know-we-we-the reason why we suffer or cause of suffering is ignorance-ignorance. Ignorance means we do not know the true teaching that everything changes and that everything has no self. Because we do not know anything about those teaching, we suffer. Actually everything changes, but, you know, we expect things not to change.

For an instance, I am changing, you know, every day. So-but I'm not anymore young. But I feel as if [laughs] I am quite young, and I expect you to treat me as a young boy [laughs, laughter]. But, you know, I am not young at all, and next year I shall be much older, you know. But I feel as if I am always young like this or like, you know, I was 40 or 45 years old. As I expect you to treat me, you know, as a young boy, or I-as I expect me to be always young when I see my-the mirror-myself into the mirror, I shall be very discouraged. [Laughs, laughter.] That is suffering. [Loud laughter.] You don't know this kind of suffering because you are too young. But for you, there is particular suffering. That suffering is suffering because you have too much energy [laughs]. To have too much energy is also suffering.

There are many suffering, but cause of suffering is-we-we actually don't know not much about that. Jane [Schneider?] said this morning, to me, Alan Watts, you know-he is very famous, as you know-[said] ignorance means ignore-ignore-ance, to ignore. Intellectually we know everything changes. But actually we don't like things [1-2 words] change. To ignore the truth is ignorance. Maybe so. I thought he said, "ignore ants." [Laughs, laughter.] There are many ants. So I though he said to "Don't kill ants! Ignore ants!" But ignorance.

We should ignore, you know, the truth. And we-we know that we should not ignore the truth, but still, you know, we ignore-we are always trying to ignore the truth. Truth, we think, should be true without us, not with



me. That is usually how I feel-how we feel. The matter of birth and death is inevitable for human being. But we know the truth of birth and death. But we think as if that truth is for someone else, not with me, you know. With me, I feel as if I live forever. Even though someone die-even though we see someone die-someone is dying, we don't feel that matter of birth and death is universal suffering for us. And someone may feel, "Oh, this is terrible," you know, when your friend die. "Oh, this is terrible," you know, for you. But someone may not feel so seriously even though your friend died. But if your direct relative die, you will feel-you will be shocked. But someone will not-even your direct relative die, you may not feel so bad. But when you feel-when you are dying, you will feel terrible. [Laughs.] That is the human way, and that is true for almost all human being.

So we count suffering-four-four suffering or eight suffering. If we count the suffering of birth and death, suffering of illness, suffering of old age. I think birth and death, so it is two, actually. So suffering of birth. Birth should be a great suffering, you know, for us, even though we do not remember. It should be a great suffering for the baby and for the mother. So suffering of birth, suffering of illness, suffering of old age, you know, suffering of old age [laughter], and suffering of death. Next suffering for me will be suffering of death. That is four.

And there is-there are some more. We count just four. But actually there are many, many suffering. The suffering of separating-separated-being separated from someone who you love. That is one. The suffering you meet who you don't love. That is actually [laughs]-actually very true. I don't know why, but if you think over and over you will find out why-who is-who should you blame [?] for. Anyway, we suffer. You know, for meeting someone you hate-you don't like, that is next one. And suffering you cannot gain which you want. This is very true too. That is, you know, if you think over it, over and over about it, you will find out why. It is because, in short, because you expect things, you know, too much. And you expect something which is not permanent to be permanent. That is another reason, maybe. In this way, you will find out many reasons why you cannot gain what you want. And the last one is we suffer because of our own vitality, or unbalance of the vitality, or difficult-difficulty to control our desires and vitality.

Those are the four-another four suffering. So we say four suffering-sufferings, or eight sufferings. So suffering of birth, suffering of illness, suffering of old age, suffering of death, and suffering of separating from-separated-being separated from someone who loved, and suffering of to meet someone who you do not love, and suffering which you not gain which you want-suffering that you cannot have what you want, and suffering of unbalance of the vitality. Those are eight sufferings.

But in short, those sufferings comes from ignorance. The fundamental suffering is caused by the idea of self. Self which-which we have subjectively and which we have objectively. We think, you know,

everything is substantial, everything exist just as you see it. But actually it is not so.

Something you see is created by yourself, you know. If you do not see anything, there is nothing actually. Because you see something, there is something. So in one sense, we are creating things by our eyes or by your ears, by your five sense organs. There is nothing which is purely subjective or objective-something which ex- [partial word]-something exist is subjective being and also objective being. This is very true. You may say that is not true, but actually it is so.

You may say objective being is something which really exist, and subjective being is something which you yourself created. But actually, you know, for us something exist is very subjective-maybe 80% or 90% subjective. And it means that, at the same time, ignorance-our ignorance create, you know, or subjective ignorance-because of ignorance, we-our subjective function of five sense organs create things. We don't know why, you know, but human being creates many things-not only space ship [laughs] but always we are creating something.

I have a scroll done by famous Zen master.[3] It says, "a piece of stone in the air." It say-"piece"- "a stone in the air." Actually there is no stone in the air, you know. You may find some electric bombs, but there is no stone in the air. But we see many stones. Something subjective, you know-something which we-we create, you know, in the air. That is something which we see. This is very true even though your scientific mind will not accept it, but actually there many things-many difficulties which we create.

So I say "homemade" difficulty [laughs, laughter]: difficulties created by yourself. "This is the cookies I made. Please have it. This is very good." [Laughs.] I don't know if everyone think that is good. At least you think this is very good. Maybe so, maybe not so. I don't know. That is very true.

But you think the cookie-cookies you made is best. [Laughs.] And there is no "just cookie." Cookie-cookie is something-maybe always best cookie, whatever cookie is. The cookie is always best cookie, especially when you made-make it. [Laughs, laughter.] When someone else makes-make it, especially someone who you don't like make it, that is always bad cookies. So cookies are always "good cookies" or "bad cookies." [Laughter.] No-the cookie-no "just cookie" doesn't exist.

So "cookie" are very subjective, you know [laughs, laughter]-subjective view. Maybe 1% of it objective cookie, but most cookie are-99% of cookies [laughter] [are] objective [subjective?] cookies. I think Buddha was very wise to say it, you know: "We create things, and all the being is created by ignorance." We ignore the truth, you know. You may ask, then, "Who created that ignorance?" The phenomenology of ignorance is-which you-which was created endless-no, beginningless time. We

don't know when it was created and who created. We have-we don't suppose to-suppose something who-someone who create it, you know. We have no idea of-we are not interested in who created or how created. Yes we are interested in how things are created, but we don't say who created. This is the difference between Christianity and Buddhism.

So as a Buddhist, it is all right to say, "I don't know. I don't know who created the ignorance." That is quite all right for us. If you are Christian, you-you shouldn't say so [laughs, laughter]. If you say so you are not Christian anymore. You should say, "God created it." And then you will ask why he created it. [Laughs, laughter.] There is no end.

So it may be better to say, "I don't know." [Laughs, laughter.] And I may ask you, you know, "Why do you ask such a question?" you know. That will be my question for the-for someone who ask me. This kind of discussion should be continued sometime which is not so hot-what I was talking about.

Anyway, because of ignorance everything exist. This is, you know, another translation of the teaching of selflessness. That you ask, you know, why we have ignorance means you, you know, try to figure out some substantial being must have created ignorance, you know. We Buddhists are more interested in how everything is going on like science, not who created. How everything is actually going on is the main point of Buddhist teaching.

But we do not seek for what exist besides our-besides the things we see, besides phenomenal world. In Western thought, there is idea of absolute. But actually we don't have the idea of things like you understand by absolute. For us, the word "absolute" is another interpretation of the each phenomenal being. So absolute and phenomena-phenomenal being is two side of one coin.

There is no absolute beyond our phenomenal world. This is the-also the point you should always remember. When you study Eastern thought, you should put this point always in your mind, or else you will not pass koan [laughs]. You will always fail to pass koan because you stick to the idea of absolute, absolute, absolute, absolute, and ignore the reality-ignore your human life.

We say "ignorance," you know, but ignorance-to know that we are ignorant is wisdom. To know what is ignorance is wisdom. And that you don't know what is wisdom is ignorance. If you know we are ignorance-ignorant, and we are creating things because of our ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.] ... enlightened. With this wisdom, you will have-we will reach the stage of kendo. Kendo means the first stage-the stage [in which] you have right understanding of reality or real life.

And so real life we mean is life of ignorance, you know, and life of

wisdom. And wisdom and ignorance is also two side of one coin. So we say if you know the cause of suffering, which is ignorance, you know, you will know how to attain perfect understanding.

Buddha said, "Because this arise," you know-"A arise, B arise. And because A exist, B exist." Because A arise, B arise, you may say. Actually he says B extinguish, but the same thing. It is the truth of cause and effect in time span. Because, you know, I arise here, I will die some day. Because A arise, B extinguish. And because I exist, you exist at the same time. If I don't exist, you don't exist. For you, if you don't exist, I don't exist.

Actually we cannot be separated completely from you [laughs], physically and spiritually. If I say something you will understand it. So in space-time span, we are related crossing. We cannot be independent. So this teaching is called interdependency-teaching of interdependency. Vertically and horizontally we are closely related, and we are all interdependent being. That is another interpretation of how we exist and how we suffer. And actually it is the teaching of everything changes and selflessness. Nothing to be called "self" particular, you know, because we are related-completely related with each other. So in Mahayana, teaching conclude this sort-in this way: "One is all, all are one." One is all, you know. That I exist here, everything exist. That everything exist means I exist here. So I or everything else is another interpretation of one reality. So in-in reality, one is all and all is one.

So far is maybe intellectual understanding of the truth, because actually even though we understand in this way, we ignore [laughs] our understanding and stick to self, idea of self. "I-I-I," you know, we always say, "I-I-I," ignore-ignoring how everyone else will be. That is actually true. I am sorry to say so, for me and for you, but it can't be helped.

If you have this kind of wisdom, you will completely understand why we suffer and how we could get free from suffering. To know, you know, the cause of suffering is to attain the way to free from suffering, way to get of-get rid of suffering. And Buddha conclude in this way: "There is no other way to get out of suffering for us. The only to get out of suffering is to know, to have wisdom, or to know what is the cause of suffering." Before Buddha, you know, people offer sacrifice, you know, to divine being and to have-sometime to be born in some wonderful world. But, you know, there is no-to sacrifice something-the act of sacrifice something cannot result, you know, for us to be born in s-[partial word]-in some other world. If we kill some animal, the animal may suffer, you know, and we-we will suffer too. That is true. That is true course of cause and effect.

And we, you know, offer some money to Buddha and to have-to improve our health, you know [laughs]. "Buddha help me. I-I will offer a million dollar to you. [Laughs.] So please help me." But it cannot be-we

cannot be helped in that way because the cause-of-course of cause and effect is wrong. So only way to get free from suffering is to know real cause of suffering and to get-to get rid of the-no, knowing what is the cause of suffering, trying not to do something which will cause suffering. That is the only way to get out of the suffering, according to Buddhist. So we have no miracle at all [laughs] because we believe in the truth of cause and effect, and we are strictly observe true course of cause and effect. And if we mix-mix up the cause-course of cause and effect, that is so-called-it "to violate the-one of the precepts," kaigon suke.

That is the teaching-teaching of suffering. I think next time, or tomorrow,[4] I must explain the teaching of Four Noble Truths.

So we-tonight we studied what is suffering, and what is cause of suffering, and we refer to the teaching of interdependency. Teaching of interdependency is arising from conditional causation. Everything arise from conditions and not being spontaneous. Or self-condition has no separate and independent nature. Nothing has no independent nature. This is, you know, the teaching of interdependency.

Oh. [Laughs, laughter.] I have no time to drink. [Laughter.] Excuse me.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican (3/5/01).

[1] Shogyo-mujo-ge: A sutra verse on impermanence (e.g., in Nirvana-sutra): "All things are impermanent; they appear and disappear. When an end is put to this appearance and disappearance, then the bliss of nirvana is realized."

[2] It sounds like Suzuki-roshi is counting down a list from (a) to (c).

[3] Kishizawa Ian-zenji. [Discussed in Crooked Cucumber, p. 382.]

[4] Lecture SR-69-08-03.

### **3 - Selflessness**

Sunday, August 03, 1969

Selflessness  
Tassajara

As most of you know, this is Yoshimura Ryogen-sensei.[1] Ryogen Yoshimura-sensei. In Japanese way we say family name first, so Yoshimura Ryogen. But-Yoshimura is family name. Ryogen-sensei, or Yoshimura-sensei. He was appointed-he arrived at San Francisco as our

teacher, or as our friend, March 27?

Off-mike: Yes.

March 27. And mostly he was in-he has been in San Francisco. I think he came here once? Twice?

Off-mike: Twice.

Twice. So most of you know, I think, know him. But as some of you may not know him, so I think it is better to introduce him to you. Thank you very much.

Last night I talked about the teaching of selflessness and the teaching of suffering too-not completely, but briefly about what is our suffering. May be better to explain about the selflessness more, because that is very important teaching which is directly related to the teaching of Zen.

We practice zazen so that we attain selflessness. This is very, you know, important and very subtle thing, the matter of self. We don't know where is ourself, but it is very tenacious one, as you know [laughs]. Even though you think you are pretty well, but it is not so. Why selflessness means, you know-why we say "selflessness" [is] because each one of us is not substantial being. You think you are here, but there is no such thing as "you" exist here. You are not ghost, but [laughs] at this moment, at this place, you exist here, but you don't exist here so many times. It is just, you know, just tentative being which is always changing. We know that by here [possibly pointing], you know, but it is almost impossible to get rid of this idea of self or feeling of self.

To change, you know, to have good understanding is easy, we say, but to have right-I don't know what to say-to have right feeling or to accept it completely emotionally is very hard. Even though you know it, you know, but actually you have no feeling of it. Emotionally you don't accept it.

So it is easy to get rid of idea of self intellectually, like break small lock, you know. It is not so difficult to break some small lock if you hit it [with a] big hammer, you know, it is quite easy. But it is difficult to get rid of habitual thinking, or habitual way of thinking, or habitual way of understanding, or emotional, you know, feeling of it. [It] is as difficult as to break lotus root, you know [laughs]. To break lotus root is quite easy if you right. You think I have diamond. I break-broke it in two like this. But string is, you know, still here in between, even though [laughs] you pull as much as you can, string is always follows. It is so hard, like to break a lotus root in two. I think that is very true.

Dogen-zenji was so kind to explain this point in the-one of the fascicle of Shobogenzo, "Sansuikyo"-the sutra of Mountain and Water Sutra."[2]

Mountain-what is mountain? What is water? We know-we think we know what is mountain and what is the water. Of course you know. But water for human being, [is] of course water. But for the people in hell it is blood, you know, water is blood. For fish or for dragon, who live in water, [water] is a beautiful palace [laughs]. And for human being, that is water.

He says a dragon or a fish knows-understand water is blood or palace-their own home, but they don't understand the palace for them is the water-is water for the human being. But you know-you think you know what is water. You are not like a fish, or like a dragon, or like a hungry ghost. "I know water," you know. But Dogen-zenji says you don't know [laughs] water. You are almost same as-almost ignorant as the dragon or hungry ghosts in heaven. Even though you say you know what is water, Dogen-zenji said you don't know actually what is water.

I think that is why you don't understand why he took the water-leftover water, to take it to the river and return it to the river.[3] Maybe-maybe he knows what is water, but we don't know what is water, maybe, according to him. Do you think [laughs] what is water then? He says, "You don't know [laughs] what is water. You are almost as ignorant as the fish." So he says mountain is mountain and water is water. This is point we should study or understand even in intellectual way.

I said last night-I explained last night how everything exist in this world. The teaching how things exist in this way is teaching of interdependency. [Brief exchange off-mike.] Teaching of interdependence. Actually I explained last night, but may be better to repeat it.

That something exists means that some other thing exist before-in time-span before. Because something exist before, something else exist later here. Because this exist or because that exist, this exist here. And that something exists here means, at the same time, some other thing in space-span exist, you know. That you exist-that I exist here means you exist here at the same time. And that I exist here means my father existed. Because my father existed, I exist here. In this way, we are closely related to something else. So we do not-we cannot exist just as a independent being from others. It means that, that something exist here, the rest of things exist here. And many things exist-existed in past time.

So, you know, if water, if, you know, if water is here, you know, it means that mountain exist, and fish exist, and the stone exist, tree exist, frog exist, stars exist, moon, and milky river, and everything exist. So we said that water exist, you know, you-you-you may say that. When water exist, everything is water, you know. The water is representative of the whole world. So whole world is water. Nothing can compare to the water because the water is closely related to other things. So actually water may not be water. But if we say, "This is

water," the rest of things can be the same thing. May be the water too. Just for convenience sake, we name it "water," that's all. When we reach this kind of understanding, even intellectually, we said-we may be said to have understood what Dogen meant by "water."

You exist here, you know, helping you. But actually there is no borderline between you and I. For me, you are everything. you know. When I-as long as I am here, you are everything. You know, like water, for-like for water everything is just water, just for water. A husband is-for your husband, you are everything [laughs]. There is nothing but you for your husband right now. When you reach this kind of understanding, you know, you will live in this moment in its true sense. As long as you understand things in term of duality" "I am here and he is there," as if there is no relationship between you and others.

So water is not just water. The water I drink, if I drink a cup of water, the water is everything for us right now when-as long as I am drinking it. With this kind of feeling and spirit, you have to drink water, and you have to treat others. There is no separation between us.

So you say "star," star is only one being which include everything. If you say "mountain," mountain include everything. For mountain, you know, everything is just for himself. Do you understand? And if you reach this kind of experience by practice, you are said to have been practicing zazen. Do you understand?

So there is no wonder why Dogen-zenji says, "Water for you is just like water for the fish," because actually a fish doesn't know what is water. Even though you said you know what is water, but you don't know actually what it is. And you have no feeling of real water. That is something which is very little to do with you. You do not appreciate water. So there is no wonder why he had to-he couldn't help to return the leftover water to the river. Okay? [Laughs.] There's big, big difference-even-in Kegon Sutra. So how we exist in this world is very miraculous way. Even though you can reach to the moon, you cannot explain this point.

According to Kegon Sutra, you know, how we exist is-he-sutra-the sutra says, "I am Vairochana Buddha,[4] who is sitting on a big lotus in-in a big miraculous shape of lotus named Lotus Seed. And in the Lotus Seed there is a lotus-big lotus. And sitting on it. And the lotus has thousands-a thousand leaves." Do you say "leaves"?

Students: Petals.

"Petals. Thousand petals. And I incarnated into thousand buddha and sit in each petals of the," you know, "lotus. And in each-in each petal-and then in each petals there is"-how many there [laughs]? "There is hundred millions of Sumeru Mountain[5]-one millions of Sumeru Mountain, and-no, no, hundred millions of Sumeru Mountain-Mountains,



and hundred millions of Four Seas, and hundred million of the world called Naiyenbudai."

So it makes-how-how much, you know, world there is. And in each world there is Bodhi tree. And under the Bodhi tree there are Bodhisattva Shakyamuni practicing zazen to attain enlightenment. And after he attain enlightenment, he will tell you the true sto- [partial word]-true law. And that is very true, you know. In this world-I don't know how many beings is in this world. Even we don't know how many stars there are in this cosmic world. I think much more than one hundred million of world or earth, and that is very true.

And in each world there is Shakyamuni Buddha, who know the truth, who know what is water, what is this Bodhi tree, what is petals of lotus. So this is just, you know, a way of expressing the truth, but actually we cannot figure out how things exist in its true sense. That is actually the teaching of selflessness or teaching of interdependency.

Only when you understand our world or-in this way we will be free from suffering. So every existence is just for you, you know. If you ignore this fact, that is, you know, ignorance [laughs]. Ignore the truth. You ignore the fact-this fact. Even though you cannot describe it, it is true.

And now I think I have to explain the Four Noble Truths: how to-how we should get out of the suffering. The Four Noble Truths are: All existence is suffering. The second, the cause of suffering-what is cause of suffering? Cause of suffering is because of our ignorance we don't, we do not know how we exist here. So cause of suffering is illusion or ignorance and desires based on ignorance. Desires-there is nothing wrong to have desires, but if the desire is based on, you know-based on ignorance, it is like a-like to, you know, drive a car when you are drunk [laughs]. You don't know where to go with the desire. It is good to have a brand new car. That is okay. But, you know, you must drive the car pretty well, you know. You shouldn't be drunk. The cause of suffering is delusion [illusion?] and desire based on ignorance.

The third one is nirvana. Nirvana-what is nirvana? Nirvana is realm of free from suffering, you know. When we understand the "things as it is," like I explained-when we understand the teaching of interdependency then we are in nirvana-in realm of nirvana.

The fourth one is the means for attainment of nirvana-how to attain nirvana. And how to attain nirvana is the practice of hasshodo, or Eightfold Noble Path. And Buddha exp- [partial word]-this[6] is the, you know, the first teaching which was told by Buddha when-after he attained enlightenment. How we suffer, why we suffer, and cause of suffering. He points out the cause of suffering. The cause of suffering is ignorance, illusion. And he pointed out if the cause of suffering is the illusion or ignorance, to be free from ignorance, or to get rid of ignorance, or to have wisdom is the way to attain enlightenment. The

cause of suffering is directly related to the result of suffering-suffering which is resulted by the cause which is ignorance. So, you know, cause of suffering is here, and the end of the suffering, the result of ignorance is suffering.

So to-there is, you know, immutable truth between the cause of suffering and suffering. And this is the teaching of cause and effect. And you cannot, you know, get out of the cause-course of cause and effect.

So to-only way to be free from suffering is to transmute the ignorance to-into wisdom. That is the only way. Or to replace ignorance for the wisdom. And the relationship [between?] wisdom and ignorance is the same, you know. The-it is two side of the one coin. And suffering and the relationship between suffering and nirvana is also two side of the one paper. It is actually one, but because of our ignorance we cannot see, you know, the other side of the wood [?],[7] like we can see the water but we do not actually understand what is water, like Dogen-zenji point out-pointed out.

Now how to-the practice how to attain nirvana. The one is to have-this is, you know-what I am talking about for-in three lectures are-four lectures are not Zen-teaching of Zen, but in its wider sense it is teaching of Zen, but in its narrow sense this-those lectures are lectures about Buddhism in its wide sense. And those teaching are called teachings for shravakas,[8] or Hinayana Buddhist, or Theravada Buddhist. But it is true for every Buddhist-Buddhist.

And Four No- [partial word]-Eightfold Noble Path-Paths are: One is correct view. The second is correct thinking. The third is correct speech. Correct action. Correct livelihood. Correct endeavor. And correct memory. And correct meditation. Those are Eightfold Noble Truth-Noble Path. Here it says "correct," but there is no other word for this. So in Chinese or in Japanese we use "right": right thinking, or right speech, or right thinking, right view, right thinking, right speech, right activity, right livelihood. In this way, we say-we use "right." But this "right" is not the "right" in term of good and-right and wrong. This is more than that.

Anyway, we cannot say-we cannot explain it in one word. So "right," here, it means to have good understanding or, if possible, perfect understanding of the four teaching of: everything changes-everything-teaching of everything changes; teaching of selflessness; teaching of suffering-teaching of everything in state of suffering; and how-teaching of nirvana.

To have correct understanding of it is right understanding. As you have-as you underst- [partial word]-you-as you have understood what is water, actual, you know. When you reach this kind of understanding, that is right thinking, right view, right viewpoint. Not partial, you know, one-sided view, but correct view or right view. And right way of

thinking. Just-it is not just thinking, but it is wisdom itself. And if you think accordingly, that is right thinking and right speech. Right speech does not mean to, you know, to speak-to give a speech in term of right or wrong, good or bad. Right action. The right action should not be one-sided action. We should speak impartially always. And the fourth one is right livelihood-livelihood. It want some explanation. And this is-it gives us very good suggestion what is right livelihood. Of course, this is for monks.

What is, then, wrong livelihood? To cultivate the land or to cultivate land for a monk is not right livelihood. But in China, you know-this is like a kind of precepts for Indian monks. There are the people who enter religious life after finishing their family life. And they are supposed to be supported by people-not only his family but also people in the town-in his the town.

So after they entered religious life, they are not supposed to cultivate land or cut the wood for fire. Or they should not [practice] compounding. They should not compound medicine, even. And they should not study astrology. [Laughs, laughter.] They should not speaking by proxy for another. You should not be attorney [laughs]. You should-you should not practice charms, you know, some magic. And you should not be fortune-teller. You should [laughs] tell fortune for others or [1-2 words]. You know ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... is-what will be a monk-what kind of person, you know-what kind of personality is for monk, or ideal image of monks. They should not tell something, you know-they should not pray some magical power, you know. They should not fascinate people by some, you know, by some extraordinal [extraordinary] way [laughs]. Only his own personality, only his own everyday life, he should be a monk. Do you understand? They should not take some particular-they should not take some different activity. They should be plain, common, ordinal [ordinary] people, and they should be a good friend of others. And sometime they should be even a teacher of others, without having this kind of charm. This is how the monk should be-how Buddhist should be.

If you understand the teaching of interdependency, or if you understand what is water, actually, you will easily understand what will be the right livelihood for Buddhist. Okay? You should remember this. I don't prohibit, you know, those things, but you should know the image of the Buddhist. What will be the Buddhist? In this way, Buddha had many disciples.

Do you know Mañjushri? He was a very alert fellow. How he joined Buddha's order is when he saw his-Buddha's disciple early in the morning on the street, walking, you know, straight, calmly, and gently. And he was strucked by his appearance. Just-when just he saw him, he was fascinated in its trueness [?], not because of some magic-magical power. And he decided to join Buddha's order.

In this way, you know, Buddha obtained many disciples. He did not play any magic. He did not say anything strange, special. The teaching he told for us is very usual teaching. It is very wide and big, but if you try to understand it, you know, it is bottomlessly big. But he did not tell us anything strange. This is right livelihood. I think this is very important, especially for you who want to be a pioneer of American Buddhism in its true sense. You should not depend on some, you know, power, or some wisdom, or some particular knowledge or study.

And right endeavor. This is also important, you know. [Laughs.] It is rather difficult to-to have right endeavor. In short, when people get up you should get up. When people eat, you should eat. That is right endeavor. You should not get up too early or too late.

And right memory. Memory-something-to remember something which is important for our practice. And the last one is right meditation. Before Buddha, people practice zazen, you know, in various way, with various aim. But Buddha's meditation is completely different from those meditations. I think there is no need to explain about this. Okay? I think you will dust [?] everything [laughs, laughter].

You cannot use, you know, what you have now. Even though you know many things, you should not tell-you should not use it, and just to sit is what you should do. Just to know what is meditation, what is water [laughs], why did you come here-that's all what you should know. And, in this way, if you continue your practice, you will be a good Buddhist in its true sense.

Oh! [Probably finds out the time. Laughs.] I thought it was too early to stop it.

Before, I use big towel [?]. [Laughs, laughter] I better [?] change over.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican (3/6/01).

[1] Soto monk who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 to help Suzuki-roshi. (See *Wind Bell*, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30.) He died at a young age after returning to Japan.

[2] See also Lecture SR-69-08-07 and SR-71-07-24.

[3] Referring to the story of Dogen respectfully returning the unused half of the water in his ladle to the river at Hanshaku-kyo, a bridge beyond the entrance gate of Eihei-ji. (See also "Nirvana, the Waterfall,"

in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, p. 92, and Lecture SR-69-08-01.)

[4] One of the five transcendent buddhas.

[5] In traditional Buddhist/Hindu cosmology, Mount Sumeru (Meru, Jap. Shumi-sen) is regarded as the center of the four continents (i.e., the world-system or universe) as well as the largest entity in that universe.

[6] The Kegon Sutra.

[7] If "wood" is correct, Suzuki-roshi may be referring to tamban-kan, carrying a board on one's shoulder in such a way that one cannot see the other side.

[8] shravaka (San.): literally, "hearer": originally, one of Shakyamuni Buddha's students or students in general.

#### **4 - August Sesshin Lecture**

Wednesday, August 06, 1969

August Sesshin Lecture  
San Francisco

I think you are facing actual problem in your zazen practice. The worst one may be the pain of your legs, maybe. It is some-not secret, but it is some certain way to sit in pain. Because it is so direct that you have no time to-to think of some way, you know. Before you think it comes, and you are involved in the pain. But that is so-called-it, you know-that you are involved in the pain immediately means that your way, your way of life, or your attitude towards your life is not well-trained.

For an instance, if you-I think some of you must have this kind of experience. If you are going to fell, you know, from, for an instance, from the tree to the ground, the moment you, you know, leave the branch you lose your function of the body. But if you don't, you know, there is a pretty long time before you reach to the ground. And there may be some branch, you know. So you can catch the branch or you can do something. But because you lose function of your body, you know [laughs], before you reach to the ground, you may lose your conscious[ness].

But in zazen practice, first problem you face will be the pain. Even for Japanese people who are sitting always on the floor, this problem of pain. But how you endure the pain is, as I always say, to have-not to lose your power right here and free your legs, you know, from pain-having more strength here [possibly pointing to hara]. And this is-this kind of way-this way will be applied for various problem you have. For an instance, when you are about to be angry, you know [laughs], you shouldn't be involved in the anger immediately.[1] You have time-you

must have time before you become angry. So we say count to ten before you are angry. Your anger will not come while you are counting: one, two, three, four [laughs].

My cough is, you know, same thing. You know, if I have, you know, some strength here [possibly pointing to hara], I don't cough. Even though I cough-not so bad. But when I laugh or when I am excited-in other word when I have no preparation in my tummy, you know [coughs] [laughs, laughter], I immediately cough. My doctor said: "Nothing wrong with your," you know, "throat. Maybe that is some," you know, "nervous cough." So I-I was very ashamed of [laughing] being so nervous, you know, as a Zen master [laughter]. So I decided to conquer the cough. Before I didn't matter so much, but after doctor said: "Nothing wrong with your throat. If you cough, let your wife collect ten time-ten cents each time." He said so.

So I am-I am trying, you know, to have always some power here [possibly pointing to hara], but when it comes, you know, it comes so suddenly, so I have no time to prepare for it. My cough is good, ex-[partial word]-good practice for me.

That you have some problem or difficulty in your practice is, I think, very good thing. It is much easier to practice zazen without any problem. If you have some problem, you have some excuse to work on it [laughs, laughter], instead of shikantaza. Shikantaza is actually not so easy. If you are supposed to practice shikantaza, maybe it is pretty difficult thing. It is difficult to continue it. For a while you can do it, you know. Five minutes, ten minutes-you may be able to do it, but without cessation to continue shikantaza is pretty difficult.

We say "selflessness." "Selflessness" is to say, you know, just-or to explain what is selflessness is-is not so difficult, but actually what it means is, you know, not something to explain, but something to actually practice it or attain it-the stage you must attain, although there is no such "self" you know-no such thing as self. We have no self. Originally we have no self. But we feel as if we have self. And we see as if everything has its own self-nature. But there is no such things as self-nature.

You may say water has its own nature and iron has its own nature, but that nature is conditioned by many con- [partial word: conditions?]-factors. That is why water is flowing, iron is hard. So, as Buddha said: "All constituent object are-has no self-self-nature." The nature is-universal nature takes some particular way of function and under some condition. That's all. So there is no such thing as self-nature.

But although-although there is no self-nature, there is some rules. The fundamental rules is rules-rule of causality. If there is cause there is effect. That is the immutable truth. And that is, maybe, the only-only truth we can figure out. The rest of the truth-truth is- there is no special

truth. To explain in this way is not difficult, and whether-whatever you feel about it, you know, even though you say there is self-nature, but there is no self-nature. That is very true. Excuse me. Can you hear me?

So there is two-two ways of understanding about self-nature. Self-nature which exist, and no self-nature as a ultimate-ultimate truth. And no self-nature as a goal of practice, you know. For human being, unless we strive for-unless we make a great effort, it is difficult to realize the self-nature- no self-nature, even though there is no such thing as self-nature. For us, I don't know why, you know, it is necessary to practice and to attain no self-nature. It is-for us it is something to attain.

That is why we practice zazen, you know. By zazen we can realize-or realization of self-no self-nature will appear-will take place. Without zazen, even though you know that we have no self-nature, it doesn't work. That is why we practice zazen. And intellectual explanation of no self-nature is to give you some confidence in our practice, you know-to point out the possibility of attaining no self-nature. Or even though you don't attain it perfectly, you know, if you-you will find out-you will have some confidence in your practice. That is-we have teaching for-we have various explanation for zazen practice.

And you may ask, then, after-after we, you know, realize-or realization of selflessness happen to you, what-what will be your way of life, you know? If you, you know, think something, you know-after attaining non-self-nature you will have some, some wonderful, you know, feeling or some special power, that is also mistake. Nothing will happen [laughs, laughter]. If nothing happens, why you make such [laughs]-such effort, with pain? Here, you know, there is interesting story. Here is some interesting or famous koan.

Do you know the koan of Hyakujo[2]-"Wild Fox and Hyakujo"?[3] Hyakujo was a famous-famous Zen master, as you know, who established special precepts for Zen monks. Before Hyakujo, Zen monks were practicing at some other temple-some temple which belongs to mostly Precepts School. Precepts master were lead [?]. There they were practicing zazen as you have been practicing zazen at Soko-ji [laughs], because they have-they haven't their own temple. And they observed mostly Indian precepts. But Hyakujo established a monastery and they-he set up monastic rules, like Buddhist-like we have precepts-like Buddha set up precepts.

And he-one day-everyday he was giving lecture. The one old man always came and listened to the lecture. But one day he didn't leave after-after lecture. So Hyakujo asked him: "Why do you-why don't you go back to your room?" And the old man said: "I-in many hundreds of years, before you come to this temple, I was a resident priest of this temple. And I-when I was asked, 'Is it possible to be free from the truth of causality?'"

If you do something good you will have good result. If you do something bad you will have bad result. This is rules of causality in morality. And there must be various truth or theory. And-or you may say this is truth of karma.

"Is it possible to be free from karma or to be free from the truth of causality?" someone asked him. And he said: "Yes. It is possible." And that answer was not, you know, proper. "So [laughs] I reincarnated in fox, and I reincarnated [as a] fox again and again, about five hundred times, maybe," he said. "And I cannot-now I cannot be-I cannot get free from the karma because I did-I said something wrong."

And the old man asked-the fox actually, in disguise of fox asked, you know: "What will be the right answer?" And Hyakujo said: "Right answer will be, 'You will not-you cannot be free from karma.' That will be the right answer." And at that time the fox attained enlightenment. And next day he didn't-the old man didn't come to the lecture. And Hyakujo said, "We will have funeral [laughs]." And, you know, students amazed, "Who died?"

At that time, Buddhist didn't take funeral service for someone else. They take-they took funeral service for their students only or teachers only. "When no one dead," you know, "why do we have funeral?" But Hyakujo said: "Go back-go to the mountain, back of the temple." And they found dead fox in the mountain. And they had big funeral for him.

And this is the story. And since then we have-we made it as one of the many koans. To be free from karma is one. And not to ignore karma. That is, you know, next to. We have two.

But what do we mean by, "We not ignore the truth or truth of causality?" And, you know, to be free from karma, without ignoring karma, and to get free from karma, what will be the way? After you attain enlightenment, you-you-your way still, you know-you should follow the truth of karma or truth of causality.

You sh- [partial word]-you cannot ignore the truth. But you should not be caught by it. The way is just I wear such a troublesome robe [laughs]. This is karma. Because of karma I have to wear [laughs] long-sleeve-sleeved koromo like this [laughs]. And without taking off the koromo, you know, to have freedom from koromo is the way. Do you understand?

Sometime to use koromo to hide something underneath [laughs], when it is necessary. To use karma, you know, to help others, or to enjoy the karma without ignoring it. To enjoy our life-complicated life, difficult life-without ignoring it, and without being caught by it. Without suffer from it. That is actually what will happen to us after you practice zazen.

Actually you-whether you attain enlightenment or not-if you continue



this practice, naturally you will have that kind of quality. It is a matter of just slight-subtle feeling like, you know, the-this-like the sound box [speaker?]. Some, you know-there is slight difference between my own voice and the voice through the-voice you hear through the-this box. But this slight difference makes big difference [laughs]. It is, you know-you think I-you say: "I practice zazen for two-three years, but I haven't make [laughs] any progress," you may say [laughs]. But actually, you know, the feeling you give by your conduct, by your words, will be quite different.

It is like to feel something, you know. This is wood; this is cloth, you know, and this is enamel, and this is a kind of lacquer [probably pointing to or picking up various objects]. Looks like same, but if you feel it, feeling is quite different. And feeling you have from it-when the feeling you have from it is different, you feel as if this is something else, you know. This is quite different from that. That kind of difference-subtle difference, but big difference in our actual life.

Physically it is very small difference, but spiritually or-feeling you have from it is quite different. And we, you know-when we talk about our practice, we-our merit of practice or value of practice, we tentatively talk about the value in term of good feeling or bad feeling. If you help others or not; or if you help others or don't help others; or give some-both someone. We say "non-discrimination," you know. Non-discrimination [laughs]-but when we try to help others, you know, we should say "good and bad" or else we cannot help others. Good feeling or bad feeling.

But originally there is no such thing good and bad. But when peoples feel something is good and some other thing is bad, we should also involved in that kind of idea of good and bad. Even though we don't actually feel as they feel, but-it-feeling is not exactly the same, but we-we must give-we must be able to express our sympathy by some words, in term of good and bad.

That is also actually two contradictory attitude. One is non-attachment. The other is attachment-looks like attachment. But not actual attachment, but it looks like discrimination. Looks like attachment, but there is slight difference.

If you do not have complete calmness of your mind, you know, you cannot tell the difference. You see everything nearly the same-exactly the same. You cannot tell the difference of the quality. One may be glass and one may be jewel, but [laughs] you-you think all jewels or all glass. So if you actually, you know, practice zazen with pain, you will know what is pain in its true sense.

If you sit in calmness of your mind in pain, you will know what is pain in its true sense, but which you didn't know in your everyday life. So when you have time, you know, to wait when you are angry, you will know

what is angry, exactly. So you will not make any mistake. You are so subtle, you know, in handling your words. Even though you are angry [laughs], you have time to think.

So it is necessary for us to have complete calmness always. And we should be able to go back to the complete calmness, even though sometime you are angry or excited. You should be able to go back to the calmness of your mind. Over and over, if you train yourself in this-in this way, you will have complete freedom from the karma. So, you know, not to fall into karma, you know; not to be caught by karma; and not to ignore the karma. And the third stage will be to have complete freedom from karma. And those things should not be different, as I explained-as we wear robes. It does not mean to take off. To be free from karma does not mean to take off all my troublesome robes. "Now I am free!"-this is not the complete freedom we mean. Do you understand? This kind of stage is the stage Buddhist are aiming at. So under-under the difficult situation, without escaping from it, we should have com- [partial word] freedom from, from the circumstances- adversity or easy circumstances.

If there is, you know, no pain in your legs, it is rather difficult to make progress. But if you have some problem, I think you will make progress easier. It is true with calligraphy or with sumi painting. When you start to feel some difficulty, you know, you start to make progress. When it is easy, you know, you don't make much progress.

When you are wealthy and happy, with money and with family and with everything [laughs], you don't make any progress. After you lose-you have lost everything, you know, without money, without family, without house, with begging bowl [laughs], then you will start to make some progress. That is why we go for-go for trip-trip of takuhatsu. But nowadays, you know, we have big temple like this; once in a while we go out with begging bowls, so it doesn't-so it isn't so difficult. But real takuhatsu should be done without anything.

But after you attain complete liberation from this world, without escaping from it, you will have all the money people has [laughs]. So there is no problem [laughs]. If, you know, everyone of us-oh, no-one out of ten person have this kind of freedom, we will have no war, no social problem, we will be all happy. With this kind of understanding of practice, we, you know, practice zazen.

So we must trust people, you know, and we must trust Buddha, and you must trust yourself. And you should be completely give yourself to practice, completely involved in practice, forgetting everything: pain or various confusion.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields (6/28/00) and Bill Redican 7/31/00.

[1] S.R. starts coughing here and continues to do so intermittently throughout the remainder of this paragraph and the next two paragraphs.

[2] Hyakujo Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai): 720-814. Chan master of the Tang period. Dharma successor of Baso Doitsu.

[3] Mumonkan (Wu-Men Kuan, Gateless Gate), Case 2.

## **5 - August Sesshin Lecture**

Thursday, August 07, 1969

August Sesshin Lecture  
San Francisco

[In][1] Buddhist scripture, you know, there is a famous story. Water is same, but-water is, for human being, is water [laughs], and for celestial being-for celestial being it is jewel. And for fish it is their home. And for people in hell or hungry ghosts it is blood or maybe fire. If they want to drink it, the water change into fire. So they cannot drink it [laughs].

Same water [laughs, laughter], you know, looks like very different. But you may-you may say, you know, our understanding of-of water is right. It-it should not be "home" or "house" or "jewel" or "blood" or "fire." It should not be so. Water should be water.

But Dogen-zenji says, you know: "Even though you say 'water is water,' it is not quite right." [Laughs.] It is not right. I think most people think water should be water, and that is right understanding of water. "It-it cannot be anything else. Water is something drink [laughs], not to live in it." Or, "It cannot be fire," you know. But he says that is not right- quite right. He doesn't say it is wrong, but he says, "Not quite right."

I think we practice zazen, you know, and this is right practice, and the attainment we will acquire is something right and perfect. But if you ask Dogen-zenji, he may say, "Not quite." [Laughs.] This point should be- this is, maybe, good koan for you to work on two more days or three more-two and a half days more.[2]

I don't know how to explain-or how to explain why, you know, the answer "Water is water" is not quite right. At least not much different if you say-if human beings say "Water is water," it is-it's not much

difference from to say "Water is fire or blood or jewel." Not much difference. Don't you think so?

You know, it may be, you know, actually for angels, it may be actually jewel, you know. And he may-they may like it because it is beautiful. But we like it because it is cool-nice and cool and not tasty, but, you know, help our thirst. If so, to say "Water is jewel," there is some reason. And to say "Water is water" is also some reason. Not much difference. Buddhist has been explaining this point in various ways. For an instance, teaching of selflessness, or teaching of interdependency-those teachings, or teaching of emptiness, you know. There are many teachings which will explain- [partial word]-intellectually explain why the answer "Water is water" is not perfect.

When we say "Water is water," we understand substantially, you know, here is water. But what we-we say water is maybe H<sub>2</sub>O [laughs]. This is not actually-may not be actually water. So by-under some condition, you know, H<sub>2</sub>O became liquid. But under some condition it may be a vapor, you know. So you cannot say "This is-here is water," because water is not constant. So it is changing, and because it exists under some condition, it is something which is-which exists the rules of interdependency or rules of causality. So because of the some reason, some cause, water just tentatively became water, that's all. So we cannot say "Water is water."

Tentatively, you know, for convenience sake, you can say "Water is water." But it is not always so. We-you may understand in this way. But when Dogen-zenji says that is not complete answer, we should actually, you know, appreciate the water in its true sense. Water is something more than just water. It should not be a kind of, you know, drinking, you know-one of the drinking of many liquors.

When we drink water, water is everything to me, you know. And the whole world is water. Nothing exists besides water for me. When we drink water with this understanding and attitude, that is water, but that is, at the same time, it is more than water. So he says: "'Water is water,' that's right. But not quite."

This explains what is shikantaza. We say "just sit." "Just water" is like water. We should just sit. Or to "settle ourselves on ourselves." It means to become we ourselves, you know. We should not be anything else-something else. We should be just ourselves. And when we become just ourselves, "we" covers everything, "we" include everything. There is nothing else than-nothing else but you. That is shikantaza.

So by practice-so what we acquire is ourselves. To become ourselves, we-completely ourselves-ourselves, we practice zazen. That is shikantaza. We have everything. We are fully satisfied with ourselves. And there is nothing to gain or nothing to attain. This is maybe very verbal [laughs] interpretation of-of true practice. Anyway, this kind of gratitude or joyful

mind we sh- [partial word]-must have in our practice.

I understand-I think I understand why you practice zazen. But I-I think most of-and I think most of you are trying to seek for something-something true, something real because the world is, you know, too much unrealistic, and too many, you know-too many things is told. And we hear too many things which we cannot accept or believe in. So I think you are s- [partial word]-you seek for something true and real. And you don't seek for even something beautiful. Something beautiful is not-to you, I think, is not true or real, you know. It is very-it looks like beautiful [laughs], but actually you don't think-you don't think that is really beautiful. Some-something, you know-it is just outlook of something. It is just ornament for someone who is not honest enough.

So justice doesn't mean anything, or beauty doesn't mean so much to you. Or some virtue, you know, doesn't mean so much-virtuous person. Mostly, you know, maybe-I forgot the word-hypocrist [hypocrite], you know. I think you feel in that way because so many beautiful things-so many things was told something like "true." And so many virtuous person appeared but who didn't convey you real, you know, gratitude. You couldn't trust him.

So what is real to you is big problem, I think, for you. What is real? [Laughs.] What do you-you know-you don't know. You don't have any person to trust, or any teaching to believe in to follow. I think that is most people nowadays, you know, have inner idea-in our mind, and this kind of feeling is universal feeling for many people.

That is why, I think, you came to Zen Center. Real reason is-that is the reason. But, you know, even though you came here, you know [laughs], I myself, you know, don't believe any special thing, you know [laughter]. I don't-I don't say "the water is water" or "water is jewel or blood or house or"-I don't say so, you know. But really, according to Dogen-zenji, you know, this-water is something more than that. Our-we stick to righteousness or beauty or virtue, but there is something more than that.

So I can, you know-I don't feel so bad, you know, even though you seek for something. First of all I will tell you, you know, you are-it-it is not appropriate or it is not wise to seek for something like that. I noticed that you like trip, you know, very much [laughs]. Today Alaska, next day, India [laughs, laughter] and Tibet. I don't think that is wise too, you know. You are seeking for something-blood or jewel or something like that. But because we come to the time when we cannot believe in those things, we should, you know, change our way in seeking the truth. We have to change our way of trip. Instead of going to moon [laughs], you must make some other trip. I don't mean acid trip [laughs, laughter]. We have to change our way of trip. That is, you know, [as or what] Dogen-zenji suggested. The trip he meant is something different.

Yesterday I-I talked about something about freedom. Real freedom is, you know, to feel freedom wearing robe-this kind of, you know, troublesome robe. Instead of, you know, [being] bothered by this busy life, we should wear this, you know, civilization without, you know, being bothered by it, without ignoring it, without being caught by it. So without going somewhere, without escaping it, we should-we should have composure, you know, in this busy life. You shouldn't laugh at people, you know, who are engaged in busy activity. We shouldn't laugh at them. But-or we shouldn't follow them. As Ummon[3] says: "Following wave and drive wave. Follow the wave and drive wave." It means that, you know, to follow the wave, and actually you should drive the wave.

Or Dogen-zenji says: "We should be like a boatman." A boatman is on the boat, you know, but actually a boatman is carried by boat. But actually boatman is handling [laughs] the boat. This is how we live in this world. We know how, now, if I explain in this way, you feel as if you understood how [laughs] you live in this difficult world. But actually, even though you understand how, you know, like boatman, but it does not mean you are able to do it [laughs]. To do it is very difficult. That is actually why you practice zazen.

I, you know-yesterday I said, "However painful your legs are," you know, "you shouldn't move." I, you know-maybe some people understood in that way. But I-I talked about the confidence or determination to practice zazen should be like that, but there is no need, you know, for you to do it literally [laughs]. If-if it is too painful, I think you can change your posture [laughs, laughter]. But your determination should be like that-and should be also, you know. When I say "should be" is, you know, some-that is a good example, but it is not always-it is not necessary be so always.

When I say something, you know, you understand-like a "fish" or like a, you know, "angel"-you know, you understand it literally and rigidly. "This is house, our house. This is-this is WATER," [thumps table for emphasis at each word-especially at "WATER"], forgetting all about how human being feels. So even though you live in water like a fish, you know, you should know: "This is, for human being, something to drink. So we should be very careful not to be drunk by human being, like a small fish." [Laughs.] This kind of consideration is necessary. That means to have freedom from everything.

The secret of Soto Zen is, you know, just two words: "Not always so." Oh-oh-three words [laughs, laughter] in English. In Japanese, two words. "Not always so." This is secret of the teaching. If you understand thing in that way-you don't ignore, you know. "It may be so, but it is not always so." If you understand things in that way, and without being caught by words or rules, without too much pre-conceived idea, we should actually do something, and doing something, you should apply

your teaching. Then, the teaching which was told by our ancient people-ancient masters, will help.

Actually, you know, to take something rigidly is laziness, you know [laughs], because, you know, you-because you under- [partial word]-because you want to understand it before you do something difficult [laughs]. So you-you are caught by some words. But if you are, you know, brave enough to accept your surrounding without saying which is right or wrong, then, you know, a teaching which was told to you will help.

If you are caught by teaching, you will have, you know, double problem: whether you should follow this teaching or whether you should go your own way. This is, you know-this problem is created by the teachings which was told-which was told.

So practice-practice first, and apply teaching. Then, you know, teaching will help you. So to-to seek for some good teaching like Buddhism [laughs], you know, is, you know, to seek for something good anyway. Whatever it may be is the "sightseeing people" [laughs]. You-even though you don't take a trip by car, but spiritually you are making sightseeing: "Oh, beautiful teaching! [Laughs, laughter.] This may be true teaching!"

We say yusan-gansui.[4] Yusan means "to-with playful mind," you know, "to go to mountain or to go to river or ocean"-someplace where you can enjoy the view of things. Yusan-gansui. This is the danger of-danger for Zen practice. Yusan-gansui. Don't, you know-be careful so that you may not [be] involved in practice of yusan-gansui. It doesn't help at all [laughs]. It doesn't help. If you have right understanding of yourself and right understanding of practice, then yusan-gansui will help. But if you don't know the actual way of practice directly, whatever you study doesn't help at all.

Or we say: "You shouldn't be fooled by things." Fooled by things: Fooled by something beautiful. Fooled by something it looks like true [laughs]. Don't be involved in play game, you know. This is also [as, what] Dogen-zenji suggested. You should trust Buddha, trust the dharma, and trust the sangha in its true sense because that is the-those are ultimate goal you will reach anyway. You shouldn't be fooled by things.

So we should practice zazen like someone who is almost-almost dying. For him nothing, you know, to rely on, nothing to depend on. When you reach this kind of situation, you will not be fooled by anything because you don't want anything, because you are dying, you know. Money [laughs] or wife? No [laughs]. No more wife, no more children. You have-you cannot be fooled by anything. But you may still want to know who you are, without fooling-being fooled by anything. That is why we put emphasis on the feeling of evanescence of-of life, so that you may not be fooled by anything.

But most people, you know, not only always fooled by something, but fooled by himself [laughs]. Very silly, you know. Fooled by himself. When you are fooled by something else, you know, the damage will not be so big. But when you are fooled by yourself [laughs], it's fatal. No more medicine [laughs].

I think we should know whether we are fooled by ourselves or not. Here there are many students, but I think most of you are fooled by yourself [laughs]. Most of you are fooled by yourself: by your ability, by your beauty, you know, or by your ability, by your confidence, and by your outlook. It is all right, you know, to feel some resistance to this kind of way of life, but we should not-we shouldn't be lost in fight [laughs], in resistance. Do you understand? You know, if you involved in-deeply involved in resistance or fight, you will lose yourself. As you are human being, not so strong and very emotional-not much reason you have. It is-you will be easily lost. Even though you are young, you will be lost. You will lose your strength and you will lose your friend, lose your parents. You will lose everything. And you will feel lonely. And what will you do?

You lose your, you know, brightness of your eyes. You lose your confidence. [Laughs.] You are dead body. And no one will say, "Oh, I am sorry." No one say so [laughs]. Actually many people, you know, are lost, I think. Look at your face into the mirror-[see] if you are still alive or not.

If you don't change this kind of-this sightseeing practice, even though you practice zazen, it doesn't help at all. Do you understand? It doesn't help.

We have three-two and half day-oh, no-two-two days more, so let's practice hard, while we are still little bit alive.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Sources: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (9/28/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] The opening word(s) is/are missing on tape. The transcriber added "[In]."

[2] That is, for the remainder of the sesshin.



[3] Yunmen Wenyan (Ummon Bun'en): 864-949. Chan master of Tang China.

[4] yusan (sight-seeing); -gan (play); sui (water). Figuratively, "Go to the mountains and enjoy the sights; go to the water and play (i.e., do both sides)."

## **6 - Question and Answer**

Tuesday, August 12, 1969

Question and Answer

[I did not][1] prepare for tonight lecture anything. So I want you to ask some questions, and I will answer for the question, as I have nothing in my mind right now. Hai.

Student A: Of the two types of meditation, the counting and the shikantaza-the counting-do you think that has more to do with ego purification?

Suzuki-roshi: The counting-if you-it looks like different from-counting-breathing practice looks like different from the shikantaza. But actually, if you, you know, practice it, [there is] not much difference. Because purpose of counting-breathing practice is not, you know, to count. No, it is quite easy to count your breathing, you know, if you try to count, just count.

Why it is difficult is-you have to-you have to have right posture, and you have to make-and all parts of your body should participate in the practice of counting breathing. And your mind should follow the counting, and your arm, and mudra, and legs, and spines, and, you know, muscles should join-participate [in] the counting-breathing practice. And it is more than concentration to-it is more than to be concentrated on your counting. Concentration usually means mental practice, you know, but counting-breathing practice is not just a mental practice but also physical practice too. Then not much difference between shikantaza and counting-breathing practice.

Shikantaza means to practice zazen with your whole body and mind-that is shikantaza. So maybe after you-you can practice counting-breathing practice pretty well, you can practice following-breathing practice-to just, you know, follow your breathing without counting. Your mind is always in-on breathing, and your physical practice is participate [in] the breathing. That is to follow the breathing. And shikantaza, you know, is more than that. You don't even try to follow your breathing. Maybe you can say more advanced practice. Hai.

Student B: What is the function of the ritual and monotonous chanting that preceded your talk?

Suzuki-roshi: The rituals, you know, also-before you, you know-before you get accustomed to it, it may be, you know-it is not so natural to you, you know, especially for you, you know. You are not familiar with this kind of practice-bowing.

So-but it is same thing with counting-breathing practice. To-to-and our way breathing may be-may be very unfamiliar with you. So unless you try, you know, pretty hard to take deeper breathing, it is-it may be difficult to have deeper breathing. And bow-bowing is also-may be difficult until you get accustomed to it. But to bow to Buddha, you know, means to attain selflessness. It means that when you get accustomed to-when you make bow thousands of time [laughs], you will lose your ego-ego. You will not much-you will not have too much ego. We understand in that way.

I don't know how you feel, but that is the reason why we practice bow. Even to put your hand together, it, you know, may be-you-when you do it for the first time, you feel funny, you know [laughs], blushful [bashful] feeling you may have. Maybe I-I cannot explain so well about it, you know. While you are doing over and over again, you will understand what it is. It is that kind of things. Through practice you will-through physical practice you will have spiritual freedom too. Okay? It may not be okay [laughs], but I cannot explain so well. Hai.

Student C: Roshi, could you say something about the difference between the mission of Jesus Christ and that of the Buddha?

Suzuki-roshi: Between what?

Student C: The missions of Jesus Christ and-the missions of Jesus Christ and the Buddha? Are they similar?

Suzuki-roshi: What did-I don't-I couldn't follow you. The last part.

Student C: I was wondering if you could compare the messages of Jesus Christ and those of the Buddha. If you could-

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know Christianity so-at all, you know, maybe. I have-I studied, you know, very [hard], you know, as a Buddhist. I was not Christian, so, you know, my understanding will be-will not be appropriate-good understanding of Christianity, because I am not-I don't believe in, you know, God or [laughs, laughter] some-so-

I have no-I have no position in-as a Christian, you know, so I'm afraid to say anything about Christianity because I don't know, you know. But I am just-as a Buddhist, I want to study our way, and I want to be very critical with Buddhism not with other religion. As we are Buddhist-if it is difficult for me to believe his teaching, I must have some doubt, and I must have some criticism, you know, about it-about Buddha's teaching.

I have some, you know, right or-I don't feel so bad if I criticize Buddhism, as I should criticize me, you know.

But I don't want to criticize other religion which I don't know so well. And if I talk about-when I want-when I start to think about Christianity, you know, as a Buddhist I have big doubt or [about] how Christian people believe in God, you know. I don't understand so well. I can imagine, or I can guess, you know, how they believe in God. So I cannot compare Christianity to Buddhism.

And, of course some Buddhist-some teacher, Buddhist teacher, who was-who was once Christian, you know, can compare Buddhism to Christianity. Like Uchiyama-roshi, who live in Kyoto, he was a-once he was Christian minister, and he converted to Buddhism. So he know-he knows both Christianity and Buddhism. I am sorry, I cannot [laughs], you know, answer.

Student C: I was thinking more of the figure of Christ than Christianity. When I said that, I was thinking more of the figure of Christ or-rather than Christianity. I don't think Christianity [4-8 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me, I don't want to say anything about Christianity, you know. I am completely blind [laughs, laughter].

Student D: Could you say something about the state of samadhi regarding our zazen practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Samadhi? Samadhi is-mostly it is-it is understood [as] deep concentration, you know, of especially mind-that is samadhi. And-but Zen is not just samadhi. Zen is not a kind of state-state of mind. It is more than that. If we-if I try to explain about it, I have to tell you the history of Zen, starting from, you know, pre-Buddhistic practice, and Hinayana practice, and Mahayana practice, and Zen practice.

The background of the practice-or understanding of practice is different, not the same. The other day I explained about sightseeing [laughs] zazen. There is many kinds of samadhi, you know. If you practice zazen to, you know, attain various-to practice various samadhi, that is a kind of sightseeing practice, you know.

The purpose of practice for us is to find the deep meaning in our everyday life, and in various being, to have complete-not-I cannot say "complete," but because I have no other word for that, I must say complete understanding of things. Not in term of comparison or dualistic sense. In another words, to live on each moment accepting things as it is. That is zazen practice. And to go beyond the comparative value of things.

This point may be interesting point for people who cannot accept the old standard of appreciating or evaluating things. You know, wealth or

fame, you know, is not so important thing for us, you know, when most people put great value-find great value in money or their happiness in its worldly sense.

Those, you know, standard of evaluating things belongs to comparative, you know, evaluation, we-which we do not think it is-it is-we rather, you know, put more emphasis on thing itself. And we do not try to evaluate things in its relative sense. Do you-what is your question?

Student E: Does the con- [partial word]-does-what is meant by truth in Zen?

Suzuki-roshi: Truth? Truth for us-truth in its usual sense may be opposite of false or untruth. But [the] truth we mean is beyond right or wrong is for us truth or absolute. This is maybe-I don't know-but this is for almost all the-all people. This idea is very difficult to accept: truth which is not good or bad, not right or wrong. The truth is something which is beyond right or wrong.

So, you know, Buddhist does-do not talk about, you know, "this is right," or we don't say "this is right" or "that is wrong."

Student E: Would you consider it wrong to just-like, to just count to nine in your breathing practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Just-

Student E: Like if you just counted one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine-one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine-would that-like-in the-in a bigger sense that wouldn't be wrong, but like in a smaller sense that would-that-now that's something that would be wrong. Am I correct? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Maybe [laughs] wrong. Maybe right, you know. Someone may say that is right, and someone may say that is not right, you know. Because people has some standpoint, you know, from standpoint it may be wrong. From the other standpoint, it may be right, you know.

So it means that it is not always right, you know, or always wrong. So, you know, if so, you know, which is [laughs]-without taking any viewpoint, you cannot say right or wrong. Without having some standard, you cannot say that is good or bad. So the standard we take, you know, belongs to us, not to thing itself. So if we, you know, forget all about standard, you cannot say good or bad. Hai.

Student F: Is it important for us as Zen Buddhists not to eat meat or fish? And if so, why?

Suzuki-roshi: Zen Buddhist-because we didn't, especially in Asian time,

they didn't eat fish or, you know, meat because it is directly related to the first precept of non-killing, you know. "Don't kill." Directly related to the precepts of not-don't kill. And it is the most brutal, you know, way of killing animals, you know. So we didn't.

But, you know, our, you know, feeling or emotional life is more complicated right now, you know. And even though we know that-even though we don't kill animal, to eat rice or vegetables may be the same thing. We understand that, so we don't know, you know, to eat meat or fish is so bad or not, you know, anyway-because anyway we have to kill something when we eat something.

So our understanding or our understanding of precepts, you know, changed little by little. And in China, you know, the Sixth Patriarch, you know, when he received the transmission from his master, he lived for a long time in fishing village. And he mixed-the people, you know, would eat fish, but he ate soup [?] [laughs]-soup and the fish. Fisherman must have eaten the meat, and he mixed his soup with rice and ate. That may be actually violence [violation?] of the precept.

So precepts, you know, according to the time and place, changed little by little. And especially in Zen precepts we take-we observed precepts [in a] more positive sense. Without saying "not to kill," we say "help," you know, "living being in some way." For an instance, to raise, you know, to be kind to animal, or to be-to help to raise vegetables. This is more positive way of observing the precepts of not to kill. The best way of observing the precepts of "not to kill" is not to kill buddha-nature is the highest way of observing precepts.

So to practice, you know, zazen and to have more meaningful life is the way to observe our precepts. So we don't understand precepts in term of fish or, you know, meat. But I think to-I'm sure meat is not so good food for us. I think so. If so, we should not eat meat so much. Not because it is violence [violation] of the precepts, but because of, you know, because fish or meat is appropriate food for us or not appropriate. Hai.

Student G: It says that you need faith, doubt, and determination. What kind of doubt?

Suzuki-roshi: Doubt. Doubt means, you know, try to understand completely is doubt, you know-to accept teaching in its true sense. When you, you know, when you don't-when you find something difficult to believe in, you know, then you should, you know, try to accept it until you can accept it. That is doubt.

Student G: Well, if you accept it but you have doubt or true [1 words] as to what you're seeing while you practice it-or what you are going [1-2 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: Still-still that doubt should go on and on until you, you know, completely get over the doubt. That is a kind of-that is a way of studying our way. To continue doubt, that is very good practice. As a Buddhist it is good. The doubt should be very big and [laughs] and very wrong, you know. Then you-what you attain is greater.

Student H: Someone began as a student and doubted all rituals.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: How do you speak to him [SR laughs, laughter]? Would you ask him to do it and put his doubt aside? Or would you ask him to not do it and exercise his doubt?

Suzuki-roshi: That's-that is just intellectual doubt, you know. I mean doubt [laughter], you know, physical doubt and everything [laughs, laughter]. "If you have doubt, why don't you try it? If that is true or not?" Okay? [Laughter.]

Some question?

Student I: Could you explain to us some of the ceremonies that are used in the Buddhist funeral service and what they mean, please?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. In Buddhist funeral, you know, if he hasn't received precepts, we give precepts first of all. And then as a Buddhist, you know, we say farewell to them in some way, you know, in some traditional way. That's all, you know, but, you know, what we-

Student I: There is something in the service about forgiveness of sin.

Suzuki-roshi: Sin?

Student I: Yes. [4-6 words.][2] In the context of the service, could you explain that part?

Suzuki-roshi: We, you know, before we accept, you know, precepts, we make confession, you know, and receive precepts, and become Buddhist. And as a Buddhist I-we say, you know, last words to them or, you know, we, according to some traditional way, you know, as we say goodbye to our friend, we say goodbye to him. That is, you know, our Buddhist funeral service. And maybe we have to translate all those, you know, things into English, but which we haven't, you know, yet.

Student I: Do you believe that the person for whom the service is given is aware that you are giving it?

Suzuki-roshi: That, you know, it-we understand in this way: That we, you know, observe service with some certain feeling means that he also have that same feeling, you know. It is not, you know-we say "that I am

here means that he is there," you know. There is closely related-his being to our-to my being. That I am here means that you are there. That is very true, you know [laughs]. That I feel in some way means, you know, that you feel in the same way. Not exactly, may be-may not be exactly the same, but there must be some reason there is some difference between my feeling and your feeling. But there is some reason, and it is the law of causality.

That my feeling is different from your feeling does not mean we have quite different feeling completely. It should be so because if it is-if I think your feeling and my feeling are exactly the same, that is wrong understanding of the truth. It should be different, and why it is different is some reason of causality. So we don't mind, you know, even though my feeling is different from his feeling who is no more-who is supposed to be no more. But no-we say "no more," but it cannot be so. In some way he exists, and there is some reason why he is now different from me or from other people who is-who are alive.

So still we believe in, you know, even though he is in other world, maybe there must be some relationship [between] this world and to the other world. And that relationship is the law-still, you know, in the relationship of causality-cause and effect. So one is all and all is one, and in this sense we, you know, say farewell to everyone.

Student J: If-did the Buddha say that ego is-does not really exist-that it really exists is delusion, then what exactly is it, you know-the experience beyond death? I mean, what does it mean to be dead, or-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh-yeah, you know-ego-ego-we say ego doesn't exist. We say so because you think ego exist, so we think-we put more emphasis on egolessness-egolessness. But both is true. Ego exist, but not in some substantial way, having some special nature, you know. So in this sense, ego doesn't exist. But, you know-but it exist. Very paradoxical, but it is so. Strictly speaking, in the smallest particle of time you exist there. But not always-you don't exist always in that way. So we say egolessness. Exist but not always exist in the same way. That is what we mean. Okay? Yeah?

Student K: You mentioned that the chain of cause and effect in, you know, my present life-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student K: -then when I die this chain does not end, but it goes on and carries me through another world to a-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student K: -in a similar way [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: In time span it goes in that way, but in space span, you know, you-your existence is closely related to other existence. We understand in that way. So we say "egolessness," because we think we exist here-most people exist-understand we exist here in this way. And next life will be same person will [laughs], you know, with same character will exist, but I don't think so. We will change into something: not into cats or snake, but some change should take place on each one of us. So there is not much reason why we should stick to, you know, to our being[3] literally in its substantial way.

Student L: In Buddhism, as I understand it, they teach that life and death are not opposites. Death is a part of life.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: And from what I've read, the Buddha had great composure in regard to his-

Suzuki-roshi: Great-?

Student L: Composure.

Suzuki-roshi: Composure. In birth and death?

Student L: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yes.

Student L: So my question is, why does it seem that most living beings-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: -try hard to extend life and to avoid death if death is-

Suzuki-roshi: Another form of living?

Student L: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is, you know, how we exist, you know. That is also a kind of paradox, you know. So Buddhist-Buddhist-our teaching tell us not to, you know, not to be discriminative, you know, in birth and death [laughs].

Student L: But still as living beings we should-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student L: -try avoid death?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, try to. That is, you know-the "try to avoid" means



to be-to continue our life, you know. So we-as long as we live in our ex-[partial word]-our life is continuous, you see? Or our idea of time is continuous. To live long is-in time span, we try to live long. We try to continue our life. That is our tendency. But at the same time, you know, we want to enjoy our life moment after moment.

When you go to the moon you may say, "Oh! The moon was wonderful place." [Laughs.] You say so. That is idea of discontinuity. You don't want to be discontinue, but, you know, you don't want to live just-even the moon is so beautiful place, you don't want to live in the moon always. So when you appreciate your life in the moon, you have both desire to be continuous-continuously live.[4] If so, you will not stay so long at the same place, because you want to continue your life. If you want to continue your life-even though you want to continue your life, you know, if you realize we are continually going some other place, that is also which you don't like. If it is something good you want to stay there for long time until you are really tired of it. That is, you know, idea of discontinuity.

So-but when we talk about our life, we are deeply involved in first of all, the idea of continuity. That is why you don't like death. But actually when you are-when you enjoy something very much, you are involved in idea of continuity-discontinuity. That you stay he- [partial word]-one place for a long time mean-is not possible, but that you want to live in this world forever means the idea of discontinuity. That you say, you know, this is quarter of nine, you know, that is idea of discontinuity.

So, you know, we are very selfish, you know-selfish-we are not-our feeling doesn't-is not so-what do you say? We-our emotional activity doesn't work so well, you know, so impartially. If we see one thing, we cannot see the other side. That is good, you know, but at the same time we should know the other side of the truth. Did I-yeah, I-

Student L: Then it has something to do with nonattachment somehow. We-if we live, if I understand it, shikantaza, we would appreciate it very much, but we would not try to hold on to it. Is that so?

Suzuki-roshi: When we practice shikantaza we go back before this kind of feeling arise. Do you understand?

Student L: That would mean inactivity.

Suzuki-roshi: Inactivity, and in our feeling we have no emotional attachment, or we have no feeling of no-thinking. If some thinking activity arise, we will be involved in, you know, some confusion.

Student L: So to say appreciation means thinking? Is that what-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, usually it is so. But when we say appreciation in its true sense, [we mean] detached from emotional things and thinking

faculty. And to have direct experience of it is, you know, non-detachment [non-attachment?] or shikantaza.

Oh. Excuse me. Do you have some more questions? Hai.

Student M: Do you practice for me or Buddhism?

Suzuki-roshi: To practice Buddhism for Buddhism is not to practice Buddhism in term of good or bad, or in term of "I like Buddhism," or "I don't like it." Whatever it is, if it is true, you know, we should study it and we should practice it. That is our spirit. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... you have-we should [gap in tape for 1-2 minutes] ... different. Having complete relativity way in term of reality is Buddhist way. So even though we understand things from various angle, and we-even though we have completely different understanding of life, as long as we are here in this world, we should, you know, extend or we should follow. But that relativity is based on, you know, non-duality of life. So we don't-that is at the same-you may say that is detachment. Detachment does not mean to cut off worldly desires.

Having worldly desires, you know, with right understanding of it, and knowing how to treat our desires-to live in this world is Buddhist way. But usually, you know, we have no idea of non-detachment [non-attachment?], and we will be enslaved by our desires and world of duality. That is why we have always-we should have-we should fight always. Hai.

Student N: You said that Buddhism is to live with our desires but not be ruled by them, if I understand you. Can you still say the vow, "I vow to put an end to them"?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student N: Wouldn't it be more accurate, if I'm standing here teaching, wouldn't it be more accurate that we vow-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student N: "I vow to understand them." [SR laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: You continue-it means that you continue this practice, you know, forever because it is-our desires are, you know, inexhaustible. If so we [laughs, laughter]-there is no end in our practice.

Student N: Should I even try to put an end to them?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student N: To our vows [?] I should try to put an end to them. But as I understand you, I should sort of make an effort to limit them, if I understand [3-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: No, we don't mean that. Moment after moment, we should make best effort to put an end to the desires [laughs]. But desires- because desires is endless, so our effort will-may be endless. That is why, you know, Buddhist exist forever. You know, if-you know, if we put an end to every desires, you know, there will not be any need for Buddhist to [laughs] practice our way.

Student N: Do you dream at night? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: [What] did you say?

Student N: Do you dream at night?

Suzuki-roshi: I? [Laughter.] I don't remember so well, but-yes I do.

Student N: Dreams are a [1-2 words] [laughter]. Our dreams [2-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe. [Laughter.] But I don't remember so well, you know, because I don't-it is-maybe I have this kind of trouble always, so it is not so important to remember things one by-one after another, you know. I may laugh at me if I dream of something.

Student O: I was trying to ask of myself the question of birth and death. I see when one attains a certain consciousness, that birth and death are a daily process or of a "now" process. [2-3 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student O: And I say I've seen a sleepless death of the body, because body is not there any more. You know, it sleeps.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student O: Is that an individual thing, and why is this-this [3-4 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student O: [4-6 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: I-I often wonder why I don't, you know-why I am not afraid of going to sleep, you know [laughs]. If it is, you know, it is a kind of death, you know. I am not afraid of going to sleep, you know. I don't know why, but maybe I'm so sure tomorrow-that tomorrow morning I'll get up, you know.

Student O: So death is only a physical thing-a physical [1 word]. I was wondering if [8-12 words]. I guess-is the body a part of the mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Body?

Student O: Is the body a manifestation of the mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I-

Student O: Does the body come from the mind? The universal mind? [2-4 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. [Laughs, laughter.] I couldn't follow you completely, but-what is your point of question?

Student O: Oh. It's-I'm still talking about birth and death.

Suzuki-roshi: Birth and death?

Student O: Yes. Duration of-

Suzuki-roshi: Duration of.

Student O: Does [1-2 words?] clear things up when you talk about death? I-I think about death a lot. But, you know, like I [4-6 words] the longer I think of [4-6 words]. Birth and death are cycling and always options [?]. I-I guess I'm not phrasing this in the form of a question, but there is a question that I'm asking.

Suzuki-roshi: Birth and death, you know-the-the most important point of problem of birth and death is, you know, the idea of self, you know.

Student O: Isn't talking about-speaking of death as this gentleman was speaking of it, in the sense saying the body is less than the mind? That it is a separate entity from the mind?

Suzuki-roshi: We understand, you know, oneness of mind and body.

Student O: They are one?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. We don't understand "here is body, and mind is floating in the heaven and come [laughs] to my-our mind. And after death it will go out from our body and enter again into our body." We don't under- [partial word]-we have not-our understanding of mind and body is more than that. The-we put emphasis on the point that mind and body is one.

Student O: Umm. Question: What do you think of mirrors?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student O: What-what do think-do you look in the mirror a lot [laughter]? I was thinking that-I think-doesn't man's fear of death come from a fear of physical change? In other words, the body disappearing-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student O: -that's the only fear-

Suzuki-roshi: Reincarnation.

Student O: -[2-4 words] death, that this thing we live in will disappear, and-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That kind of thought exist in Buddhist thought too. But that is Buddha applied the teaching which-usually-usual people had at that time. But to help people, he applied the-he did not, you know, deny their understanding of life. But somehow he managed to, you know, to make them understand the point of Buddhism even though he applied various thought-various folk religion. But he did not lose his point always.

And later, you know, most Oriental people had been involved in their naïve [native?] folk religion. And that kind of religious understanding became more and more powerful and common. That is why Buddhist has that kind of-put emphasis on that kind of idea of reincarnation or something like that. But if you read Shobogenzo, he clarify this point completely. Hai.

Student P: Would it be correct to speak of a-that we have a human personality?

Suzuki-roshi: Personality.

Student P: Human personality.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Personality, we say but it is not-personality may be not completely so, but some tendency which is caused by his physical, you know, condition or physical nature. This is a kind of materialistic, you know, philosophy, but it is true, I think. So even though you receive education, you know-a kind of education, it is almost impossible to change their character. If it is possible-I think if it is possible to change our physical, you know, condition completely, then our character will change too. That is true from materialistic viewpoint. But from idealistic viewpoint, you know, our thinking-our mind will change our physical body-physical function of our body. If we have healthy mind, our body will be healthy too. This is also true, but we cannot completely argue, you know, from materialistic viewpoint and idealistic viewpoint, because both is true.

Student P: Well, [2-4 words] asked was-you were speaking of idea of self. And yet it seems to me that all of us have a concern for expressing our unique [?] personalities-in place of our human personality. I don't mean my individual personality, but I mean somebody that's a version of the self being expressed in me. This is just-at this moment of time, it's a force.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Oh. Not as a self, but as a momentous [momentary], you know, impulse or something. Yeah, I think that is-that is all right, you know, but we usually, you know, without being aware of it, we are usually controlled by-by our preconceived idea or by our past experience. And so we should know that-this point also. Even though this is just expression of my, you know, my being[5] right now, but it is not always so. If we understand this point, you know, we should train ourself more so that we can express ourselves fully, completely, without any-without being enslaved by something or bound by something. Only we are alert enough to, you know, to see ourselves, to check ourselves. We cannot easily accept ourselves, you know, so easy. That is why we-we are so strict with ourselves. Hai.

Student Q: It seems that in order to [8-10 words] always scheming.

Suzuki-roshi: Always what?

Student Q: Always scheming-trying to find ways to snatch [8-10 words] or [6-8 words].

Suzuki-roshi: No, I'm sorry. I couldn't follow you. Did you-

Student Q: If you couldn't hear, I-

Suzuki-roshi: Will you make your question in short-put in some short way? Condense your question?

Student Q: Can zazen practice stop-

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student Q: Can zazen practice-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Zazen practice.

Student Q: -get you to stop your grasping for attention?

Suzuki-roshi: Zazen practice stop-I'm sorry. What-

Student R: Grasping.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student R: She's saying, "Can zazen practice initially stop grasping?"

Suzuki-roshi: Grasping-

A brief clamor of several students all talking at once: [Unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Attention.

Student S: Desire for attention.

Student R: Will zazen stop this? [Said slowly and gravely.] [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Attention. Stop? [Laughs.]

Student Q: It could be I just need to find more control, or can zazen practice eventually stop the greedy grasping [1-2 words] completely?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, you know, when you start our practice, you know, your effort should be, you know, concentrated on something-some particular thing-like counting breathing. But eventually, you know, that effort will be extended in many direction, and you will have deep, wide, strong mind. Then you can, you know-you will have some power or some ability or, you know, the ability-without trying you can do many things. But at first it is necessary for us to make some effort in right direction. As long as you know the direction of practice, that is all right. And one by one you make your effort, you know, in-with right direction. Without going this way, you know, you can go this way.

We-we say detachment, it is not so easy thing to [laughs]-to attain. We can talk about it, but not so easy. So the only way is to try to practice our way, starting from very simple way like counting breathing or following-breathing practice. Then, you know, even though you have various problem amidst [?] of the difficulty, if you can count your breathing perfectly, you know, you have already have power of controlling yourself or power of being free from objective world.

It is more than habit, you know, because you have some belief or power in it. Habit is just, you know, succession of our activity-our intentional activity. But zazen power is, you know-with always steady steps it is going with some direction or intention. But eventually that intentional part will vanish, you know, and the power will go by itself. That is complete detachment. As we-our-we are very selfish, and we are always, you know, [feeling] some tendency. So without some effort we cannot get out of it. Okay.

Student S: In yoga meditation, we're taught to relax the muscles and clear the breathing passages so-to help the meditation, which zazen seems to ignore completely [?].

Suzuki-roshi: No, we don't. We don't. Yoga maybe put more emphasis

on physical practice, you know, than our practice. I think yoga practice will help a lot if-but-if it is too much like zazen, you know, it will create some problem for you. So maybe we should be careful, anyway. Hai.

Student T: Could you explain that problem?

Suzuki-roshi: Problem?

Student T: Yeah, the problem-could you share what could be the problem?

Suzuki-roshi: That is, you know, some person, you know, for some person who is very difficult to sit in cross-legged position, you know. If you-if he force too much, then it will create some physical problem, maybe. And-

Student T: Yoga, then, can create a great deal of intake of energy-your forced-breathing exercises rather than just watching them. Can those energies taken in cause anything difficult for zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Student T: Also, another question on sleep. Can one practice zazen in sleep?

Suzuki-roshi: In sleep? We don't say that is zazen practice, you know [laughs, laughter]. Maybe we say-but we say if you are really Zen student, way you sleep must be different from ordinal [ordinary] person [laughs].

Student T: Often I have seen an icon of the Buddha sleeping on his-not sleeping, or-laying on his right side.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student T: This is often described as a parinirvana. I don't know what this is. Did he attain some kind of enlightenment lying on his side?

Suzuki-roshi: That is, you know, how most Indian people say they sleeps, you know. This side down. There is-of course, if you think why, it is quite obvious, you know, why they do this way. And most people are, you know, right-handed.

Student T: Also it relieves the stress on the heart. This is not from-this is not from Buddhism, but a woman who-part of her way is pure sleeping heart. And-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student T: -she says that lying on the right side-the heart-there's no



stress on the heart, or less stress on the heart, so that it can beat fully and regain strength during the night.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. [Laughter.] I don't know, you know. I am not concerned so much about those things, you know. But, you know, if you, you know, sleep left-side-down, you don't feel so good, you know [laughter]. It's obvious, you know. Maybe-and-it is-it may be better to sleep, you know, this way [laughs, laughter]-south and north, you know, rather than east and west. We are very magnetic being also. Everything may be so.

So if you start to study this kind of thing, you know, we will have many things to study. But we will have some specialist, you know, and-who may suggest us many things. As much as we can, we should apply-we should follow their suggestion, I think.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed verbatim by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/9/01).

[1] Text in brackets was not on tape. It was added by transcriber.

[2] Possibly referring to "All your ancient twisted karma ... is now released."

[3] "Being" used as a noun.

[4] Used as the verb "live," not the adjective.

[5] "Being" used as a noun.

## **7 - Liberation**

Monday, August 18, 1969

Liberation  
Tassajara

Suzuki-roshi: Tonight I want to discuss about our way to attain liberation or enlightenment. When you study Buddhism through teaching or reading scriptures, it looks like Buddhist has some special way of thinking by which we attain liberation. If we understand Buddhism, and if we take the Buddhist standpoint or Buddhist way of thinking, that is the way to attain liberation.

Do you hear me?

Various Students: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Okay? [Laughs.] Most people may understand in this way. If so, there will not be-no need to practice zazen. But-but it is necessary. And why it is so is the point of my talk-discussion tonight.

When the Sixth Patriarch attained enlightenment, his teacher Konin[1] thought it may be dangerous for him to accept disciples because of the situation of the world at that time-situation of the country at that time when China was culturally divided in two: South and-North and South, and partly because the Sixth Patriarch was unknown, you know, unknown disciple. He was just one of the many disciples, while Jinshu [2]-the head of the group-was very famous. And if people know that the Sixth Patriarch is Jinshu-[corrects self] [that] Hui-neng received the transmission from the Fifth Patriarch and become Sixth Patriarch, people-some people may [get] angry with him.

So he segregate himself in seashore, and he worked with fisherman. And when he appeared for the first time in some temple, there were several disciples were discussing seeing the flag, you know, whether the green-thin flag-what do you say? Flapping?[3]

Students: Waving?

Suzuki-roshi: -waving by the wind [laughs], and some disciple say, "Because wind blows, the flag is waving." Some said, "Because," you know, "flag is waving, so we know that the wind is blowing." They are arguing about it. Actually maybe means that the flag may be, you know-each one of ourselves, and wind may be our objective world or our surrounding. Because, you know, surrounding is not good, we are not so good [laughs]. Or because we are not so good, we will make our surrounding, you know, [something] which is not so good. There may be two ways of understanding of our life. They have been in dispute for pretty long time.

And the Sixth Patriarch appeared and, you know, while listening to them, and said, "Because," you know-"It is not because of the flag or because of the wind [that] we see the flag is waving. But because of our mind," you know, "flag is waving and wind is blowing." That was his, you know, answer for that. And he said very definitely, you know, he said so. So they thought he may be a great Zen master, and he-that was the beginning of his life as a Zen master.

There may be, you know-it may be interesting, you know, to think about the opinion that flag is waving because of the wind. Or that flag is waving-that wind is-because flag is waving, we know that wind is blowing. Or, you know, because our mind is waving, so flag is waving.

Actually, in Buddhism we have this kind of three-those three

understanding. Actually, as the Sixth Patriarch said, the two, you know, two opinion-because of our surrounding, or because of our environment, or because of the society, we change, or because if we are strong enough, we can change our surrounding. This is true. And what the Sixth Patriarch said-in Buddhism, as the Sixth Patriarch said, actually we, in Buddhism, we do not discuss anything which is-which has nothing-which is nothing appears in our mind. Whatever it is-that thing exist means that we exist, that we-our mind exist. And our mind-when our mind see something to start to exist. This is, you know-there is some reason why we say so. But most people thinks-think things exist whether we observe it or not.

Maybe so, but what we discuss is something which has something to do with our mind, to do with ourselves. It-when we discuss something [in the] objective world which exist independent from our mind, is more scientific discussion but not religious discussion. Whatever it is, we discuss things as things which has something to do with ourselves. That is Buddhist way of discussing. And that was actually the answer of the Sixth Patriarch. Because that flag is waving means our mind is waving. We treat things-understand things, as something which is something to do with ourselves. This is actually pretty close, you know, to our final understanding. But that is-that is not complete.

We Buddhist teachers usually give some instruction or lectures according to the audience, you know. And the Sixth Patriarch thought they may not understand if he say something more difficult, so he made it easy-he made his answer easy and explained in that way. I think most people understand if we attain enlightenment or if we study Buddhism, you will have some special experience or you will have some special understanding. So, so-called-it "wisdom" is some power of understanding things. If you think in this way, your understanding is nearly the same as the two-the people who were discussing about the flag-waving flag. And if you think-if you train your mind, or by training you will have some special power to change your environment, that is, you know, so-called-it more philosophical understanding of life, more idealistic understanding of things-a kind of idealism. Mind is first, and object is second.

But Buddhism is not idealism. So according to Dogen-zenji, when we say "mind," that is not mind-that is not our mind which observes things. What is our mind is-when we say "mind," it means big mind. The small mind-to observe things, you know, even though it is right, we do not say that is our big mind. When we say "mind," the mind is big mind in which everything happens. So waving flag is mind-itself mind. And waving flag include everything. If so, waving mind is big mind itself. That is, you know, maybe right understanding. And how we attain this kind of mind is our practice.

If I explain this much you may, you know, already understand what is our practice, what is shikantaza, or what is our everyday life in its true

sense. When we say "one is all and all is one," you know, that is how things happens in our big mind. This mind is not mind in relative sense. It is-this mind is beyond subjective and objective world.

We say, you know, when you eat you should eat. When you sleep, you should sleep [laughs]. That is the big mind, that is selflessness. And best way to get rid of small mind is just to, you know, sleep when you should sleep. Just get up when you should get up, without hesitation. Do you understand?

In monastery, the basic practice is, you know, to follow people. Follow waves and drive waves, that is our way. Wind may follow the waves, you know, of the wind. And at the same time wind drive flag. So-if so, wind and flag moves, you know, at the same time, and that movement include everything related to various movement in this world, in this cosmic world. That is actually to realize the true activity of true mind.

If you go to monastery [in Japan], you will see the big notice: Dojodaishuniichini.[4] Dojo daishuni ichini. That is Chinese and Japanese. "Whatever you do, you should do with people at the same time." That is [1 word]. Basic practice: "When they sit, you sit." So zazen practice is not actually-we do not practice zazen just to attain enlightenment but to practice zazen itself is the realization of the truth. And to, you know, to realize this point, we practice zazen. To get up, you know, when you hear the bell, you know, is the most important practice for us. The moment you hear the bell, you should get up and you shouldn't feel rested [laughs]. "Two minutes more, three minutes more." You shouldn't stop a lot [?]. Okay? If you do so, you are not practicing our way. But you should not, you know, run into wall [laughs, laughter] or into door, you know.

As I have, you know, now in my room three mats. At first, to enjoy spacious room of three tatami. I slept this way, using all three mats [laughs, laughter]. I felt I am a giant, you know. Like a giant I slept using all three tatamis. But if I do so, I have to sleep east and west, like this. And someone tell me-someone-someone tell me that is not so good. You should sleep this way, south and north, you know [laughs, laughter]. So I change my way of sleeping. Last night, you know, I got up all of-this is my habit, you know-if alarm or if I get up, immediately I wake up, I get up, and [laughs] I lost my place [?]. Usually if I get up and walk this way [laughing, laughter], that is my rest room. But last night, I, you know-learning to [where it was]-by lamp, that was not so good, but-you know, this kind of habit, you know, is-usually it is good, but sometime it is not so good.

Without hesitation, you know, you must have-you must be able to do something without hesitation. Even though it is cold you should be able to get up and sweep the garden or clean the garden if you have to. If-when the garden is very frosty, you know, you may hesitate, you know, to work on the garden without tabi or without sandal. In wintertime

[laughs] we do not, you know-we small disciples do not use sandal. But summertime we use something. We have to wear something. But nowadays we don't, even in monastery. But we do not wear tabis. Why we do so is to have some habit of doing something without hesitation.

Whatever it is, you should be able to eat it. You shouldn't say, "This is good" or "This is bad." And if you, you know, eat it, and if you determine to-decide to eat it, everything taste good. Before you eat it, you don't like it. But if you start to chew it up, then everything has some good-its own taste which is very good.

This kind of practice is based on the teaching to do something with people, without not much self-centered idea-without not much discrimination. Then your manner will change, and your countenance will change, and your face will change. We say when you are young your face is given to-was given by your parents. But after forty, you know, your face is-will be given to you by your practice. If you continue a good practice you will have generous, happy face. If you don't practice our way, you will become more and more nervous [laughs]. You will be very mean father or mother, you know. That is why we practice our way [laughs, laughter], and-to be a good father or good mother or good teacher.

And we say, after forty we should not have thought-we should not, you know, have thought-we should forget all about our [1 word-sounds like "weapon"]. If he has, you know, [same 1 word] after forty, he will be a, you know, a kind of fool, we say. It means that we have accomplished selflessness before we become forty. And without any [same 1 word], without anything to rely on, we should be able to manage our life. But usually, you know, when we cannot, you know, work properly we cannot do something properly because of the old age, we stick to some teaching [laughs]. And we talk about too many things, like me [as I do]. That is not so good.

Without, you know, saying anything we should be able to communicate with each other. That is the best way to accomplish something good. Not by words, not by rules, or not by teaching, we should be able to accomplish things, especially when you become over forty years.

If you have some question, please ask me. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Why we are-maybe before twenty-for woman, maybe before twenty-, you know, twenty-two or -three, have to study something, you know. That is the time you make foundation of your life. And after, for a man, maybe, after twenty-five, we should-before twenty-five-we should make background or foundation of our life.

And after twenty-five, we should try, you know, things-try out things which-which-by all means. And when we become forty, you know, we

should be able to manage our life without using some special means or special things. And we will, you know-after forty we will help people and help ourselves in its true sense. But still we will make a great effort to do so. But after, maybe, sixty we should be able to do it without so much effort. We should be able to do-to manage-able to manage things quite naturally, without much effort. By doing something which we like, you know-by doing something by his own way, he should be able to accomplish something without much effort. Hai.

Student A: If best way is without speaking, what would we do-what do we accomplish here with rules and teaching?

Suzuki-roshi: Teaching?

Student A: And teaching.

Suzuki-roshi: Teaching.

Student A: Rules and teaching and schedule. What-what good do we do with all of that?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah-I [laughs]-without words or, you know-I mean, we have to see our schedule or we have to remember our names, you know. That much effort-words or rules-may be necessary. But rule is not the first, you know. Just to observe our rules is not-is not the-is not the most important thing. Do you understand?

Student A: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I, you know-I cannot say literally, but I put more emphasis on our natural, you know, activity with good concentration, and with tender mind, or with soft mind-not rigid mind. Not-we should not use very sharp knife, but, you know, dull, you know, maybe big dull knife [laughter]. Most of the time that is better because there is no danger, you know, of cutting you fingers or [laughs]-. It may be difficult, you know, to use blunt, you know, thick knife-big knife [laughs]. That is-most of the time, it is safe and bigger. And we should not-we should try not to use something so sharp. Sharp knife is necessary, you know. Of course it is necessary. But to use it always is not so good. Do you understand what I mean [laughs]?

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student B: If we do not exercise discrimination, many times we will get into situations that are dangerous or bad for us. How do-is that not so?

Suzuki-roshi: No, it is not so [laughter]. I don't think so, you know. [Laughs.] We feel in that way, you know. We have some fear of, you know, something we-we feel some need of being smart, and, you know, but it is not actually so. Everyone knows what we should do and what

we shouldn't [laughs]. And for us it not so-it is not necessary to be so smart and so clever, especially to understand Buddha's way. It is one of the difficulty, you know. One of the difficulty of being Buddhist is "too smart." "Too smart people is difficult to enter the true way." That-that is what Buddha said.

But for-for such a person who is very alert, strong practice is needed. And after practicing very hard, he will attain-his attainment will be great too. But mostly, you know, smart people think, "Oh! I understand that. I know that. That's all." [Laughs, laughter.] They will not make so much effort, you know, so he cannot be a good Buddhist. If he is [having] some difficulty in doing things with people, like a donkey [laughs, laughter], he should, you know, practice hard to be a donkey.

We-we say we should get through donkey's way [?] and horse way [?] [laughs]. We should get through. It means we should get through life of donkey and life of a horse. That is, you know, important practice.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student C [Bill Shurtleff?]: One of the last times that you spoke here-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: One of the last times that you spoke here-not tonight, but before-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Oh.

Student C: -you said that-I understood you to say that we may think of the whole world as existing for ourselves.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And often I feel that there is a mind or a magician or a buddha who knows my problem and keeps creating a world-

Suzuki-roshi: Who know whose problem-his problem or?

Student C: My problem.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, your problem [laughter].

Student C: The problem that I think I have.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: And he keeps creating a world that comes to me which helps me to see that problem.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: And in this sense I often feel that the world does exist.

Suzuki-roshi: World?

Student C: That the world does exist-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -for me-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: -and that it keeps showing me this problem again and again and again.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And-as if it's instructing, like in the Diamond Sutra it says, "The tathagata instructs-"

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: "-the bodhisattvas."

Suzuki-roshi Uh-huh.

Student C: And-

Suzuki-roshi: Do you mean some particular person or things?

Student C: Things and-

Suzuki-roshi: Many things.

Student C: -the world and situations-the-

Suzuki-roshi: Situation, yeah.

Student C: -anything that happens-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student C: -seems to be constantly-

Suzuki-roshi: And it may be-he may be many things, you know-various things. Do you mean that, or-?

Student C: Yeah. Sometimes a bird, sometimes people, sometimes-



Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student C: -the kind of work that I'm given.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: Sometimes missing a bell.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: Missing hearing something. Sometimes taking too much food.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: All of those things together-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student C: -seem to keep speaking to the same thing-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Student C: -as if there were something outside that was sending all of these things-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -like a magician.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And somehow-I don't know how-but I feel that this is very closely related to what you're saying tonight-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -about the flag and the wind. And I can't-I can't grasp quite how, but somehow in a very formless way, they seem to be one and the same thing.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: Could-could you talk about that a little bit?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. You talked about it pretty well [loud laughter]. Yeah, I-you know-that is very true. That is what Dogen-zenji said, you know. Buddha guide us and teaches us with everything. And when we talk about the truth, my mouth-our mouth become Buddha's mouth.

And when we-what do you say to do like this [gestures]? Not-the opposite of grasping thing.

Students: Let go?

Suzuki-roshi: Let it go, you know. My hand become Buddha's hand. Not grasp, you know. To talk about is something to grasp. Here is teaching, you know, in my mouth. But this mouth, actually, when you feel-we feel in that-in that way, my mouth is not any more my mouth. Buddha's mouth. And if you-we let my hand open, my hand become Buddha's hand. If you hear something, that is not something. It is something more than that. So if you-if you cannot hear or see things or talk about things in that way, we are not Buddhists, he [Dogen-zenji] said [laughs]. Very meaningful, you know. He express that kind of feeling very well. It is not so interesting if I translate it in English, but if you say it in Japanese in that way, it is very poetic. And it is more than poem.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed verbatim by Diana Bartle (10/30/00) and checked by Bill Redican (5/7/01).

[1] Daman Hongren (Daiman Konin): 602-675. Fifth Chinese Patriarch.

[2] Yuquan Shenxiu (Gyokusen Jinshu): 605?-706. Disciple of the Fifth Patriarch, Daiman Konin. Founded the Northern School of Chan.

[3] Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan, Gateless Gate), Case 29: "The Sixth Patriarch's 'Your Mind Moves.'"

[4] Japanese: dojo: "temple, meditation hall." Possible daishu ("monks") and ichi ("one"). See also lecture SR-66-08-15A.

## **8 - Question and Answer**

Thursday, August 28, 1969

Question and Answer  
Tassajara

Suzuki-roshi: I want you to ask me a question. [Laughs.] I have nothing in my mind to say. Something-some question about our practice, maybe, or zazen practice, or our everyday practice. Hai.

Student A: I have two days-I am leaving Tassajara to live in the city after being here for one year. I wonder what you might have specifically

to say to me about that right now.

Suzuki-roshi: Right now [laughs]. What time did you actually come back?

Student A: Come to-back?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. What time today?

Student A: Today? Today, it was about 5:15.

Suzuki-roshi: 5:15. [Laughs, laughter.] The feeling-I think when you-you are at Tassajara, you know, you don't find anything special [laughs]. But if you come back, you know, from city you will have-you will find Tassajara something quite different from city. I had same feeling when I came back to Eihei-ji Monastery after staying outside of the monastery for maybe one or two days. When you are here, you know, you don't feel anything special. But, you know, even [if] you feel something special when you come back to Tassajara, if you compare, I think proper understanding should be like this: Tassajara should be like a water, you know. That you feel something special about it [is] to see the wave on the water. So even though you feel you have some special feeling about Tassajara, but that is not true Tassajara. It is-you feel very good, but Tassajara should be greater than that. The wave is, you know-wave you see is, according to Dogen-zenji, you know, the wave is a part of-a part of-part of water, or-or one-many ways of observing one of the feature of water.

So even though you have special experience in your practice, that special experience you had is just a part of the reality or perfect enlightenment. Perfect enlightenment is something more-greater than that, which is beyond our experience.

But usually, you know, we become of-we become very proud of our practice at Tassajara when you feel good. But, you know, if our true practice is-whatever feeling you have about our practice, that is a part of-if that is a part of our practice. So even though you feel good, that is not-it does not mean our practice is good. Just because of [if] you feel good-even though you don't feel good, you know, about our practice [laughs], it does not mean our practice is not bad. And if you don't feel anything about it, it does not mean our practice is-practice does not mean anything.

Our real practice is something which you cannot compare to some other practice. It is s- [partial word]-it is-we should know that it is something greater than that or deeper than that. And it is so great that you cannot compare [it] to your ordinal [ordinary] experience. This point should not be forgotten, I think.

But anyway, you know, if you come back from city you will feel

wonderful, you know. Maybe Tassajara is more than your home, I think. That is how I felt [when I came back to Eihei-ji monastery after staying outside for a month].[1] I think you must have had same feeling. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, what of the auto-suggestive aspect of zazen? By "auto-suggestive" I mean like self-suggestion. Do you understand? Why don't I-

Suzuki-roshi: I-I don't understand your point.

Student B: I-I-you say "count to ten." To a degree, this is auto-suggestive. Or if someone said, "I should put my consciousness below my navel"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -this is even more auto-suggestive.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: But if somebody said, "In zazen, just sit."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: "No matter what happens, just sit."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: That would be like the antithesis to auto-suggestion. I just wanted you to talk a little about auto-suggestion or its antithesis and its relationship to zazen.

Suzuki-roshi: Zazen is, you know-I am talking about shikantaza, you know-we-we say, you know, "count your breathing" or "put your mind on your palm." This is just-it does not mean that to put our mind, you know, on our palm is-is our practice, you know. What we mean is to have mindfulness, you know, in our practice, not only on your palm but also your mind should pervade in various corners of your body, you know-your body should be-all of your body should [be] aware of our practice.

So to be concentrated on something like tummy or like your palm means-it is like, you know, if you are sitting, you know, for an instance, I may go, you know, for an instance, you know, check your posture. And I see your mudra and back, your neck, you know, and breathing. If something is missing-some-even though your mudra is right, you know, your [laughs] neck is like this [gestures], you know, that is not practice, you know. Even though your mind in on your palm, if you are watching like this [gestures, laughs, laughter], whether there is your mind on your palm, that is not what I mean, you know. This is very-I don't think

you are-you understand in that way.

But mostly-there is some danger of mistake, you know-to understand our instruction in that way. So why we say so is-this is the most important point or center of your practice. So that is why we say so. But center is center when all of your body is participating [in] the practice. So, in short, with your mind and body-whole mind and body, you should practice zazen.

And for me and for you, best way to know whether your practice is good or bad is, you know, to see your mudra, you know. That is what-whether you have strength here or not is easiest way to check some other's practice and to know whether your practice is good or bad by yourself. That is why we say-why you-we give you that kind of instruction. Does it-[laughs]?

Student B: I-that doesn't mean, then, that-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -if you say "keep your mind in your left palm"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -that 40 minutes should go by with concentration on the left palm.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: You say-am I-is that the understanding?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. It-that is not all, you know. Of course, you know-

Student B: The counting of the breathing-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -should the whole 40 minutes be devoted to counting exhales, one to ten, and back to one? Which-

Suzuki-roshi: That is, you know, pretty difficult. But you should be able to do that. Not always. I don't think you can do it always in that way. But when you are in good condition, you should be able to do that.

Student B: In other words, this is sort of like a self-test?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah-yeah, a sort of self-test. And actually-actually if you can do that more than maybe ten minutes, you know, it is-it is more than self-test. You-you will forget, you know-not forget, but you will be-your practice is [to] go beyond actually breathing counting. You are

counting, but you are not counting like you count something. Hai.

Student C: Roshi, sometimes when we have discussions about the dharma, you -you are quoting, you know, "Roshi said this," or "Roshi said that." How do we find our own true way with you?

Suzuki-roshi: With me.

Student C: With you.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] That's very difficult. [Said quietly.] The best way may be, you know, if you understand-if you think you understood what I say, you should try, you know-you should try to accept it in its complete sense. And if you cannot, you should ask question again.

About breathing and practice-do you have some-some other questions? Hai.

Student D: You said that in counting the breathing from one to ten, it's not counting in the usual way. Could you say something more about that?

Suzuki-roshi: We count, you know, actually, and-but-not only count our breathing, your mind follow your breathing. And your physical body also follow or participate in breathing and counting. In that way, you-as you count, you continue the practice with your mind and body. That is how we count our breathing.

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student B: You said to push down on the exhale, just-not too much, but some little bit. Should that be done for a whole period of zazen-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student B: -or just for a short period?

Suzuki-roshi: Not just short period. You should continue [for the full period], especially for, you know, for beginners.

Student E: Roshi, can you-can you say something about the mudra, like you use while sitting and other mudras connected [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: This is called "cosmic mudra." There are many mudras, of course, but we, you know, we put all of our fingers like this [gesturing], and second [1 word], and first joint and second joint will make one line like this. And so-so shape will be like this. And here we have vertical line-here-right here. And it should not be like this or like that [laughs].

We must be, you know-we have to be aware of what we are doing, you know.

Student F: My right thumb is always crooked. Does that mean my zazen is sort of crooked?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] No. No, I don't think so. That is all right. My-for an instance, my-this finger is crooked, you know [laughs, laughter]. It doesn't come flat [?]. If you do your best, that is all.

Student G [Bill Shurtleff]: Roshi, could you speak about pain in zazen-physical pain?

Suzuki-roshi: Physical pain, yeah. Legs? [Laughter.] Or where? If it is legs, you know, if you continue it, you know, it may be all right. If-if that is too much, I don't know, you know.

Bill: Well, I-I always have the choice whether to sit half-lotus and not have any pain, or sit full lotus-

Suzuki-roshi: Half-lotus.

Bill: -for a full period-

Suzuki-roshi: Why don't you try half-lotus? It-it is not necessary-always necessary to be [in] full lotus. Half-lotus is good enough. But when you-in you-cross your legs half-lotus-may be better to try to [do] full lotus. [Laughs, laughter.] Naturally you will do so, you know, when you-when you find it easy to-too easy to cross in half-lotus, you may try [full lotus], you know. I think you will try.

Student H: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student H: Do you have-are we supposed to count our breaths now? I know-I know you say that sometimes, but I don't believe it enough to do it more than sometimes. [Laughs, laughter.] And sometimes I will count it for five minutes, and then I'll start wondering if I should be counting my breath and I'll quit. So why don't you tell me how to count my breath or don't count my breath? [Laughing, laughter ongoing.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. Hmm. [Laughter.]

Student H: And-is this-does it depend on the person?

Suzuki-roshi: That is your zazen, not my zazen. That is not my problem, you know.

Student H: Oh my God. [Loud laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: So if you feel good, you know, giving up in five minutes- but I don't think so.

Student H: You don't think so, what-?[2]

Suzuki-roshi: You don't think you, you know-I think you don't feel good if you give up in five minutes. And you-I think until you can continue it, you know, one period, you will not be satisfied with your practice. This kind of effort is, you know-here the effort is the point-to make continuous effort is the point, not, you know, attainment is-not attainment-actually posture or ability to count is not the point. To give up is bad. Do you understand? The spirit is important. This spirit-you know, as I explained in parable of water and wave, in our practice we are liable to be caught by waves, you know. But wave is a just a part of the nature of water. So five minutes is valuable. Ten minutes is also valuable if that is-if the practice is based on our belief in buddha-nature. Okay?

Student H: I guess. I don't know.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student H: I'll just-I'll count my breaths.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. [Laughter.] You will-you should continue, okay? And don't be discouraged if you cannot do that. But try as much as you can. So far as you are trying, that is practice. Hai.

Student I: If we're having-I'm having a great deal of difficulty counting my breaths.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: In fact, I gave it up about a month ago [laughter], and I started concentrating on my posture because I found that when I was counting my breaths-I counted my breaths for five or six months, and then-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student I: -I found that if I counted my breaths, my head was hanging, my mudra was-was lopsided-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: -my whole body-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.



Student I: -was-was not with it.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student I: So I just-I started to concentrate on my body. And when I did that, I couldn't count my breaths any more. What should one do? Should one-if-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, if so-

Student I: -one has great difficulty counting breaths-

Suzuki-roshi: -yeah, I understand what you say. The breathing, you know-without right posture, it is difficult to have natural good breathing. You know, only with right posture you can count or you can follow your breathing, or you will have natural good breathing without much effort.

And even though your posture is good-you can sit in good posture-even though you can do that, but if you are not yet fully accustomed to it, you know-if you-as long as you are trying so hard just to keep your physical posture-the spine or, you know, straight or, you know, mudra right, then it is rather difficult to follow your breathing even. So counting breathing is good because it will help your breathing. And naturally your breathing will be deeper. That is why we count for beginners.

Student I: Do you think-I find the counting exercises difficult. I mean, I'm just beginning, but it seems too difficult-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: -because there's so-in the beginning there is a great deal of pain, and the body-it's such a new position for the body to assume-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: -it's very difficult.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student I: And-and taking concentration and putting it into the counting which then becomes very mechanical. I find that my practice is, I wouldn't say "better or worse," but stronger when I'm very aware of where my body is: how it's moving, how my mouth is feeling, my head, my hands, rather than just counting one through ten and following my breath.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I think so too.

Student I: So-could-can we-should we-if we're beginning and finding it

very difficult to count, can we concentrate on our posture?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. If so, a kind of preparation for counting breathing, you can do that. It does not mean you gave up [laughs], you know.

Student I: I try occasionally, but I fall asleep when I count.

Student B: Roshi? Does counting breathing alter the character of the breathing?

Suzuki-roshi: Character. No.

Student B: If a person breathes as I'm breathing now, I'm not counting-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -when you make a suggestion with your mind: one, two, and so forth, does that make the breath different-longer, or shorter, or more pushed down, or something? It seems different to me, but I'm not sure.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. It-it-it will help deeper breathing.

Student B: It seems like the breaths are longer-

Suzuki-roshi: Longer.

Student B: -both the intake and the exhale.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. And what-try-I usually count exhaling, you know.

Student B: Yeah, that's what you suggested to do was to-to let the in-in-but the inhale is connected to the exhale.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughter.] And when the inhaling is, you know-inha- [partial word]-exhaling is good, inhaling is naturally good. It means that you make more space for your lung to inhale, you know, to-

Student B: Push down?

Suzuki-roshi: -push down. Push everything down and make, you know, your-you make more space for your inhaling.

Student J: Roshi, I don't understand what you mean by ["pushing down"].[3]

Suzuki-roshi: Without [laughs]-you-you don't feel you are pushing down. You feel just having deeper breathing, you know. You feel as if your air come to your belly, you know, but it [laughs]-it-that is your feeling, but actually exhaling doesn't reach here [gestures]. Inhaling

doesn't reach here [your neck].[4] So when you exhale, you know, it means to press everything down, that's all, even though you don't try to do so.

Student K: Should the chest rise, Roshi, on the inhale? Should the-if you're breathing up here-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student K: -your chest inflates.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. I don't realize in that way, but-

Student L: If the-

Suzuki-roshi: -inhaling is quite natural when the exhaling is deeper.

Student M: Would you speak about makyo[5] in zazen and nightmares during sleep?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Nightmare and makyo may be different.

Student M: What is makyo?

Suzuki-roshi: Mayko is-there is many things, you know. When you-you practice zazen, being concentrated, in deeper concentration, you will see something. The reason why will be different-many-there must be many reasons, but mostly it is because of your imperfect breathing. And physical practice is not so good. But your mental or your mind is pretty good-in good concentration, then there-there may be some imbalance between physical and mental practice. I understand it-I, you know-understand, you know, in this way about makyo. But that is-anyway, you have pretty good practice.

Student M: How about nightmares?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student M: How about nightmares?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] That is, you know, lack of, you know, understanding of practice. [Laughs, laughter.] Makyo is also, you know, also good. Makyo or nightmare is also good, you know [laughs, laughter], if you enjoy your nightmare. That is one of the function of our buddha-nature, so you should welcome nightmare. There is no reason why you should be afraid of [it]. So, you know, that kind of-our practice should be, you know, based on that kind of faith, or conviction, or confidence.

Student N: Roshi? Monday[6] you said that the buddha-nature was

ignorance. Does this mean that enlightenment is an illusion, or that we-

Suzuki-roshi: No, no, no. [Laughs.]

Student N: Does this mean that we practice just to practice? I've been worrying about this a little bit [?].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] You know, when you are not afraid of anything, you know, whatever happen to you, that is all right, you know. You will not be killed by it [laughs]. Even though you are killed by it, it is all right. You know, we should-our practice is not-we should not practice our way in some personal reason or selfish gaining idea. We cannot escape from this world, you know [laughs]. So, that you are afraid of something means you have some-something. So the purpose is to get rid of that something. And that is possible. And most important point is to understand our buddha-nature or absolute nature in-from various angle, you know-to observe our life from various angle. Not just the selfish angle, but various angle, good and bad.

What we mean by "good" is when you are ready to follow the truth, that is good. And when you have selfish idea, that is bad. It does not mean to have some special standard, and measure our practice, or evaluate things. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, if we follow this method of counting breathing we won't necessarily feel better physically, or-and we may have even more mental stress, or-it's very hard to compare because if you don't do it, you don't know [?]-than we would if we didn't follow this method?

Suzuki-roshi: Anyway, you know, to practice shikantaza, you know, it is-it is easier to follow some way to help shikantaza. So the purpose is of those practice is to-how to-how to practice shikantaza. Without doing anything, we should-you can practice-we can stop-if you can stop your mind and practice our way-these two things-that is good. But that is very difficult. For a moment you can do that, but it is very difficult to continue.

So if you are counting breathing, that is not-not much, you know-you are not involved in some-not much activity. It is much better than to think many things or to have many images to come over. And even though you don't do anything, if your mind pervades all of your body, and all parts of your body participate in the practice, you don't actually think, you know. So for a while you can do that, but it is rather difficult to continue it. So we need some help, you know.

Student B: You mean like a koan or a wato[7]-something on this order?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe. Koan practice is-purpose of koan practice is, you know, mostly to stop thinking or to push yourself to the limit of thinking, where you cannot think any more, where you have to give up thinking.

Your urge to accomplish our way [must be] so great that, you know, mental thinking cannot help you anymore. So as long as you cling to thinking faculty, you will be defeated, or [laughs] you will be lost, or you don't know what to do because the something you will-which support you is too weak. You will find it too weak, so, you know, you will [say], "This is no good." And you will confront with the problem or koan without anything, you know, without relying on anything.

Student B: This-this is formal koan practice, not counting breathing, but more the Rinzai-type koan that you're talking about now? [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Suzuki-roshi: The counting-breathing practice is very old-has old tradition, and it works pretty well for everyone. Maybe as long as you-when you, you know, practice zazen with some purpose, you know, you may, you know, say counting-breathing practice is good or bad, you know. But when you feel you have to practice zazen in some way and you have to accomplish your practice, when you have this kind of urge first, then counting breathing or whatever it is will work. So-

Student O: How about repeating a single word, Roshi? I've found, like if you take the word mu and just sit and fix your concentration on that word and let it repeat, it fixes the mind, and eventually the word seems to go out too. Is that-is that wrong practice to-to do that?

Suzuki-roshi: It is good, actually, you know, to be involved in some activity in its true sense without any subjectivity or objectivity. When you become one with your practice, whatever it is, not only zazen but drinking, eating, you know, with oryoki, [8] or bow, or reciting sutra- whatever it is. When you become one with the practice, then you-it means that you are one already-one with everything, and that practice include everything. When the practice include everything, there is no- nothing to achieve or, you know, even nothing to do. And that activity include everything. I say "everything," you know [laughs]. Everything: this is just word, you know. "Everything" means, actually, something greater than things, you know, which you can figure out. So that is so-called-it "nothingness." Nothingness will, you know, will be realized when you are involved in some activity completely. That is nothingness.

Student P: You disappear into the activity.

Suzuki-roshi: You-you will disappear-

Student P: -into the activity.

Suzuki-roshi: -and what exist is actually activity only. And that activity is not your activity [laughs]: someone's activity. I-that someone I don't know who [laughs]-who he is. Maybe he is Buddha, and we don't think he is Buddha even. That is actual nothingness, you know. Nothingness is not somewhere else. Right here. When we do something, there is actual

nothingness. And when you-we are able to continue this kind of activity, more or less, that is Buddhist practice in our everyday life.

Student Q: Does that ever happen while you are talking, say [laughter]-

Suzuki-roshi: What did you say?

Student Q: -or only in activities that are like physical, or like the oryoki or rock-moving? Could it happen in-in talking.

Suzuki-roshi: Can it happened.

Student Q: -while talking or-.

Student R: Can-can it happen while talking?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student R: Can it happen while talking?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, it happens. Whatever it is, if you can do that [laughs, laughter]. It looks like very difficult, but zazen practice will, you know, will give you some proof, you know, if that is possible or not. Oh.

Student B: Roshi, does-does that mean-just to get really straight on this-that for all of us, we should all count our breathing for 40 minutes [laughter] during zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: That we should all count-all of the students that follow your way-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -should count their breathing for 40 minutes during zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughter.] They have to try. If that is not possible, you should figure out why: because of want of sleep, or [laughs] because of your physical posture. You will find out many things. Then you should correct [them], you know, one by one, so that you can do it. So it does not mean if you cannot do that you should, you know, you should be expelled from Tassajara. It does not mean that. So I want you to understand through counting-breathing practice, many-what is actual practice of zazen. That is the main point.

Student S: Is it possible to experience emptiness other than through form?

Suzuki-roshi: There is only one way. There is no other way.

Student S: There's-there's no experience where one-where one perceives emptiness rather than just-just being involved in activity? I mean, if-if one is involved in activity, you said that's emptiness. That is nothing-nothingness. Is-is-is that the-is there another experience where one experiences emptiness as emptiness rather than emptiness through form?

Suzuki-roshi: Emptiness through form-or through some idea-aid, you know?

Student S: Pardon?

Suzuki-roshi: By some aid, or-?

Student S: Well, some special experience [laughs, laughter]. So we-I mean, I've been confused about the idea-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student S: -of enlightenment.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, maybe so. [Laughter.] "One with something" is very, you know, very imperfect, you know, way of putting it.

First of all, you know, before we figure out what does it mean, we should practice zazen, you know. We should be completely involved in zazen practice, you know, or else you will have many various misunderstanding. And as long as you are here, you should follow our everyday life. And you should recite sutra in certain form, and you should bow with some instruction, and, you know, with some certain way. That is the shortcut to understand what does it mean. If we-I try to explain it, you know, we will-I will cause you various misunderstanding. That is why we practice our way in this kind of a way. Hai.

Student T: Roshi, it seems like zazen is more difficult when you're not sitting on a cushion. I mean, I work in the kitchen, and I clean vegetables or something. And all of a sudden I become aware of the fact that I haven't been "just cutting" vegetables at all. I was thinking all the time-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student T: -thinking, and so [?], you know, [I say to myself] "Shut up."

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student T: Fine, you know [?]. And the more I thought to shut up, the more-the more it just was-it's more noisy. And I get, you know, really

grouchy.

Suzuki-roshi: You feel what?

Student T: I feel grouchy.

Suzuki-roshi: Grouchy. Ah. Yeah. You should come back to our practice, you know, when you realize-when you notice that you are not practicing.

Student T: But it seems like the more-the more that-the more that I'm trying [to] make it be quiet, the more it's noisy-the more difficult it becomes. But then if I'm not aware of it, then nothing happens.

Suzuki-roshi: The more you [are] quiet, you find it more difficult?

Student T: No. The more-if I don't notice it, then it's easy. I'm not working on anything.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student T: And I don't feel grouchy. But I'm not working.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] You should try to work, you know, and you should, you know-you should try to keep yourself on track.

Student U: She's saying the harder she tries, the crookeder the track gets, though.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. No, I don't think so. Even so, you should try to keep yourself on track [laughter].

Student U: Of course, but-

Suzuki-roshi: If you don't, you know, you don't know where you are going. So [laughs]-so there is no way to-to practice our way.

Student T: Well, what-what I'm asking is that-is that effort directed in the right direction, because it seems that-it seems that what-what you're doing seems to me-seems to make [2-3 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: If you-if you are cutting something, you know, you should be-you should be cutting. That's what I'm saying.

Student T: But if-if you're thinking, what do you do about thinking. Do you try and stop thinking, or do you [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Thinking-if you are thinking some other things, you should stop thinking and you should cut [laughs, laughter]. You know, that is like-that is why I advise you to practice zazen, you know. This is easier.



Student T: Yeah, I know. That's the only thing that makes me feel better.

Suzuki-roshi: Much easier. And if you-the more you get accustomed to, you know, zazen practice, naturally you can do it without-without not much effort. So it is better to practice zazen rather than to apply the weak practice [laughs] to your everyday life. So first of all, you have strong, you know, power of practice. Then you can do things quite easily. You can read well, you can think better, you can act better. Do you agree?

Student T: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Okay. Hai.

Student V: Roshi, my back is sore all the time. I feel that in zazen I should be relaxed, but there's a tension. I try to keep my back straight, and my muscles get very tense up and down my spine. And I-I've tried several ways of sitting lower or sitting higher, but it still seems to hurt quite a bit, and I-I don't feel relaxed. My zazen is very rarely relaxed because I am always trying to keep my back straight. But when I just relax, then [laughs] I fall over.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Student V: Is-is there any way, or does a way develop to keep your back straight without tension?

Suzuki-roshi: More easily? You can do it quite easily if you are-how long have you been sitting?

Student V: About three years.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe not enough, you know [laughter]. You know, some kind of effort is always necessary, you know. As I am 65 years old, you know, my back tend to be like this [gestures].[9] And my mother was like this [laughs, laughter], and so I-I have to make always some effort to keep my back straight. It is not-I don't feel so bad, you know. I rather feel better. But I am trying always keeping-to keep my back straight.

This kind of, you know, effort is always necessary. You know, sometime you will be sleepy, you know, and you cannot practice zazen as if you are lying in bed [laughs]. Some-some effort, which will help you-encourage your practice, is necessary. If there is no difficulty in your practice at all, I don't think you can practice zazen. Like counting breathing, you know: you may easily lost your [laughs] number. Then you-you will [think], "Oh, I lost. So [laughing] next time I must-I-I must not lose my counting." So you will, you know, make some effort to-to

continue counting.

That kind of effort, you know, will encourage your practice. And if you-if you feel, "This is good practice" or "That [is] bad practice," that is not our way. Whatever happen to our practice, you should accept as a part of your practice. And you should continue to practice.

Anyway, you know, if you think you will attain something which is beyond, you know, our-excuse me-which is beyond our reach, or, you know, which is beyond-completely different from our everyday life, you know, that is wrong understanding. In our everyday life there must be our way.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (1/8/01).

[1] Text in brackets was added by the original transcriber. Earlier S.R. in this lecture had said "one or two days," not one month. This return to Eihei-ji is described in *Crooked Cucumber*, pp. 74-75.

[2] That is, he is asking SR to continue.

[3] Text in brackets was added by the original transcriber. [Mike noise obscures student's voice.]

[4] Text in brackets was added by the original transcriber.

[5] makyo: Hallucinations or delusions.

[6] SR-69-08-25.

[7] wato (Jap.): a single koan given by a teacher to a student; a subject; a koan.

[8] oryoki: Buddha's eating bowl. The meaning of the word has been extended to include the entire set of eating bowls and utensils, wrapped in a cloth, with which Zen monks eat their meals. The procedure for unwrapping the bowls, eating from them, cleaning, and re-wrapping them has been formalized, and, in the zendo, this ceremony is performed in unison by all of the monks at mealtime. The Japanese tea ceremony grew out of the use of the oryoki in monasteries. [Footnote by the original transcriber.]

[9] Original transcript said "slouched forward."

## **1969 september (8)**

### **1 - Interviews with Peter Schneider**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Interviews with Peter Schneider  
Interview With Shunryu Suzuki  
about his life in Japan

by Peter Schneider

[In the fall of 1969 Peter Schneider interviewed a reluctant Shunryu Suzuki about his past. There are two tapes made at two different times but only a few days apart. There's another one (or maybe that's the second one--I'm not sure--I have to piece it all together) which was made during a lecture done on the evening of one of these interviews. I have all sorts of versions of these interviews and frankly, I don't have the time to sort it all out right now. This file was labeled SR-PS.JP3, or the third editing of parts of Peter Schneider's interviews with Suzuki-roshi that pertained to Suzuki's life in Japan. This includes the lecture Suzuki gave or at least part of it because I remember that that's where Suzuki talked about Miss Ransom as "my old, old girlfriend." The way he said it, it brought forth gales of laughter from the audience (not an unusual occurrence when he spoke--and it's things like this he said that led some very few to wonder if they were lovers. I seemed to have conveyed this nuance in my book because Don Latin, the SF Chronicle reviewer indicated that he'd picked that up--and this led to a certain amount of upset and some letter to the Chron. I don't think so, but who knows.). I have so many files representing so many different versions of all this that it will take me some time to get it down in an archive that shows the original version and subsequent useful editions. I have to erase a lot of my files. I had to edit things along the way to be able to use them and to work on them. The originals are, at times, not so clear and are more boring, so for now I go to the best edited version that I used. I spent hours and hours and hours and hours and hours going over these interviews and things he said in his lectures and what I remembered and other peoples' memories and what people in Japan remembered and really, Crooked Cucumber represents an enormous amount of effort to get at the crux of it. I think that this archive of the interviews should show the raw materials that were used AND my interpretations, but it will take me time to organize it all and I'll need help from people like Richard Speel and Jamie Avera and LezaLowitz (who are all helping me now) to get it organized so that it's usefully presented. I don't want to spend a zillion years on it again but I do want to leave it in a form that others can understand what's raw material and how I came to what I came to. Some of the information in here might differ from what I said in the book but that may be because Suzuki forgot and subsequent research cleared that up or because I couldn't

understand at that time. I just went over it and I see there's lots of stuff that was figured out and fixed later so don't take anything Japanese or Buddhist as the gospel truth or even the right words or spelling. Anyway, it's an interesting interview and mostly it's correct and shows what he said and how he felt without a lot of the hemming and hawing. -D.C.]

## PETER SCHNEIDER INTERVIEWS SUZUKI-ROSHI

### ABOUT HIS LIFE IN JAPAN

#### BASIC

Date at time of filing out: 1969

Name in Full: Shunryu Suzuki [other 1st name? Toshi [boyhood name-- Toshitaka, the kunyomi or Japanized reading of Shunryu, the onyomi, or Chinese reading].

Date of Birth: May 18, 1904 (age at time of filling out - 65)

Family Relation: First son of Sogaku Suzuki [others?]

Permanent Domicile: 1400 Sakamoto, Yaizu-shi, Shizuoka-ken, Japan.

Present Address: 1881 Bush Street, San Francisco, California (Soto Zen Temple - Sokoji)

--

#### EARLY YEARS

My teacher, Gyokujun So-on Suzuki, was my father's disciple. He had the same family name as my father, Suzuki, and it was not just coincidence. He had been adopted by my father. He was my uncle, but not a real one. I had tokudo, he ordained me, on my thirteenth birthday, May 18, 1917 at Zoun-in, Morimachi, Shizuoka-ken. I lived there until 1924 when I went to Tokyo to complete high school.

When I was young, even from my boyhood, I wasn't satisfied with Buddhist life for many reasons. So I wanted to be a good teacher when I was very young and I wanted to look for a good teacher for there were so many people who did not respect priests so much. At that time my ambition was directed to some narrow attainment, but, anyway, I made up my mind to leave my home and to practice under a strict teacher. So I went to my master's temple. My master was a disciple of my father and my father when he was young was very strict with his disciples. My master was one of my father's disciples who was raised up in a very strict way, and my master was always talking about my father's

strictness with him and that was hardest thing for me to accept.

My master would always bring up my father. "Your father, you know, raised me in this way." That was very hard to listen to. So naturally, this kind of spirit I had all the way until I became maybe thirty or more. After my master's death I didn't feel it so much and that kind of feeling changed into the opposite way and I missed my master very much.

--

Peter: Looking at your history, it looks pretty ordinary. Is it ordinary sort of Zen teacher's history?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. Not so ordinary. I say priests in my age had it pretty hard. If I told you all about it in detail it would seem very noble.

Peter: Oh, ho. That's what we never hear.

Suzuki-roshi: What I did was actually not so different for back then. But nowadays a priest who is brought up in a family temple succeeds to his father's position, that's all, you know. But my age was thirteen when I left my father's temple.

Peter: Why did you leave your father's temple?

Suzuki-roshi: My father took care of me too well, so here in my heart I always felt some family feeling. Some emotional feeling, too much emotion, too much love. And my teacher at grammar school told me this kind of thing. He always said to me, to us, "You should be ..."

[Did he ever talk about his father or mother? Or Gyokujun Soon?]

--

## EDUCATION

Peter: You graduated from college at 26 - pretty old for that.

Why did you start school so late?

Suzuki-roshi: Because I was with my teacher from the time I was thirteen: cooking, serving, and so on. I hadn't finished middle school or high school. I only finished grammar school. And I was studying, of course, in the temple so I could enter the last years of high school which at that time went for five years. I only took the fourth grade and fifth grade of high school, from 1924 to 1926, staying till I was twenty-one. [where did he live while doing these last two years of high school - name of school, location?]

--

## SHUSO CEREMONY

Shunryu was (head monk) Shuso-risshion[sp?] (risshion - standing body) from Nov 15, 1925 to Feb 18, 1926, at Kenko-in, in Shizuoka City, during a full practice period under Dojun Kato-roshi. A note on his curriculum vitae says at that point the other priests stopped considering him a boy. He became their new young friend. He was 21 years old at the time.

Twenty is the traditional age to enter adulthood. Maybe for priests at that time, the shuso ceremony marked a young monk's passage into adulthood. This is also the period when he was finishing up his last year of high school. Being shuso outside of the hard-core training temples like Eiheiji is usually largely formality. Shunryu made a point that this was more than that, and he did go to a special temple to be shuso, but still he was surely quite busy with his studies.

Kenko-in was technically a training monastery, but actually there were not many students. Just a few. But when Shunryu had his shuso ceremony more priests and monks came to join the ceremony and the practice.

--

## DHARMA TRANSMISSION

Just before entering Komazawa University, six months after his shuso ceremony, on Aug. 21, 1926, at the age of 22, Shunryu received dharma transmission [ Japanese word -shiho] from Soon Suzuki-roshi in a private ceremony at Rinso-in. According to a traditional way of looking at dharma transmission [probably Kobun wrote this part], in the Dharma Transmission Ceremony, the teacher's robe is handed down to the disciple from his dharma master. The Zen master considers his disciple as a Zen Master, Tathagata knows Tathagata, Buddha meets Buddha.

But in Japanese Soto Zen, the initial transmission ceremony is merely the first of many steps toward being considered a truly independent priest. Shunryu received dharma transmission at this point, so he could become head of Zoun-in because Soon was too busy to take care of it anymore with all of his responsibilities at Rinso-in, but it was important to keep it in the lineage. Shunryu was still in the university, and his father had retired to Zoun-in, which had originally been his temple and which he regretted he'd left at all. Shunryu said that this transmission was just a formality. "At that time my master wanted me to be successor of his former temple. Although my practice was not good enough, he wanted me to take it over. Before he came to Rinso-in he was head priest of Zoun-in where my father had also been previously." So at that time [August 21 of 1926] he became the [what? - priest?

Chief priest is 1929] of Zoun-in where he'd had his early training with Soon, and his retired father Sogaku actually officiated as priest. Arrangements like this are quiet common.

"Officially I was supposed to receive transmission here (thumping) [1926], but actually I haven't. It was a just a formality."

Peter: How do you mean you haven't?

Suzuki-roshi: Just because, you know, to get an acknowledgement from headquarters we submitted this (thumping), my master submitted this [1926].

Peter: So you could have a robe for Eiheiji or what?

Suzuki-roshi: I didn't wear it - this is just a formality - what do you say? - for the record. I have this record at our headquarters, but actually I changed my robe [at another time - at the Ten'e.

Peter: Oh, there - I see, I see. [1929]

Suzuki-roshi: If I didn't have this record I couldn't have taken over my master's former temple[1926]. At that time I couldn't actually take over his position so my father did my job there while I was studying at Komazawa University.

Peter: So that transmission does not make you Zen master then? That just makes you osho?

Suzuki-roshi: Osho.

--

MRS. RANSOM SR1

Interpreter for Miss N. Ransom from Aug 1, 1927 to May 30, 1929.

(Roshi is very grateful for this job - this training helped him a lot) (When Roshi was at university he lived in one room of her home with 2 other boys - he was the best to help her and she became earnest Buddhist.)

Mrs. Ransom was teaching at Komazawa University when I first saw her. I took her English (and) conversation class once a week. At that time I didn't have much of a relationship with her, but after I finished the preparatory courses of the University and specialized in Buddhist courses, I was still interested in studying English, so once in a while I attended her classes (lecture - some other course and English course). Then one day during summer vacation I was (on my way home) but it was so hot I just wanted to get out of the heat and I was near her place so I went to the back door and called her. She was quite gracious and

invited me inside to a sitting room near the kitchen. She asked if I would like something to drink and I asked for water but she brought (us) something different, watermelon. So while we were eating watermelon she asked me if I would like to help her, in shopping, or such things like that, as she had some difficulty in communicating with Japanese people, especially some of them. At that time two students from Komazawa were working for her, helping her already, so I thought she may not need me, but she said one boy would be leaving quite soon so she wanted me to take his place. From that point on, our relationship became much closer.

Mrs. Ransom had been a tutor to Emperor Sento of China. Yoshida who became prime minister of Japan invited her and her parents [mistake-DC] to Japan. It seems her father was quite famous though I don't know who he was or why he was famous. As far as I know he was as famous as General Toho who defeated the Russian fleet in the Japan Sea. [I think SR is off here.-DC]

She was quite strict and stubborn and she tried to force her English ways on us and on Japanese people in general. And she always had some complaint - mostly what I had to do was listen to her complaints.

I stayed with her, living in her house, for a year and a half. I had many difficulties, but anyway I stayed there. At last I left her, not because of any difficulty between us but because I felt that if I continued I might not remain a priest. This was brought home to me one day when I visited the Turkish Embassy. I was doing some business for Mrs. Ransom with an assistant to the ambassador and we were speaking in English. While we were talking I looked at him. Maybe someday I shall be like you, I said to him in my head. I scared myself. If I stay with Mrs. Ransom for two or three more years, Will I become an ambassador? I wondered, and not a priest? So I left her and moved back into the dormitory.

She was not a Buddhist when I met her, but she had a beautiful sitting Buddha about one feet tall which she had put in the tokonoma where we usually keep a scroll and flower arrangement. But she kept a Buddha there. That's okay, but she also put her shoes with the Buddha, side by side. I was not so concerned about those things, especially when because she was not Buddhist, but I guess it did cause me some problem, (lots of coughing) so I decided to change her way. So everyday I offered a cup of tea to Buddha and she was very much amused. She had many guests over - so she started to tease me about my offering by putting a toothpick into Buddha's hand. Then she put some matches. I think it was her. She didn't do it in front of me. Maybe one of her guests did it because she told them, "He is a very naughty boy to put tea before the Buddha." To her it was a form of idol worship so she made fun of me.

A month or so passed and I didn't stop and neither did she. She



continuously teased me, but I ignored whatever she or her friends did. I didn't take off the toothpicks or matches. But I thought, there will be some chance for me to explain what Buddha is, what Buddhism is. In my spare time, I studied hard how to explain this in English. I made a special vocabulary list. And at last she asked me one day about why we worship Buddha. So I told her about Buddha and Buddhahood and she was amazed. It was not what she had in mind, you know. And ever since then she didn't tease me anymore and she started to try to understand what Buddhism actually was and what is our practice and she became a Buddhist. She asked me to buy some incense for her, incense and some other things too - a small bell and a candle, as I told her these kind of things are necessary.

That gave me some confidence in the possibility of Caucasians' understanding Buddhism. They understand quite easily, I thought, what Buddhism is. They may like Buddhism. So maybe for the first time I got the idea to go abroad or at least to Hokkaido where I would have a chance to speak to Caucasians or at least foreigners who don't know what Buddhism is.

--

MRS. RANSOM SR3

I must tell you she was my old, old girlfriend. When I was at college I studied English pretty hard to go abroad. I had no idea of America or Hawaii or anywhere. Anyway, if I am going to some country, I thought, I have to speak English and so I studied English pretty hard when I was a student. When I was at Komazawa University, Miss Ransom was teacher of conversation. Once a week Miss Ransom taught us conversation and after I finished her class I attended more English courses. Meantime Miss Ransom found me and asked me to help her in shopping or when some Japanese came or when she had some private students. Of course, I couldn't help her so well, but I tried pretty hard and, at last, she asked me to stay at her home with two more students who were helping her in shopping and conversation with Japanese people. But the other students, Kundo and I forgot the other student's name, Kundo was student of Komazawa and one more student was from Bundikadaima before that school was a normal high school and changed their system and became a university. Both Kundo and the other student were also studying English, but eventually they left Miss Ransom's home. Then I was only one student who helped her and in the meantime there were many interesting things that happened between Mrs. Ransom and me. Don't be so inquisitive.

Before she came to Japan she was a tutor of the last emperor of China, Emperor Sento, Emperor of Manchuria. At that time Japan became more and more ambitious, trying for some chance to fight with that northern part of China. Emperor Sento's [that's the Japanese for PuYi, the Last Emperor of China] capitol was in - I don't know what is the name of the

city right now - at that time it was Choshun. And when the Emperor was there she was the tutor of the Emperor. And she is a daughter of a very famous naval general whose name I forget.

She was a very strict character, and at the same time she always complained about Japanese people: about what kinds of things happened at school, and what kinds of things happened in the car. She was always complaining about Japan. I was the only person who listened to her complaints. But I also had many complaints with her.

For instance, she had a beautiful sitting Buddha as big as this (a foot high) which was given to her by the Emperor. She put it in the tokonoma, which is alright, but she'd put her shoes beside the Buddha. A tokonoma is a place where we put some antiques, scrolls, or some valuable things, objects of worship [respect] or something like that. But she used to put her shoes there as soon as she came back from school. That was very embarrassing to me. I didn't say anything but I offered tea every morning in a small cup, lifting it above my eyes and putting it in front of Buddha. She started to be amused by me but she didn't ask anything. And I didn't say anything about it or about her shoes. Maybe this kind of silent cold war lasted for two or three weeks and I was waiting for a chance to start a hot war. As my English wasn't so good I had to study pretty hard preparing for the chance to speak and I studied some important words to speak about it. When one of her friends visited her they were talking about funny things about me. He's a very strange Buddhist, offering tea to that wooden figure, sometimes offering incense. They were talking about it. I could understand them. And she had a friend who put matches in the Buddha's mudra - sometimes matches and sometimes cigarettes. Still, the hot war didn't start.

And, at last, I don't know how the hot war started, but she asked me about the Buddha figure. She thought Buddhism was a kind of idol worship. So I explained it as best I could. It was very difficult, but I managed to explain why we pay respect to a wooden image of Buddha and I explained what the real Buddha is. Maybe I told her about the Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya, and Nirmanakaya Buddha.

She was rather amazed. She didn't know Buddhism was so profound. And she started to become interested in Buddhism and soon she converted to Buddhism. And she started to study Buddhism - there were many professors of Buddhism at Komazawa and some who could speak English. So in one year she had a pretty good understanding of Buddhism. One day she took me downtown to buy some incense and an incense bowl and she took it home and started to offer incense to the Buddha. I taught her how to keep her tokonoma clean and she started to keep her shoes in the entryway where they belong.

I felt very good. I developed then some confidence in our teaching, in Buddhism, and also confidence that I could make Caucasian people understand Buddhism. And I thought that for Caucasians, Buddha's

teaching might even be more suitable than for Japanese. For Japanese to study Buddhism in its true sense is pretty difficult because they have so much mistaken tradition and misunderstanding of Buddhism and it is difficult for people to change their misunderstanding once they have the wrong idea of Buddhism. But for Caucasians who don't know anything about Buddhism, it's like painting on white paper, it is much easier to give the right understanding of true Buddhism. I think that the experience I had with Miss Ransom resulted in my coming to America.

As soon as I finished my schooling I asked my teacher, my master, Gyokujun Soon, if I could go to America or Hawaii or someplace, if I could go abroad anywhere. He became furious and he wouldn't allow me to go, so I couldn't go to America and I gave up my notion of coming to America for a long long time so that I forgot all about it. I told my master about my experience with Mrs. Ransom and suggested I go abroad to teach Buddhism. I said, America and he said, "No." So I asked about Hokkaido and he said, "No." I kept bringing it up and at last he became very angry and yelled at me that I should stay here. But he just used one word. He just said, "Here!" So I gave up my notion of going abroad. I completely gave up my idea of going to America. Several times after that I had a chance to go to America but I refused. But ten years ago, at last, I came to America. In 1954 - no, my age at that time was 54 - it was 1958, after I had finished doing what my teacher told me to do, I decided to go to America. So there is some truth that being with Mrs. Ransom was actually the turning point of life. My idea was of going abroad was always in my heart even though I gave up. I thought I had given up, but I hadn't.

Fifteen years ago [1954] actually I had a chance to come to America, but I didn't because I hadn't finished fixing the main building of Rinso-in, which was my duty left to me by my master. I thought I had to finish his instructions first, so I didn't come to America at that time. And then five or six years later I had a second chance to come to America and I decided to do it. It was pretty hard, but anyway I managed to come to America.

--

One day she told me to buy some daffodil bulbs. I bought some pretty big one for her but she wasn't satisfied. "Oh, these are too small. Get me some big ones." So I tried to find the best daffodils in Tokyo, at least in the Shibuya district. I visited several florists and I got the largest bulbs I could find, but she wasn't satisfied with them. That made me very angry. After a while I went out and did some more shopping. "Here, I got some very big ones. Here they are," I told her when I came back, and I left her room, carefully watching her to see what happened. She opened the bag up and saw the big bulbs I had gotten her. "Oh, these are very good!" she said and started to smell it. I felt very good, but at the same time scared of her so I ran away. "Oh, these are onions!" she shouted and started looking around for me, but I wasn't

there. I knew she didn't like onions at all. I couldn't help to bursting into laughter so she found me and with the onions in her hands she started to chase after me. So I went upstairs to the second floor and from the second floor to the roof where I hid. That kind of thing happened many times.

I had to come back to her home before ten o'clock, but it was rather difficult to always get back before ten. So when I was late I knew how to open the door. Japanese doors, you know, are sliding doors. The lock is between the two sliding doors, it's like a nail that goes down a slot to hold them together. So it is not possible to open them in the usual way, but if you lift the two doors it is quite easy to take them out. In this way I sneaked into my bedroom late and slept. But one night she heard me and saw what I was doing and she didn't trust me any more after that and she didn't trust the safety of the Japanese building any more. She determined to move out from that house and I was told to find her some good, safe building, which was almost impossible. Almost all buildings then were Japanese buildings. If it were a Western building we would have to pay a lot of money. So I gave up looking for that kind of safe building. But it was good for me to have some reason to get out. Sometimes I went to the barber shop and sometimes I went to visit some friends instead of finding some good apartment for her. At last I decided to ask a skilled old carpenter to explain how to make Japanese buildings safe from thieves and how to fix the lock so no one could get in. And together we convinced her not to move out.

As she was an English women, she wouldn't throw away knives when they got old. She had some old knives and asked me to go get them polished [sharpen?]. Maybe they do that in England but in Japan no one polishes knives for anyone else. If she'd had a carpenter or a gardener, they may have done it, but she wanted me to get it polished immediately. That was a big problem for me. She said, "In England if you go to a department store you can get knives polished immediately, so go to Mitsukochi and get them polished." Her idea that someone in a Japanese store was going to polish her knives was ridiculous. One was a pretty beautiful good knife, but even so no one would polish it in a store. "Oh, this is old," they may say. "This is very old. Why don't you get a new one."

The wooden covers of traditional Japanese bathes get rotten easily, so she asked me to go get her a lid only, but that was also difficult. Unless we buy the whole thing they won't do business. They won't sell the wooden lid to the tub by itself. I think the English way may be quite different from the American way. [because she couldn't adjust to different customs].

--

SHINSANSHIKI AT ZOUN-IN

On Jan. 22, 1929, Shunryu had his shinsanshiki at Zoun-in, Morimachi, Shizuoka-ken] and officially became the head priest.

"I had Zoun-in for ten years but for five years I actually ran it. Even after I became head priest of Rinso-in, I took care of Zoun-in. I had two temples for five years." (1934-1939?)

Again Peter asked him if this is where he became a Zen master and he said just for ceremonies.

--

TEN'E

On January 14, 1930 in a public ceremony, Shunryu received Ten'e, had that ceremony, and got another Okesa. In his curriculum vitae it's described as a "public determination" and consent from the Soto-shu." In this case, when the robe is handed down, his name is listed by headquarters as one who can become chief priest of a temple. After this ceremony he went to Eiheiji to "meet" with Dogen Zenji and to Sojiji to "meet" with Keizan Zenji (founder of Sojiji temple) for "a beautiful ceremony that lasted two days - to go to vow to be a good teacher - after this ceremony he is Zen master and can teach anywhere and have a temple." That is Kobun's description I bet, because Shunryu said it was still short of being considered a Zen master, or roshi. He got Ten'e just three months before graduation from Komazawa. Shunryu said that Ten'e means "to go to, to change off."

--

My schooling was a very late one. I graduated from Komazawa University in Buddhist and Zen Philosophy. at the age of 26 on April 10, 1930.

From Sep 17, 1930 to Sep 2, 1931: Head temple Dai Honzan (Big root mountain), Eiheiji Temple

From Sep 18, 1931 to Mar 31, 1932: Daihonzan, Sojiji Temple

--

After I finished my schooling I went to Eiheiji and Mrs. Ransom came to Eiheiji and stayed for one month sitting there and practicing pretty well. Two years later I went to Kasuisai Monastery. At that time she came to Kasuisai and stayed for one month and then she went to China again, Tenshin, near Peking. And after that she went to England. Once in a while I wrote to her and she wrote to me, but since I've come to America I haven't written so often. She wanted to write something about me, about various experience we had between us and she asked me to keep some dates or events, but that was too much. So since then

I haven't written to her because it was too much. Whenever I wrote to her she asked me many things which were almost impossible to write her back about, so I didn't and she may have become very angry. At that time Petchey was in England and he started Zen group at her home. So whenever Petchey went to her home he was the one who listened to her complaints. I know her very well, you know. Even though she complains it's not necessarily so bad. I thought it may be alright not to write her, but that was my mistake. She passed away last year before I wrote to her. I trusted her very much and she trusted me so much, so I thought whether I wrote to her or not didn't make much difference - but I don't know. As long as she was alive it was alright. Now I regret a little bit about my not writing to her.

Anyway I think she was a good Buddhist. After she went to Tenshin she sent me a picture of the same Buddha who got into trouble between us. She enshrined the Buddha in the wall where there was an alcove and she said she was offering incense every day.

--

#### KISHIZAWA-ROSHI

I studied with Ian Kishizawa-roshi from March 1, 1932 to June 30, 1952. He was considered one of the most excellent Zen Masters at that time in Japan. He was my first teacher's friend.

--

#### KOSHI

From May 7, 1932 to Apr 31, 1936, Shunryu was Koshi at BanshoZenrin, Kasuisai, at Fukuroi, Shizuoka-ken. "Koshi means 'someone to give lectures.' Bansho - this is Kasuisai temple where the head of the Soto school, Takashina-roshi, lived. Later Takashina became the abbot of Eiheiji and Sojiji and head of the Soto-shu." Shunryu didn't live at Kasuisai, but just visited to give lectures. At that time he was doing it for Soon-roshi because the responsibility of koshi at BanshoZenrin was traditionally the responsibility of the abbot of Rinso-in.

--

#### SHINSANSHIKI ATRINSO-IN

"My master died in 1934. At that time I was too young. I was maybe about 31 or something like that. He died in 1934 or 1935. I don't know by your counting."

On Apr 23, 1936, after two years of struggle, Shunryu had the shinsanshiki at Rinso-in Temple, 1400 Sakamoto, Yaizu-shi, Shizuoka-

ken.

According to notes on the Curriculum Vitae, he took the temple to prevent a greedy and ambitious faction from coming to power, to protect the Soto school and the danka of Rinso-in. Some families of the congregation resigned. Roshi said, "Don't criticize, wait two years - and they all came back."

"So there was a long period of confusion. Some danka supported me, saying, 'Even though he's young, it's all right.' Others said, 'No,' and in this way for two years no one succeeded my master. At last I became the head of Rinso-in.

--

#### WHEN ZEN MASTER 4

Peter: Did that mean that you were a Zen master? Did that make you a Zen master technically?

Suzuki-roshi: No. I don't think so.

Peter: When did you become a Zen master?

--

#### MORE ON RINSO-IN

Suzuki-roshi: At that time under my temple there were many famous teachers, roshi. Kishizawa-roshi would come to my temple and sometimes he would sit for a while without telling me and I didn't know he was there. There were many famous teachers. That is (cough) why I couldn't take over my (cough) master's seat (cough). Actually I didn't want to, to be the head of Rinso-in while I was so young. I didn't say so, but in my heart I felt so. My boy is in the same position so I'm very sympathetic with him. So I rather wanted him to come to America. Maybe that was too much after I'd left my temple. If my boy had left my temple they would be very furious.

--

#### TROUBLE AT RINSO-IN

Before I took over my master's temple, I didn't cause any trouble. I was just trying to study, but after I took over my master's temple I caused various problems for myself and for others - there was some confusion in my life. There was a lot of confusion. I knew that if I didn't take over his temple, Rinso-in, I would have to remain at Zoun-in. That would be more calm, and I would be able to study more, but because I felt some resistance from the priests near Rinso-in, I determined to take it over.

And there were two years of confusion and fighting.

The priests near Rinso-in had someone in their mind to be the head priest of Rinso-in, and that man would have been acting under their name, which would not have been so good for the danka or for the Soto school. There was too much greed for fame - they were divided in many ways (cliques), and each one of them had his own ambition, but if they did not get Rinso-in they would keep acting in the same way until they got it. But after they got Rinso-in, things would get confused. I knew that pretty well. So I determined to stop them. [Rinso-in had been turned over to Gyokujun Soon to get into shape physically and harmonically because the prior priest had fudged it up so they removed him and put Soon in and so Shunryu felt some responsibility to continue the job that had been given to Soon.]

I had a very difficult time for two years. Extraordinary things happened. Eighty of my Rinso-in members left from Rinso-in and went to another temple. That was alright with me, but others accused me of being responsible and said, "If Rinso-in is such a poor example of a temple, how will we be able to restore harmony? It is your responsibility to do so. Why did you let them to go to some other temple? If you say, 'I am sorry,' or if you ask for help we will get it, but if you don't say 'I am sorry' or ask for help, how can we help you."

Once a month we had a meeting and every time they said I had abdicated my responsibility. But I said, "just wait for two [3?] years. In two years if the eighty members who left don't come back, I will resign from Rinso-in. So let's just wait - without criticizing me for two years. Give me two years and let's see what happens. So they agreed to do that. And in two years almost all of the danka who had left came back.

The priest who was trying to take Rinso-in got his own temple, so he lost his ambition for Rinso-in. And actually, he himself did not want to be a head priest of Rinso-in so much. It was more the ambitious people around him, mostly priests and some influential lay people.

--

#### DHARMA HEIRS

"After I moved to Rinso-in, my older dharma brother helped me at Zoun-in and lived there. He succeeded me in the chief priest position there. His name was Okamoto. His boy is my son, my disciple, because he studied with me. My first dharma heir in Japan is my own son, Hoitsu, and Shoko, Okamoto Kendo's son, is the 2nd."

--

#### FIRST MARRIAGE [actually, the second]



"I wasn't married when I entered Rinso-in. And there was much discussion by members about whether I should get married or not. I was listening to them and they went to some extremes. Like if I married, some people wouldn't want family life at my temple so my wife could stay at their home and I could go visit whenever I want. That was too extreme. For awhile, not for a long time, my master's wife lived at Rinso-in. [name?] When he was quite old she stayed there. We established some custom. My master started something like that. But some opposed it, especially because I was so young, some people were critical of me wishing to have a wife in the temple. Someone said, if I get married, my wife could stay at 'my home' - if the people don't like temple life at my temple 'she can stay my home.' That was what someone said. At last they decided to allow my wife to enter my temple. We were married two years after Soon died, when I was 33 or 34, no, 31 or 32." It was in 1936. It was about six months after he became the abbot of Rinso-in. [Her name was Chie Muramatsu]

Peter: It says here, you said that a friend of your master picked your first wife. What does that mean? Did you have some choice?

Suzuki-roshi: No. I had no one in my mind and I wasn't so sure about my married side, my ability to handle both priest's side and a family side. It is very complicated, you know. I know that pretty well. So I was not firm, but I was reluctant to take a wife. I had no one in my mind to be a wife, but my master's friend thought it necessary for me to get one.

Peter: So you said yes?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Before I saw her, I said yes. At that time he had somebody in mind.

Peter: Does that usually work out pretty well, Roshi, when you don't see the woman before you marry?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, pretty well. It's amazing maybe for you. Although we do or don't like her, they are, I think, pretty superficial feelings, not so different, and they change a lot.

I had a family with her for more than 15 [16?] years. She died in 1951 (actually, 1952). My master's friend chose my wife.

--

## LAY ORDINATION 1

In March of 1938 there was a lay ordination ceremony for young female Buddhists of Higashi-eki (Mashi or Masu?) ten-mura, Shita-gun, Shizuoka-ken.

--

## WHEN ZEN MASTER 5

Peter: When did you become a Zen master?

Suzuki-roshi: I became - after I took my master's position. Often I had to conduct some big ceremony and whenever we had shuso ceremonies or training periods in branch temples, I had to join them, taking over my master's position. While I was doing this kind of thing they officially acknowledged me as a Zen master. I received a special robe.

Peter: How old were you then?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe I was 40, 45 or so. - [1944 to 1949]

--

## BRANCH TEMPLES

Zoun-in is not a branch temple of Rinso-in. "In Shizuoka prefecture there is a big temple which has 3000 branch temples. And Zoun-in is a grandson of this temple. The big temple is Daito-in and under it there is Shoshinji and Zoun-in is a branch temple of Shoshinji. And Rinso-in and Takawazon are branch temples of Seikun-in. And both Seikun-in and Soshinji are branch temples of Daito-in.

(In margin: Sekiun-in. Bill says is funding temple)

--

Peter: I see. Okay. Now From 1936 until 1942 you just were at Rinso-in then.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Peter: This says from 1942 to 1947 you're the official teacher of the number 10th monastery of the Soto sect.

--

## SHIKE

At the age of thirty-eight, from March 1, 1942 to March 31, 1947, Shunryu was Zen Teacher, shike (Official Director) (Daho) of Tokei-in which he or Kobun called "the 10th Monastery of the Soto sect - high." In answer to Peter's question he said that he formally became roshi but "only for ceremonies." Apparently it also had some connection to BanshoZenrin. He finally resigned because he was too busy - maybe at BanshoZenrin. Toke-in was a newly established temple at that time near

Shizuoka.

--

WHEN ZEN MASTER 6

Suzuki-roshi: Because I was at that time already a master, a Roshi.

Peter: You were a roshi in 1942, then?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, already a roshi. Oh yeah. Because I finished building my temple completely and I attended, I acted as roshi so many times before that headquarters acknowledged me, gave me a title.

Peter: I see. In 1942?

Suzuki-roshi: On that occasion they -

Peter: - appointed you shike?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. At Tokei-in.

Suzuki-roshi: Joshike you know, it is not assistance, you know. It's a master, but not completely. What do you call? Not vice or assistant.

--

WAR YEARS

"I had young students in the thirties and forties who had the same feelings that I had. Like they did not participate in some mistaken thinking. But my youngest students, who were mostly in high school, were very kind, helped a lot, encouraged me a lot, and they, many of them, came to me because I had these feelings. Most of them were not priests but students. At that time Japan was involved in some kind of wrong idea about strength and power, some strange form, some strange pride or confidence, confidence in power, some strange idea of nationalism.

"What they said was very strange, you know. On television, in lectures, in various ways they tried to lead people in strange directions. And they didn't understand - they didn't try to understand the actual realistic situation or power of Japan. Although I didn't know anything about America or other countries, I thought I didn't know how powerful they are or how weak they all are, but I had some confidence in human nature and that human nature is the same wherever we go.

"So they called American people things like beasts or devils. I always said beasts or devils are not only American people. We have some need for these big beasts or demons and those who have that kind of idea

about some other people may be our enemy or demon or devil. I always said that to them.

"And during the war they were afraid very much of American people who may land sooner or later in the Japan islands. But I was not so afraid of them. They are also human beings. Nothing will happen if we surrender. Those who don't want to surrender may die, and if they survive nothing will happen to them. But they burned their personal record or various records in city hall. They started to burn it down and they started to destroy the memorial tower, memorial tombstone of the unknown soldiers. But why do you do that? It is quite natural to have a memorial stone for the people who sacrificed their lives for their own country. There was nothing wrong with it. If we explain in that way why we have those tombstones, they may understand what our point of view is.

People were worried that if we have records in City Hall the Americans would search for each person to kill them or something - a very curious idea.

Peter: Were you ever criticized, Roshi, for your sort of pacifistic views?

Suzuki-roshi: I - Yeah, I was, but I didn't act officially. At my temple, in my lectures or when students came, I talked about this kind of thing always, and even when the war was almost finished. There still was some power or some courage to sacrifice their life for Japan. But I thought, that sacrifice is not for Japan, but for some wrong idea from someone in leadership who has a big misunderstanding.

And people were so afraid of what they had been doing, afraid to be responsible for it. They thought that if we still have still the tombstone for the unknown soldiers, showing them respect, then those who have been doing so will be punished or something. So no one wanted to take responsibility for that and they thought that if they destroyed it, that the American people would be pleased. So when they decided to destroy the big memorial stone for the unknown soldiers, I told them to carry it to my temple. I said to them I will protect it as long as I'm alive, and I will take all the responsibility for any American people who do any damage to this memorial stone.

--

"There were many farmers who went to Manchuria to start some farming village or something like that. And the world situation was very bad. When I left Japan it was just three months before the war ended. So no one accepted our headquarters plan or my appointment. So I thought I'll go anyway [maybe I may go] and I left Japan on May 14 for Manchuria. It took a pretty long time because our ship couldn't leave Hakata port because of danger from B-29 bombers. I stayed there one week waiting for the ship. There was always bombing going on. But

anyway I got to Korea and through Korea went to Manchuria where I visited Japanese farmers in various places. I was not a chaplain in the Service. I just went as a priest.

[trying to get out - the Russians are coming] And when I reached to, in Japanese we say Harbin, the big city, capital city in Manchuria, they announced there were no ships bound for Japan - they had stopped - and I could hardly get back to Japan, but I thought there must be some transportation or some way to get back. Someone must be going to Japan, I thought, and if I wait at Pusan (a large Port in South Korea) I was quite sure I would have a chance to go back to Japan. So I took a steamboat from Manchuria to Korea but when I got there they also said there were no ships to Japan. They wouldn't even sell me a ticket to Japan, but I said I will pay for the ticket anyway. Whether it is available or not doesn't matter, so give me a ticket. And in the train we arrived at a small station in Korea, and the conductor announced that anyone going to Japan from Sanroshin [is this Pusan?] should get off. So I got off at that station. Sanroshin is a pretty big port created by the Chinese military, it's famous [to whom] as the port the Chinese launched from to attack Japan [when?]. As soon as I arrived at that port, a ship came, guarded by two cruisers. So I went back by a navy ship, not a battleship. They were collecting wounded soldiers and without making any zigzags we went straight back to Kyushu Island and arrived at an unknown small port near Hakata. I took the express train back to Yaizu. We were attacked several times from the air. It was July 15 and by August 15 everything was over.

--

## ATOMIC BOMB

"I had no idea about the existence of the atomic bomb and how powerful it was. And when I heard of it I couldn't believe it, that it was so powerful, and that that kind of thing could happen. Most Japanese people, including me had no idea that it would happen. But most Japanese people had too much fear for their life when we lost the war. So in comparison to that atomic bomb their fears were not based on any reasonable cause. I think most of them must have thought we won't live so long, so maybe the atomic bomb is a good way to finish our life. They have no idea of righteousness, or humanity, or those problems are not their main concern. I thought - it may be very foolish for us not to surrender right now. If we surrender they will stop doing such things. So the best way may be to surrender. If they don't then it's all over, everything.

--

Peter: What happened when the Yaizu fishermen were killed by the atomic fallout?

Suzuki-roshi: Most of them, I think, accused the American people you know because of the viewpoint of righteousness, but that righteousness is very superficial righteousness. I think this kind of feeling is the feeling we have about the Okinawa problem. They talk about Okinawa in various way, but have no actual feeling in it. It is just a political game.

--

PEACE MARCH

Peter: Someone once said that you marched in a protest against something.

Suzuki-roshi: Um-hum.

Peter: What was that, Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: (long sigh)

Peter: When was that or what was that all about?

Suzuki-roshi: It was the time when Peace Corps - uh not Peace Corps -

Peter: Atomic submarine?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Peter: No, that's not it either probably. What was it Roshi? I don't want to force you.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Peter: Was it that? An atomic submarine or what?

Suzuki-roshi: Atomic submarine. At that time peace work, you know, and when the atomic submarine wanted to come to San Francisco and they had a big demonstration to express their strong desire against war. That is why I joined.

Peter: Someone mentioned that you once marched in a demonstration in Japan. Is that true?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I did.

Peter: What was that for?

Suzuki-roshi: That was after the war finished you know. Before the war I had strong feelings against war. Before the government started some organization to organize civilians against America I organized young men in my area to have the right understanding of the situation of

Japan at that time. We invited good people who actually participated in important activity in various areas of government and we would ask questions until we understood them. So later the government organized people to fight completely with America, but my purpose was to prevent - not war, but to counter people who may have a one-sided view of the situation of Japan, or in their understanding of ourselves and human nature. I didn't have any big purpose for my group, I just didn't want my friends to be involved in that kind of nationalism which I thought may destroy our Japan completely - it's more dangerous than war. We lost completely because of lack of understanding.

Peter: And wasn't this considered a very unique thing to do?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. At that time.

Peter: Did you get in trouble? Did you get in trouble for it?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I got into various troubles.

Peter: What happened?

Suzuki-roshi: What happened? At length it helped, you know, but at first I was very much criticized. But what I was saying was right and enough people agreed with me so they decided to utilize me to help their you know - to help their idea of leading people. And they appointed me to be a head of a new organization, which was started by the government, but I resigned. I accepted once, you know, and next day I resigned from it.

This was before the war, before the militarists took over. When the army took over my voice was not loud enough.

Peter: But the army didn't come after your voice?

Suzuki-roshi: No. It was not so bad. But that was why I think I didn't get drafted. They marked me - on my name maybe there was some special mark. He's dangerous, but no reason to kill him. I was not such a big deal. But if they may have been concerned that if I were in the army that what I might say will affect morale.

Peter: Were there many priests like you who were pacifists?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Peter: Were there many priests like you who were pacifists?

Suzuki-roshi: They didn't take any stand till after the Second World War was over.

Peter: You know something Roshi, your experiences like this would be very interesting to the students.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Peter: Don't you think so?

Suzuki-roshi: I think so.

Peter: Maybe you could lecture on this tonight.

Suzuki-roshi: [giggle] Oh, I think -

Peter: I think it's good if Zen is not for war in America -

Suzuki-roshi: Umhm, umhm.

Peter: And you never speak about it. Maybe you have a reason for that.

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Peter: But if you don't have a strong reason, I think it's moral, it's ethically proper to speak against war.

Suzuki-roshi: Umhm.

Peter: And (laugh) I shouldn't do this - but anyway you know the students would like to know your feelings about it.

Suzuki-roshi: I care more about the way of thinking. the fundamental way of thinking which will cause big war. That is why I didn't like nationalists in Japan. Their view was very one-sided and very unrealistic. And they accused others of faults without knowing what they were doing. They actually created problems.

Peter: Maybe this is why the government did not persecute you, because you were approaching the problem from a religious point of view.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Peter: Not political.

Suzuki-roshi: No. And after the world war I was not purged. I had no record of fighting with the military war. I had many printed matters expressing my feelings, many things about what should be the policy, what kind of danger we had then in the nation, things like that. But most of it may be difficult to understand for people. I didn't say anything about war or anything like that. I said that if we neglected to understand the situation of Japan more clearly and if we understood things just by what is printed, then we will lose the real picture of Japan. So what I put the emphasis on is to study more about what



everyone was doing in his country, in the army, or in the political world. I was very much interested in that kind of thing when I was young, before the war. And because of this kind of anti-war activity, I was not purged.

Peter: Were most priests purged?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Most priests who joined the army.

Peter: Lost their temples or were put in jail?

Suzuki-roshi: No. They couldn't join some educational programs or some official things, on education or city hall. But I wasn't purged. They tried to purge me, but I showed them the printed materials I had.

Peter: Who was they, the American soldiers in Yaizu?

Suzuki-roshi: No, the government, the new government. So they had no reason to purge me.

Peter: Did Rinso-in lose any land? Most temples lost land.

Suzuki-roshi: Most of it except the mountain. We had to sell the paddy fields or land that could be cultivated to the government.

Peter: Did you think that was a good idea?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe. I thought, to force that kind of thing on the temples is not a good idea, but the people should have land for farming.

Peter: I had heard, Roshi, I don't know where, that before the war many of the Zen temples were very rich and some of the priests were very corrupt and many priests kept concubines. Is that true? Particularly Rinzai temples.

Suzuki-roshi: Concubines, no. Not so many temples were so rich, you know, even before the war. Most of the temples were very poor. But after the war (small laugh) they lost everything and the priests started to work in city hall, as teachers, and in various ways and they became more and more rich - like the Japanese people. I'm afraid that Japanese people may have gotten too arrogant again - without knowing why they have become so rich.

Peter: This is like second Meiji Period.

Suzuki-roshi: Second Meiji, yeah.

Peter: How many people were there, about 200 people in your group? But the Japanese did nothing violent in that sort of thing. That's very calm and quiet hum?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, calm and quiet.

Peter: Like discussion group, philosophical discussion group rather than revolutionaries.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Very calm and quiet.

Peter: It seems, Roshi, that the state of Japan in the thirties and forties limited you.

--

DOJO

From Jun 3, 1947 until he left in 1959, Shunryu was the teacher of the Zen dojo (practice place) for both monks and laymen) at Rinso-in. Here Shunryu says Takakusa (the name of his mountain) and not Yaizu. Here he established a dojo.

--

Peter: It says here that in June 1947 you became this teacher of Zen practice. That's not the title for Roshi huh? [dojo]

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Peter: Why did you wait until 1947? Why didn't you begin in 1936?

Suzuki-roshi: At that time they had no set rules for lay practice. This [1947] is more for laymen, Zen practice. And headquarters provided some rules for them to establish some Zen practice. There was Zen practice for laymen even before we have this kind of practice - before Zen Center.

Peter: Right. Okay, so this was a new idea [47] or something?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. New idea at that time, and it still continues.

--

Peter: Were you a Zen master here? [47]

Suzuki-roshi: Title of Zen master isn't necessary here or here. [1942 and 1947]

Peter: Here it is? [52]

Suzuki-roshi: Here. [1952]

--

## DOKAN

From Jun 30, 1952 until he left in 1959, Shunryu was Chief Director - Dokan = Takao-gansemmonsodo at Takazoan, the Docho. (The notes mention Zenrin again and Takashina-roshi) This sodo was only for monks. This is the date that marks the end of Shunryu's study with Kishizawa-roshi. Through this period he filled out that his teacher was Ian Kishizawa Roshi, his dharma master Soon-roshi.

--

## LEAVING BANSHOZENRIN

My friend [Niwa?] was at BanshoZenrin. At first Takashina-roshi was head of this temple and then he became the Kancho of the Soto-shu, the head of the Soto sect. And my friend took over his place and later Takashina-roshi wanted to come back to this monastery again. So his assistant, assistant of Kancho-roshi, put some pressure on my friend. And my friend left BanshoZenrin so I was rather angry with Takashina-roshi too. [not Takashina, right?]

Peter: So you left also?

Suzuki-roshi: I left also, but even though I left, Takashina-roshi was not so busy. Nevertheless, once in a while I had to help him. Officially though, I had already left there.

--

Peter: In 1952 then you became the Kancho of this place? What's that, Takazoan?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Semmonsodo.

Peter: Were you Kancho there?

Suzuki-roshi: No. I was Docho. We only have one Kancho - the head of the whole Soto sect.

Peter: I see. So it wasn't until they made you Docho-roshi that you became Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

--

Peter: I see. So that means that you were then 48.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. At that time[52] I was Dokan at one more monastery [Takazoan]. At that time I became

Executive Roshi or something like that.

Peter: I see. Here. In 1952.

Suzuki-roshi: Because I have to establish this one [Takazoan?] and they need me to be here. [Takazoan?]

Peter: Why did they need you?

Suzuki-roshi: Why? I don't know exactly.

Peter: They said they need you anyway. So what jobs were these? You were assigned to this monastery which was at BanshoZenrin. In 1947 they assigned you to Takakusa? Huh? [he doesn't realize that's Rinso-in - Takakusa]

Suzuki-roshi: Umhum. (not paying attention)

Peter: Teacher of Zen practice. This is bigger job than -

Suzuki-roshi: This is bigger job [Takazoan] - and this is some job just belonging to my only temple [1947 at Rinso-in].

Peter: I see. But this five year (42) - this job ends in 1947 at BanshoZenrin[42 to 47] and the job at Takakusa [begins 47], and the job here begins in 1952 [Takazoan].

Suzuki-roshi: Umhum.

Peter: What happened between 1947 and 1952? What happened between this job and this job?

Suzuki-roshi: ?

Peter: I'm not certain. Is that 60 or 40?

Suzuki-roshi: 1947 when this started.

Peter: In 1952.

Suzuki-roshi: In 1952. This is BanshoZenrin.

--

NIWA - MISSING TEMPLE (WHEN ZEN MASTER 10)

Suzuki-roshi: One is missing here. It was when Niwa-roshi established a

temple, I don't know when, actually. If those are all the records Chino Sensei has, then one is missing.

Peter: When is that? 1947 or when? About when? After the war?

Suzuki-roshi: Before the war. Before this one too [47] of course. Peter: Before the war?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe here. [42?]

Peter: Well the war begins in -

Suzuki-roshi: 1942 [oops - shows how accurate his numbers are]. So, before this.

(they talk off tape here)

Peter: I'm still a little confused, but apparently some time in the early forties, before the war, you officially became the Roshi.

Suzuki-roshi: Officially yeah.

Peter: Became the roshi of what master's temple? What was the master's name? The other one?

Suzuki-roshi: Niwa-roshi.

Peter: Niwa-roshi. Who wanted to have a monastery at his temple. And his disciple actually acted as roshi, as docho.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Peter: But you were docho by name.

Suzuki-roshi: By name. Once in a while when they had big ceremony I went there.

Peter: Why couldn't Niwa-roshi be the docho?

Suzuki-roshi: At that time? There was not much relationship between Niwa-roshi and myself. Niwa-roshi himself was the owner of the temple, we call him the jushoku. He's the head of the whole temple.

--

## LAY ORDINATION 2

In March of 1947 there was a big ordination ceremony for lay members at Rinso-in conducted by Ian Kishizawa Roshi.

--

## NURSERY SCHOOLS-YOCHIEN

On May 5, 1948, the Tokiwa Nursery School at Shin-ya (or Nii-ya)(Nie-ya?), Yaizu-shi was opened. This happened as a direct result of Shunryu's efforts though he didn't call himself the founder. He has no official title but says he was responsible for religious education there.

On April, 1954, a branch of Tokiwa Nursery School at Nishimachi, Yaizu-shi, opened.

--

## ON BUILDINGS AND THEIR REPAIRING

In March of 1932. the construction of two new buildings (or wings) was completed at Zoun-in under the guidance of Shunryu - Kannon-do, where Avalokiteshvara is enshrined, and Seppin (Kuri). Neither of these were the main building, but they were important buildings for guests & practitioners in the temple. Also at Zoun-in, in April of 1944 he completed the new Kaisando (Founder's Memorial Hall) and Ihaido (Priests' and Laymen's Memorial Hall).

On March 1, 1958, Shunryu completed his work on the main structure of Rinso-in. [I think what he did was to finish putting on the new tile roof, but the notes on the CV read: "Rebuilt the main structure of Rinso-in (rebuilt = tore down old building and made new one." It was not torn down I don't think - Hoitsu said it has original beams.] Shunryu continued work repairing the Kaisando, Ihaido, Bell Tower, and Sutra Store Hall (library - kyozō) until May of 1958.

"To me it was very important to repair Rinso-in because the buildings are very old, the oldest part is maybe 300 years old. Unless the priest has a good understanding of architecture, he may make a mistake. So to me it was pretty important. I repaired many buildings as they were in ancient times. That was the difficult part. It cost more money and it doesn't look so good," he said laughing, "So no one agreed with me, with my idea. It seemed crazy. But I felt I had to do it. It took many years to rebuild Rinso-in. I worked on it the whole time I was there, constantly studying the architecture at that time, at the time when Rinso-in was built, and making an effort to get it all done."

--

## DECISION TO GO TO AMERICA

The way I came to America was that Bishop Tobase asked headquarters to send someone to help him and they couldn't find anyone because maybe the position they would have here in America was not so solvent.

(as to whether he was resident, priest, assistant, or volunteer) But I didn't mind that kind of situation. My idea of coming was to turn a new leaf for myself and for the Soto way of propagating religion in America. That was rather ambitious.

In Japan I was resident priest of Rinso-in temple, of one monastery in Shizuoka-ken in Japan. I was teacher at the monastery. There were nine teachers. They didn't appoint any head teacher. Yeah, I was head teacher. Maybe 30 students. Niwa] Roshi was the founder. He was maybe 65 or 66. Soon after he died there was a celebration for his 61 birthday.

So at that time actually this temple was in confusion and the resident priest was Tobase. He was Bishop of America and no one knew what to do, it seemed. So it seemed like a good idea to send someone who could be a Bishop. Anyway, they wanted to send someone. Not many people wanted to come, or maybe people wanted to come but headquarters didn't accept them. Headquarters appointed several people but they didn't accept the position. My friend, [Yamada] who was director, didn't know what to do, and he said jokingly, "Why don't you go?" I didn't have any responsibility for the confusion. I did not cause the problems and I shall be free from it. People will understand if I cannot help, so maybe I should come and see what happens.

Anyway, Sokoji was in confusion. I was sure at that time Sokoji would give me more freedom. And in one month my friend came again I said to him I will go. When I said I'd go, he was amazed. He wasn't seriously thinking I would go. He didn't even want me to go so much because he felt some responsibility for Rinso-in which is quite near his temple and we work with the same priests. He is Bishop now. Dick met him. He speaks no English.

--

I didn't want to articulate just why I came to America because I was actually invited by the Japanese congregation of Sokoji. When I said "yes" our headquarters did not at first appoint me to be the head of this temple but as an assistant resident priest. That meant that I was not responsible for Sokoji. My duty was just to help out. But as soon as I came here headquarters wanted me to take over Tobase's position. So I had to be faithful to the Japanese members. So I didn't want to make the point too clearly that I came to America to bring Buddhism to Westerners. I never expressed my real reason for coming to America, but actually I thought if I could go to San Francisco I could do something which I really want to do - not for Japan but for the American people.

I learned most of my English at college, Komazawa. When I was young I already wanted to go abroad, but my master wouldn't allow it. I guess he wanted me to take care of his temple. I had no preference of where

to go. Maybe America. Back then, there wasn't much chance for us to go to another country. At least I wanted to go to Hokkaido. It was difficult to change. And it would have been very bad if I had come to San Francisco and moved again somewhere else without having done much. If I accomplish something here, then it would be okay to move somewhere, but to move without accomplishing anything, it would not be so good. So we must stay at our temples. [implies had to do something in Japan first?]

I had no idea how long I'd stay in America when I first came. I said to the members of my temple that I'll come back in three years, but actually I had in mind to stay pretty long. You see, I had no stable position when I accepted, so it meant that for one or two years I would be a voluntary priest until I meet someone to help me.

--

#### STUDENTS IN JAPAN

P: Do so many students come and go in Japan also?

S: My students stayed pretty well in Japan. They are not forming any one group, but whenever I go to Japan immediately they come and they always keep in contact with each other. Even so, not all of them stay -- maybe 70. Two or three out of ten. Of course they have some reason. It is quite difficult to be always in one group. They are doing pretty well. In my temple the group I started is still practicing under my friend's instruction.

P: How much do they practice? Do they sit every day?

S: No. They come to the temple twice a month and usually they sit at home. When I was there they had more chance to come to my temple, but now of course they have new members -- there may be thirty of them or more. The other people who are helping work with my boy.

I have more than ten disciples in Japan, but they are not dharma disciples.

--

#### SECOND MARRIAGE

I didn't have a wife for seven or eight years before I came to America. One of the conditions to go to America, you know, to be invited by the Japanese members of Sokoji, was someone who has a wife. And she was head of the kindergarten and, at my mother-in-law's suggestion, I decided to get married with her and came to America almost at the same time.



Peter: What did she think of that? Isn't that a strange way to get married roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Strange, yes. For usual person it is very strange, but for a priest, marriage is very strange sometimes, which I don't like so much.

Peter: How do you mean that?

Suzuki-roshi: I want to do exactly what I want to do. (laughing)

Peter: Before you asked Okusan, this Okusan, did you tell her that you had to have a wife in America?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Peter: And would she like to marry you for that reason?

Suzuki-roshi: No, not that reason - you know. After my wife died, I thought I may be married with that girl, but I didn't determine to do that. But soon after my wife died - in 52 or 53, when she ran the kindergarten - there was some rumor - he will get married with her, and he likes her so much. So I thought, that is true, so I decided to get married with her.

But even though I decided so, I was too busy and she was too busy to think about it, you know. She was rather stubborn and I thought, that is alright, maybe I should wait. While I was waiting I decided to go to America and one of the conditions was that I should be a married priest. So I decided to marry her.

Peter: And Okusan's husband had died in the Second World War?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, yes.

--

U. S. Curriculum Vitae Info:

On May 22, 1959, Shunryu was appointed head priest of Soto Zen Temple Sokoji, 1881 Bush Street, San Francisco, California, U.S.

In 1967 Shunryu founded Zen Mountain Center, Zenshinji, at Tassajara Springs.

On October 1, 1969 Shunryu was appointed to the position of Gondai-kyoshi by the Shumucho. There are ten daikyoshi and the rest are gon-daikyoshi.

--

## BIOGRAPHY-STRUGGLES

Peter: Do you think it would be interesting Roshi for the students to know all this, or is it best to keep your biography very simple?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so.

Peter: Just facts? It doesn't make much sense.

Suzuki-roshi: It doesn't make much sense, I'm afraid if they don't understand what kind of things were going on [the background] (phone call - horrible background noise starts) - I don't know what to do with some things.

Peter: Yeah I'm trying to think what I do with it. How much I should put into the history. It's interesting to your students, but maybe -

Suzuki-roshi: No! Maybe for someone who is not a student! Because of these kind of experiences I decided to come to America. There's nothing interesting in it. I'm just talking to you. I'm not really interested in this kind of thing. I'm just talking to you. This is just a record, just confusion. My history, my life in Japan was spent fighting, in struggle.

Peter: Did you always win the struggles?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. But it is not the best way. It is better to surrender. If I had known the truth about American life earlier, it would have been sayonara a long time ago. Like this, you know. (waving or bowing goodbye).

Peter: It seems that many priests who came here were exiled to America, were being punished by being sent to America. They could have punished you a long time ago.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Fortunately I knew how to handle them most times. But it just made for more difficulties - things go in circles.

Peter: Too smart again.

Suzuki-roshi: I always won.

Peter: Did you ever feel vain about it?

Suzuki-roshi: No, no. I don't feel vain-it's just like, because of I was very impatient and angry I became very patient in order to win fights and so on. Hence I always started to fight because of my impatience. And once I started to fight I had to become very patient or else I'd lose that fight and it would be endless.

Peter: In Western astrology your birth sign, Taurus, suggests

stubbornness. And when you talk about yourself you say how stubborn you have been, but you don't seem stubborn to your students.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. I have been very impatient, that is true.

Peter: But Americans are so much more impatient than you. You seem very patient. Your students are so... Japanese couldn't live with them.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. I may have been patient with American people even earlier, long before I came to America. Recently I feel in that way very much. It may have something to do with past lives.

Peter: Some of your students think that in their past lives they were Japanese. Chinese or Japanese.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. I don't know. This is a big job and I'm not interested in this kind of thing. I have no accurate record of my life and I don't want any.

Peter: Is there any meaning at all in having something about you in the Wind Bell?

Suzuki-roshi: This sort of thing?

Peter: Some sort of history, some sort of biography, not too elaborate, but some sort. Not a book though. Maybe about four or five pages? Is that a mistake?

Suzuki-roshi: Four or five!

Peter: How much do you think? One? Half a page? A paragraph? One sentence? Suzuki-roshi biography: "I do not think much of this sort of thing and have not kept any records." End biography. You have the right to decide. This is your direct concern. How do you feel about this?

Suzuki-roshi: I didn't get an answer to these kind of questions from my teacher. I don't have much interest in it.

Peter: Neither do I.

Suzuki-roshi: If my life is seen in this way, everything will be lost.

## **2 - Summer Sesshin: First Night Lecture**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Summer Sesshin: First Night Lecture  
"I Don't Know Zazen"

Tassajara

In our practice, the most important thing [is] to-to know-to know. "To know" is that we have buddha-nature. Our practice-real practice happens when realization of buddha-nature take place. Intellectually we know that we have buddha-nature, and that is what was taught by Buddha.

But to know buddha-nature-when you know that we have buddha-nature, at the same time you will know that even though we have buddha-nature, you know, it is rather difficult to accept it. At the same time, we have various evil nature. And buddha-nature is something beyond good and bad, but our everyday life is going [on] in realm of good and bad. So there is-there is two-twofold of duality. One is duality of good and bad, and the other is duality of good and bad-realm of good and bad, and realm of the world where there is no good and no bad.

And our everyday life is going [on] in realm of good and bad-the realm of duality. And buddha-nature or our absolute nature is found in the realm of absolute where there is no good and bad. Our practice is to go beyond the realm of good and bad and to realize the one absolute world-to enter the one absolute world is our practice. If I say in this way it is rather-it may rather difficult to understand.

Hashimoto-roshi,[1] the famous Zen master who passed away last year or 1967, I think, explained this point. "It is"-I think I told you once-"It is like a-to-to prepare a food," you know. We prepare food-various food-you separate: rice is here, and pickles are here, and soup is in middle bowl. We don't cook like a gruel all the time [laughs]-soup and rice and everything in one bowl. Even though, you know, to cook-to prepare food separately, you know, in each bowl is the-our usual world-world of seeming. And-but when you eat it, you know, in your tummy, you know, soup and rice and pickles and everything-goma-shio[2]-and everything [gets all] [laughs] mixed up and you don't know what is-which is goma-shio or rice. That is the world of absolute [laughter]. As long as goma-shio is goma-shio,and separately prepared on the plate, it doesn't work-like your intellectual understanding of Buddhism. It doesn't work. [Laughs, laughter.] That is book knowledge.

But, you know-so zazen practice is, you know, to mix various understanding in our practice and let it work. How to let it work is our practice. The other day, by some chance, I talked about kerosene lamp. You know, when it-when kerosene lamp is just oil, you know, kerosene oil-it doesn't work. Kerosene lamp will work when it become-when it is in a state of combustion by aid of air. And even though you have kerosene lamp and air, it doesn't work. When you using it-use matches, you know, it will work-it will start to work. And this flame of matches is our practice which is transmitted from Buddha to us. By aid of matches, and by aid of air, kerosene will start to work. This is actually our zazen practice.

You may think, you know, "You are just kerosene oil," you know

[laughs]. It doesn't work. Even though you have-you say, "I have buddha-nature," you know, it doesn't work. If you have no buddha, it-it doesn't work. If you have no friend, no sangha, it doesn't work. When we practice zazen in this way, by the aid of sangha, helped by Buddha, we can practice our zazen in its true sense, and we will have bright light here in Tassajara zendo.

We will have question/answer the last day of the sesshin-last day of sesshin. Question and answer will be going this kind of question and this kind of answer. Back and forth we should discuss this point. We should know clearly what is our practice and what is our everyday life, and how to apply zazen p- [partial word]-how to extend our zazen practice in everyday life. When you are practicing zazen in this way, actually you have true practice in its true sense. But why it is difficult for you to extend our practice in city life is because of lack of precise understanding of our Zen teaching.

If you-when you know-when you know why you practice zazen and what is the most important point in our practice, you can practice our way even though your practice is not perfect. You have direction. And you know how to do it. So you will not-you will not be mixed up.

Our life, in short, should be always in complete combustion, you know. We must-we should aim at complete combustion in our life. If the flame become little bit smoky, you know, you should know how to adjust the flame, you know. If it is too long, you should make it shorter. You know, if it's too small, you should make it brighter. Actually, you know, in your practice, I think you know your practice is-what kind of practice you have-whether your practice is good or bad. You yourself know. But instead of being discouraged by it, you should know how to adjust the flame [laughs].

Before you ask questions, you know, you should know how to adjust the flame. To have a so-called-it enlightenment experience is of course important. But more important thing is to know how to adjust the flame-flame of life in zazen and in our everyday life. When the flame is in complete combustion, you know, you don't smell the oil [laughs]. When, you know, it is smoky, you will have a kind of smell. You know the, you know-you may realize there is kerosene lamp [laughs]. When, you know, your life is in complete combustion, you have no complaint. And there is no need to be aware of your practice. But, you know, we should know that if we talk about too much-like me-about zazen, it is already smoky kerosene lamp [laughs].

If I-if you see me, you may ask, "Is there lecture tonight?" Maybe I'm very smoky kerosene lamp [laughs]. I don't want, you know, to give lecture. I-I-what I want is to-just to live with you, moving stones, having nice hot-spring bath [laughs], and eat something good [laughs, laughter].

Zen is there, you know. When I start to talk about something, it is also smoky-it is already smoky kerosene lamp. As long as I [must] give lecture, I have to explain it in term of right or wrong: "This is right practice. This is wrong. How to practice zazen." It is like to-to give you recipe [laughs]. Recipe doesn't work. You cannot eat recipe [laughter]. Maybe after having a long, long practice in hot summer weather, it may be good to enjoy to say something [laughs] and to listen to something. This is, you know, our [a?] purpose of practice.

I said just now [that] to know how to adjust the flame is important. This is actually what Dogen-zenji worked so hard for-for us descendants. Not just-not-usually Zen master-a Zen master will give you: "Practice zazen! Then you will attain enlightenment. If you attain enlightenment, you will be detached from everything and you will see things as it is. So if you want to see things as it is, you have-you must practice zazen hard and attain enlightenment." That is usually [what] a Zen master will say.

But our way is "not always so." That is, of course true, but we, you know-Dogen-zenji told us how to adjust back flame-back and forth, he told us in his Shobogenzo-this point. This is one of the characteristic of Soto Zen.

In-in Soto, people say in Soto-Soto priest doesn't-Soto school doesn't use koan, and they have no koan practice. But Dogen-zenji, after studyingkoans, and he simplified all the koan in a-in a quite simple forms, as-like Tozan-zenji[3] in China did. Tozan-zenji used five ranks-five ranks of practice, or five ranks of seeming and reality. But Dogen-zenji did not use five ranks in practice or five ranks in seeming and reality because Dogen-zenji's understanding or teaching of Zen is much simpler than that. Quite simple. The point of Soto Zen-Dogen-zenji's zazen is to live on each moment in complete combustion, like a kerosene lamp or like a candle. So how to live in each moment, and how to become one with everything, and attain oneness of the whole universe, is the point of his teaching and his practice.

I don't think you have not much pain in your legs. Do you have some? It is pretty painful for you to sit now? It doesn't, you know, looks-looks like so. Pretty good, I think. Maybe some pain-some pain.

And Zazen practice is very subtle thing. When you are working, you know, something which you do not realize will mentally and physically will-will be realized if you practice zazen. You know, I have been moving stone pretty [?] [laughs]-for a long time, and I didn't know that I was tired. And I didn't realize my muscles, you know, were tired. But, you know, today, as I, you know, sit in this way calmly, so I realized, "Oh! [Laughs.] My muscles are in pretty bad condition." I felt some pain all over. Here [probably points], and in my arm, not in my back so much, but here [sounds like he is rubbing an area]. I have not much flesh here, so I haven't not much muscles to be painful. But my bone is painful, maybe [laughs, laughter].

You know, if you have no problem, you know, then you may think then you can practice your zazen very well. But actually it is not so. Some problem, you know, is necessary. Not much, but some [laughs, laughter], if possible. Then, as he said-as Dogen-zenji said, by the problem you have-by the difficulty you have, you can practice zazen. This is very, I think-very meaningful point of zazen, especially in our everyday life. He put great emphasis on this point. So he says, you know, "Practice and enlightenment is one."

Practice is something, you know, which you do consciously, which you do with effort. There there is enlightenment. Most Zen masters missed this point. They didn't know how important this point is. They were striving, you know, for-to attain enlightenment-perfect enlightenment. But actually, you know, the most meaningful point of zazen is to have enlightenment in our imperfect zazen

That is, you know, his [Dogen's] teaching, and that is how everything exist in this world actually. Things [that] exist are imperfect. Nothing [is] perfect. Whatever we see, whatever we hear. Things are not perfect. But [in] that imperfect things there is a perfect reality. This is not just, you know-this is true intellectual understanding. Intellectually it is true, but in realm of practice it is also true. It is true on paper, you know [laughs], but it is true also with our body. We can-we can realize how true it is by-through our physical practice and emotional problems.

So according to him [Dogen], you know, our practice should be established in delusion [laughs]. Do you understand? We are all deluded people, and before we attain enlightenment we should establish our true practice in our delusion.

Usually, you know, after you attain enlightenment, you may think you can establish true practice. But it is not so, according to Dogen-zenji. True practice should be established in delusion, in frustration [laughs]. If you make some mistake, you know, you should stand b- [partial word]-you should establish your practice thereby. There is no other place for you to establish your practice.

"Enlightenment," we say, but in its true sense perfect enlightenment is our-is beyond our understanding, beyond our experience. That is true enlightenment. That kind of enlightenment-if so, that kind of enlightenment is in our imperfect practice, actually-or even in our imperfect practice there is enlightenment. But-but the problem is that we don't know [laughs].

And here, again, I want [to] put emphasis on this point. People usually do not trust anything if they do not actually-if they cannot actually experience it, actually think about it.

There are two types of people. Someone-some of them cannot trust

anything until they understand things in term of right or wrong, good or bad. After they analyze reality in various way, they understand things and trust things. But some of them become more uneasy, you know, if someone explain something so well [laughs], you know. If someone talk about something-analyze something eloquently and very precisely, you know, the more he explain about it, [the] more you may doubt it [laughs, laughter]. "Oh! Is that so?" That ...

[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

There are actually two types of people. Like an artist, you know: If people say, "Oh, that's very good [laughs]," some of them will-some of the artist will be very glad if someone says, "That is very good. It may be-it may [be] worth ten thousand [laughs]-hundred thousand [dollars]." But some of them will not, you know, will not be so happy. Some of them will be happy-will be happy even though no one buy it-no one say something-anything about his art. But he can enjoy his art.

There are two kinds of people. And there may be two ways of helping people also, you know: to help people by giving something-by giving some actual help to help others. That is one way. The other way is, you know, without giving anything, without saying anything, without doing anything we can help others too.

The joy of enlightenment experience is actually-because that joy is beyond our comparison to our usual experience, you cannot say that is good experience or bad experience-but something unusual experience, that's all.

It is like a-it is like to push, you know, something-to push round ball on the top of the mountain, you know. It is very difficult, you know. When [laughs] someone who cannot [be] satisfied [with] his work until he push it up to the top of the mountain, you know, he may lose the ball, you know, because it is the top of the mountain. If he push [laughs], you know, too much, it will go [laughing] the other side of the mountain. "Oh!" [Laughter.] That will usually, you know-something what will happen to you. If you, you know, push everything, you know, up to the extreme, you will lose whole thing [laughs]. We are doing same thing over and over again. You may think, "We should not do that again." But, you know, in-within one month you will start same thing again, and you will lose whole thing [laughs].

You practice zazen, or you study Buddhism, and you help people. But if you don't know how to help people in its true sense, you cannot help people. The more you help people, if you help people in usual way, to the extreme, you will lose the friend, that's all. We say-ah-the other day, Daino-Daino Frazer [?] said, "Something too much is worse than too little." "Something too much is worse than too little." Actually what it means is to find the true meaning of practice before we attain enlightenment, not-not to try to, you know, attain enlightenment



completely-not to try to have complete enlightenment. Why that is wrong is when you try to have complete-complete enlightenment, then you started your practice. It means that your practice is not real practice. Your practice is already started-you already started to analyze your practice-complete practice or [?] enlightenment, whether it is complete or not.

So complete enlightenment should be, actually-before you attain enlightenment there is complete enlightenment in its true sense. Dogen-zenji also says the more you have good practice and good enlightenment in its true sense, you may feel you haven't enlightenment-you haven't-your practice is not good enough. When-only when you-not-I cannot say "only"-but when you-most of the time, for human being, when you feel in that way, you have at least better practice and deeper understanding-actual understanding of enlightenment, which is beyond the realm of good and bad.

So enlightenment will be attained in easy time and in adversity. Wherever you are, enlightenment is there. And if you stand upright where you are, that is enlightenment. Try to stand up-up-upright. There is our practice. It means that to accept things as it is, to accept yourself as you are.

When-Soto way is also called-Soto practice is called "I don't know zazen." [Laughs.] "I don't know zazen." We don't know what is zazen anymore. "I don't know who I am." That is Soto way. "I don't know." [Laughs.] To find complete composure, you know, when you don't know who you are and where you are, what is-what are they-that is Soto way. And that is, you know, to accept things as it is. Even though [laughing] you don't know who you are, you accept yourself. That is, you know, "you" in its true sense. When you know who you are, you know, that you will not be real you. You may overestimate [laughs, laughter] yourself quite easily. That is-that is not you. When you don't know: "Oh-oh, I don't know," you know. Then when you feel in that way, you are you, and you know yourself completely. That is enlightenment.

Maybe, even though I say so, I think you feel, "He is talking something unusual, and he is fooling us." [Laughs.] But actually it is not so. Only thing I can say is you like to be fooled by me [laughs]. If I don't fool you, you know, you will not listen to my lecture. Dogen-zenji says people does not like something real [laughs], and they like something which is not real.[4] That is very true [laughs]. Why I am-if I am strict with you-I am strict-very strict with that point. Even though you make some mistake, I-I-I will not say anything. But if you have some false, you know, unreal confidence or unreal self, I shall be very strict with you because you are in danger.

I think our teaching is very good-very, very good. But if we become too arrogant, and if we believe in ourself too much, we will be lost. There will be no teaching at all, no Buddhism at all. So when we find out our

joy of life or composure, when we, you know, don't know what it is, you know, when we don't understand anything, then your mind [is] said to be very great, very wide. Your mind is open to everything.

From what should we, you know, [be] relieved [laughs], you know, is this point. We should be relieved from this kind of arrogance, this kind of selfish way, this kind of immature childish, you know, way. And our mind should be big enough to know before we know something, you know. We should be grateful before we have something. Without anything, we must be very happy, you know-not after you have something, but before you have something, we should be very happy. Before you attain enlightenment, we should be happy to practice our way, or else we cannot attain anything in its true sense.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] Hashimoto Eko-roshi (1890-1965 {recheck 1965}) was a scholar of Dogen's Shobogenzo and an authority on the origins of the traditional okesa. He studied with Oka Sotan-zenji at Shuzen-ji and was Dainin Katagiri-roshi's second master at Eihei-ji [Wind Bell, 1971, No. 1, p. 3.]

[2] A table seasoning of ground roasted sesame seeds (goma) and salt (shio).

[3] Dongshan Liangie (Tozan Ryokai): 807-869.

[4] See also SR-71-06-05. Suzuki-roshi is probably referring to the story of Sho-kung (Jap. Seiko or Shoko) in the Hsin-hsú (Shinshi Ryaku). Sho-kung loved painted and carved dragons but was terrified when visited one day by the real thing. "Do not become so accustomed to images that you are dismayed by the real dragon" (Dogen-zenji, Fukun Zazen-gi, in Nishijima and Cross, ed., 1994, Vol. 1, p. 282).

### **3 - Summer Sesshin: Second Night Lecture**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Summer Sesshin: Second Night Lecture  
Tassajara

We have been talking about-discuss-discussing about reality, actually, and how we practice our way in our zazen and in our everyday life. And Dogen-zenji talked about the reality in-by using the Japanese or Chinese

word, inmo.[1] Inmo means-inmo has two meaning. It is-it means like this, you know [probably gestures]-and also it means question: "What is that?" Or it is, you know, "it," you know. "It" means-sometime it is question mark, and sometime "it" means-pointing at something, we say, "it."

In English, you know, you say, "It is hot." That "it" is the same words-same meaning when you say, "It is nine o'clock," or "It is half-passed eight." You know, it-you use ["it" for] only time or weather, you know. Time or weather is "it." But not only time or weather. Everything should be "it"-can be "it." We are also "it," you know, but we don't say "it." Instead of "it" we say "he" or "she," or "me" or "I." But actually it means "it." So everything is-if everything is "it," you know, it is-at the same time, question mark, you know. When I say "it," you know, you don't know [laughs] exactly what I mean, so you may say, "What is it?" [laughs] you may ask.

"It" is not-it does not mean some definite, special thing, as it does not mean when we talk about time, it is not-it does not mean some special time, or meal time, or lecture time. We don't know. So "it" is-it means also ques- [partial word]-it may be question mark for everyone. If I say "it," you know, you may say, "What time is it?" you may say.

So "it" or inmo means-has-mean, you know, has two meaning: definite-some definite thing is "it," and at the same time "it" may be a question. And this is very important for us to know. "It" has always-maybe it has-it means always-it has two sides of it: "It is hot now," but it-it is-it may be sometime cold," you know [laughs]. "Right now it is hot, but it is not always hot. Sometime it will be cold."

When we say-when we talk about time, "it" means some, you know, some special time. But at the same time it means, you know, some continuous time. Time is always-time is continuous thing, and, at the same time, time is some special, definite, discontinued [discontinuous] - some certain hour. When we say it is half-passed eight, we point out at some certain time. At that time, time mean discontinue-discontinuity. And-but time, by nature, it is something continued-continuous thing, so one words has two side: continuity and discontinuity. That is the nature of reality to us.

So we have been talking about things for tonight in term of discontinued-some special discontinuous, specialized being which has form or color, you know. That is inmo. That was inmo.

But Dogen-zenji again talked-talks about our practice in term of something continuous, not special-something which is mixed up [laughs] with everything. If we are not ready to discuss things, we will not have a complete understanding of our teaching. As he says: "Those who," you know, "fell on the ground should stand up by the ground-by the earth." [2] I don't know if it makes some sense to you. What do you

say? "To fell on the ground"-"to fell," or-?

Student: Fall.

Another student: Fall on the ground.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student: Fall on the ground?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Like this [probably gestures]. Fall on the ground? Should stand up by the earth-by the ground at that place. And he also says, "If you fall on the ground," you know, "you should," you know, "stand up"-what should I say? It is rather difficult-"by emptiness [laughs], by nothing." Actually we-actually we stand up by the ground like this [probably gestures], you know, but he says we shouldn't stand up by the ground. What does it-it means is if you think, you know, you can stand up by the ground always, it would be a big mistake. If you rely on, you know, ground, if you rely on the ground-on ground and don't mind to fall on the ground, you know, you will fall on the ground quite easily. "It's all right. I can stand up by the ground." [Laughs.] So he said you shouldn't-you shouldn't think you can stand up on the ground-by the ground.

And this point is important, you know. It is like enlightenment. If you rely on enlightenment, you know, and practice zazen, it is someone who easy-who easily, you know, make mistake or fall on the ground, relying on the help of the ground. Do you understand? It is rather-do you understand? There is very subtle point. To stand up by the ground-of course we have to stand up by the ground at the time, but if you stick to the idea of help of the ground all the time, you know, you lose the true meaning of fall on the ground. In other word, we should not make same mistake [laughs] many many times. Even though you make mistake-you may think, you know, even though you make some mistake, it is all right. We know how to get up.

That is not what we mean when we say "reality." Things happen-things does not happen many times in the same way. Even it doesn't happen same way twice. But if we say, if you fell-fall on the ground, you should stand up by the ground, then you-you will have this kind of idea: "Okay, I know how to stand up, so it's all right, even though I fall on the ground by mistake." With this kind of prejudice or easy idea, if we practice our way that is wrong practice.

You recite each time in lecture, you know, "Even one hundred kalpas of time, you cannot meet with the teaching." That is the true, you know. Truth is-exist-truth is true only when you listen to, you know. And when you try to repeat what someone said, that is not truth anymore. When he said so, it is true. When someone said so, it is true because the ground is already-has two meaning. It is, you know, at that time

ground, but ground can be-can be a stick sometime, can be a stone sometime, can be a water sometime.

Ground is "it," you know. "It" means everything, not just ground. It means that you should renew your way of practice. Each time you practice, you have-must have fresh new feeling. With fresh and new feeling, you should practice our way. Try not to have same experience, you know. Your experience of practice should be always new, and should be always "it." It should not be some definite particular experience.

So there is nothing to rely on in our practice. But on the other hand, there is always something provided for you, always. According to the circumstances, you will have some aid to practice our way. You know, even pain in your legs is help, you know. By the pain you have, you should practice our way. The pain is "it." It is, at that time, some definite experience or definite trouble or thing. But "it" can be drowsiness [laughs]; "it" can be hunger; "it" can be hot weather. So hot weather or cool weather-nice and cool weather, or hunger, or mosquito [laughs], or pain in your legs can be a h- [partial word]-aid of your practice by which you can stand up-establish your practice.

Not only, you know, Buddha's teaching, but also everything can be aid of practice. So we say inmo. Inmo-ji. Inmo-ji means "things." [3] And those who practice zazen is also inmo-nin. -Nin means "person." -Nin in Japanese means "person." Inmo-nin-"someone-someone practicing something." That is reality. [Laughs.] Even though you are practicing actually, right here, but in its true sense you should understand "someone practicing something." Or "someone doing something." Not only practice. "Someone doing something."

So if-if it-it is so, "doing" is not necessary, you know. "Someone" and "doing" and "someone" and "doing" and "something" is same thing, you know. Doing-someone which will practice zazen, include everything. He cannot be separated from this world. And some action cannot exist without background of whole world. Something cannot be special thing from this world, so "something, something, something." [Laughs, laughter.] Then, what is that? That is complete realization. So one thing, you know-everything happens in that way. So if you understand-stick to the idea of help or experience or enlightenment, that is already mistake.

As I am Soto [laughs]-Soto-I belong to Soto, if I say so: "Oh, he," you know, "deny enlightenment experience." [Laughs.] It is not so. We Soto student do not stick to one thing. We don't stick to anything. We should have always freedom. In Japanese we say shushin-shushin-no-katsuro: [4] complete freedom. Complete freedom of practice, complete freedom of expression. Our practice is expression-a vivid expression of our true nature or reality.

So for us it is not possible to stick to anything. So one after another, we

have to practice our way in a quite renewed area and quite refreshed way. And our practice should be independent from past practice and future practice. We cannot sacrifice our practice for future attainment, because all the buddha who passed-attained enlightenment in this way, and all the buddha in future will attain enlightenment in this way. "In this way" means, you know [laughs]-"this," means "not any"-I do not, you know, mean Soto way or Rinzai way. Sometime Soto way. Sometime Rinzai way. Sometime some other school's way, according to the circumstances. The way we-how we attain enlightenment will be different. Someone will attain enlightenment when he see some flower or hear some sound like bamboo. Or someone may attain enlightenment when they take hot bath [laughs, laughter] there.

And there were many kinds of people in Buddha's sangha. There was a twelve, you know, disciples who came from a rich family. And Bhadrupala Bodhisattva, [5] who attained enlightenment in a hot bath, is [laughs] one of the boy who came from very rich family. And rich and poor may attain enlightenment in various way: in hot bath, in rest room [laughs]. There is no Soto way or Rinzai way, actually. So we say "it." And "it"-that "it" means-and that "it" ha- [partial word]-means two-two side. "It" has two side: positive side and negative side.

In short, what do we mean? You know, we-you know, we discuss very abstract way so that discussion include various way of practice. But in short, what it means is: whatever it is, we should accept. And by means of various things, we should practice our way. And there is no other way to attain enlightenment.

Do you have some question? It may be rather difficult to make question, you know [laughing], because, you know, it is like to catch fish by net, you know. We talk something, you know, in this way so that you cannot escape from it. It is lucky to catch a fish by net. After throwing net, you know: "Is there some question?" is-doesn't mean much, but, you know, you escaped from the net. Okay.

Student A: When I fall down on the ground, who is it that makes effort to get up?

Suzuki-roshi: You. Or Buddha.

Student A: I have a problem-or it feels like it. Whenever I make effort, it-it seems to come from some sense of "I," maybe some pride or some very strong sense of self. Could you tell us about effortless effort?

Suzuki-roshi: Effortless effort. Effortless effort means the effort, knowing that there is no "I" or no ground, you know, and then something which is going with everything is effortless effort. The effort you make is not your effort, because there is no "you," you know. What is that effort? That effort is-the effort comes out from-from your mother body of whole being.

You, you know-that you stand up means that everyone stand up, and everyone feel very good when you stand up. And when you st- [partial word]-when you attain enlightenment, everyone attains enlightenment with you. So if the practice does not include everyone of us, it is not true practice, we say. It is tainted practice by the idea of self. And you may have this kind of doubt or-after you do, after you do something as-like you-whether this is, you know, selfish, you know, things or not: "Why did I do this?" I think you will have this kind of-some uncertain feeling about what you do or what you did. I suffered from it [laughs] pretty much.

Especially when you do something good, you know-supposed to be good, you suffer more [laughs]. When you did some-something by mistake, you don't suffer, you know. "This is by mistake, so I will not make same mistake again." That's all, you know. But if you try to do something good, after-or you did something which is supposed to be good, because you did something with some idea of good and bad, you suffer more. Especially by the idea of good, you suffer more [laughs]-you should suffer more [laughs]. That is good experience. Okay.

Student B: Roshi, I'm walking along, and everything's intact [laughter], and then I-

Suzuki-roshi: Walking?

Student B: I'm walking along, and everything seems to be okay, and then thud!-I'm on the ground. I look around, and there's a small rock. So with a roar, I can pick up the rock and throw it off into the woods. But what if the rock is so big I can't lift it? So what am I going to do?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] Rock is so big?

Student B: Yeah. It's stuck in the ground and I can't pick it up.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You-no need to take it out. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student B: But I feel some need to take it out-some strong need. [Loud laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: That's deep ego [laughing]-too big. Your ego is too big. I thought if the rock is a great big one, it is more beneficial to, you know, stand up by it, you know. Small rocks will not help you so much, but if it is too-so big, it is easy to, you know, stand up by it. If you stand up, you know, you should work [walk?] off the rock. And there is no need to take-take it away.

Actually, you know, problem-your problem is when you feel guilty, you know-when you feel guilty is the point. After you did something, you feel, you know, selfish. But before you feel selfish, you didn't feel, you

know, anything. But after-after you did something, you start to feel bad. So when you did it, it was all right. But after you did it, and when you think about it, the way you think about it was not-is not right. Do you understand? When you did it, you were not selfish. But when you think about it, you became already selfish. You expect something to be good. So don't think too much about what you did. Okay? If you think too much about what you did, it is-most of the time, it is, maybe, conscientious thing, but it is sometime very selfish idea is involved in it. So one after another, you should continue your practice, you know, without thinking, without being involved in so much selfish idea or dualistic idea. Okay? [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

When I w- [partial word]-I had-I suffered a lot about it when I was at school, you know. And I was staying at dormitory, you know. And restroom was always dirty [laughs]-dormitory restroom was always dirty. So I, you know, made up my mind to clean it, you know. But I didn't want to clean it when people, you know, see [laughing]. So I get up early in the morning before they get up so that no one can find out me in cleaning, you know, restroom.

It was pretty good, you know, for several days, but even though early in the morning someone get up [laughs]. I have very difficult time to hide myself [laughs, laughter] while doing this kind of thing, you know. Sometime, you know, our dean of the-head of the college or university-whatever it is-Nukariya[6]-Nukariya is his name-and he was very strict person. And he stayed in our dormitory with student [laughs]. And Saturday night was the night when he go home. He was so strict, in summertime when all the students went home, he would stay at dormitory, taking care of things. So most people who visited the dormitory to see-to see him, thought he was a garbage man [laughs] on the dormitory. He was so, you know-he was pretty good.

And sometime, you know, I saw a light in his room, you know. I was very much scared of [laughing] him getting-coming to the restroom. So as soon as I saw the light in the dormitory, not only his room but also some room, I escaped from the restroom, and I was quite, you know, upset or, you know-I don't know what to say, you know. I was very much mixed up. At first, I-I felt very good, you know. And more and more, I had many things to think about. And I have too much to think about. So finally I-I have to think whether I should continue it or give up.

But my nature-I was pretty stubborn, you know. I didn't like to give up something so easily. So I wanted to continue it, but I-I didn't want to have that kind of silly problems. But anyway I continued it. And I had-I studied psychology, you know. And he-the professor, you know, talked about our psychology, you know.

And he said it is not possible to have same experience again, you know. Even though you think you did this kind of thing, but what you think



about it and what you have experienced is not same-different, quite different. So actually you cannot have same experience again, in its strict sense. So it is not possible to, you know, to have same feeling again or same experience again. So I was enlighten [?], you know. "Okay! It is not possible to think about it, so forget about it, and I will try-I will continue to do it. Whatever happens, it's-it is all right. And whatever they may say, that is all right." I continued my practice in that way, for I don't know how long.

So don't think too much about it, you know. What you do is not selfish, but what you think-that you think about it is maybe selfish. So if you can forget all about it, you are not so selfish. Hai.

Student C [Bill Shurtleff]: I think I understand what you mean when you say that what we do is not selfish, in the way that it affects other people.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Bill: But it seems like there are some problems which cause us pain directly, and we think about them because they cause us pain directly, for example, during eating. And I have a problem that keeps happening again and again. And I think about it very often-each time that it happens, and I can see it happening even before it happens. And it still happens. And it's a problem with eating-like things-there are certain things that if I eat them, I know they will cause me suffering.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. [Laughs.]

Bill: And every time that I eat them, I suffer. I get sick. There is an "I" afterwards who says: "You should never, ever eat that again [laughter] because every time that you've eaten it you've suffered and gotten sick." And yet, another "I" sees himself approaching that plate of food, and he can say eat it anyway [previous six words are a guess-obscured by laughter]. And then afterwards, the other "I" comes along and says, "Now, you see!" Twenty times-the same thing happens every time. And every time I think about it, and think about it, and think about it.

Suzuki-roshi: That is karma. [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah, we are-we have that kind of problem always. We know that this is not good. But-I don't know why, but, you know, something makes me doing something wrong. But, you know, some people may say that is a kind of destiny-fate, or, you know-it is not so. You can improve it little by little. We have no idea of, you know, fate or karma in-karma in that way.

Bill: You emphasize accepting it, and my emphasis always seems to be on improving, and not doing it next time, rather than accepting it this time [student laughs].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. But before, you know, you try to improve yourself,

you have to accept it, you know, or you have to see it clearly, you know. If you have idea of improvement first, you will miss the clear sight of the reality. So you have to see it first and try to improve it. Hai.

Student D: I get the feeling, after sitting here for the last few days [1-2 words unclear]-a habit of sitting. And as I sit, I forget about it more. So it becomes a new habit. Maybe-maybe then that's sort of like an answer to Meg's[7] question and Bill's[8] question.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student D: It becomes a habit-a new habit. And you don't think about your habits.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Habit. Yeah. That is-that is habit. But habit is very important, you know, in our practice. That is why, you know, we do same thing over and over again: to make some good habit. But difference between the habit, in usual sense, and our habit-good habit is we, you know, we are trying to make something a habit, you know. That something is, you know, the way to attain liberation. Usually habit is, you know, habit of smoking, habit of drinking [laughs]-something, you know-some habit directed to the other way.

So our habit is to be free from things, we have this kind of practice. By practicing, we will have habit of being relieved from everything, to have more freedom from everything. This kind of habit is-the nature of habit is different. Do you understand? We, you know, bow to the Buddha. We observe ceremonies in the same way over and over again. But this habit will result complete freedom from-for you. Zazen practice will give you the power of being free from things. So we-if I use "habit" in usual sense, we practice our way to destroy various, you know, habit in its bad sense. Okay?

Student D: Sesshin seems to break some of my habits-thinking in the past of, say, my habit of overeating.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: And sesshin comes and I just cut it off, and it's gone for seven days. And-but at the end, there's always-I-I guess the longer I practice, the more I will be faced with this choice between keeping the habit broken or over-reacting, you know. I think, "Well, seven days of not overeating! Wow!" [Laughs, laughter.] [2-3 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Right. Yeah, that is very true. We say, "One hundred lecture [laughs] end in," you know, "one poo." [Laughing, laughter throughout rest of paragraph.] What do you call it? After giving you one hundred times of lecture, and you make big poo-big one, you know! That's worse-make me worse. If I haven't given-gave lect-[partial word]-given lectures, you know, to you it was all right. Because

I gave lecture, you know, to-to make poo is very-makes me worse. That is not actually laughing matter [laughing].

Okay.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/15/00). Tenshin Reb Anderson graciously recalled, from memory, Suzuki-roshi's citation of Bhadrápala.

[1] Suzuki-roshi is commenting on Dogen's Shobogenzo "Inmo" (also spelled "Immo").

[2] Quoting Dogen in Shobogenzo "Inmo," who in turn quoted the fourth Indian patriarch Upagupta in Keitoku Dentoroku (Keitoku Era Record of the Transmission of the Light), Chapter 1.

[3] Suzuki-roshi defined ji in a later Sandokai lecture: "Ji refers to the phenomenal-to something you can see, hear, smell, or taste as well as to objects of thought or ideas. Whatever can be introduced into our consciousness is ji" (Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness, p. 53; also SR-70-06-01, p. 3).

[4] shusshin-no-katsuro (Jap.): Literally, "the absolute way beyond enlightenment itself."

[5] Suzuki-roshi is referring to Bhadrápala's reply to Shakyamuni Buddha's question in the Shurangama Sutra. Shakyamuni: "Through which expedient did you enter samadhi?" Bhadrápala: "Once, when it was time for the Sangha to bathe, I followed the custom and entered the bathhouse. Suddenly I awakened to the fact that water does not wash away the dust, nor does it cleanse the body. And in that moment I became peaceful and attained the state of there being nothing at all... . The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. As I have been certified to it, touch is the foremost means" (Vol. 5, Part 1, Buddhist Text Translation Society).

[6] Kaiten Nukariya: president of Komazawa University, Tokyo. He was Suzuki-roshi's academic and thesis advisor at Komazawa. Nukariya's controversial book on Buddhism for laypeople, Shoshin Mondo (Questions and Answers about True Faith), was released in 1926, the same year that Suzuki-roshi came to Komazawa. While abroad, Nukariya wrote the first popular book on Zen in English, The Religion of the Samurai (1913).

[7] Possibly Meg Gawler.

[8] Definitely Bill Shurtleff (confirmed by voice).

#### **4 - Summer Sesshin: Third Night Lecture**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Summer Sesshin: Third Night Lecture  
Tassajara

We are talking about our practice. What is the practice, and what is enlightenment, and how we practice. Someone who is practicing is a man in reality. And the practice we practice is something in reality. And place we practice-some place in reality. And the time you practice is also time in reality. So everything take place in realm of reality. That is true practice. So Dogen-zenji says: "If our practice does not include everything, it is not our practice." And not only practice, but also place you practice, and person who practice, and time to practice-include everything. That is perfect practice.

So counting-breathing practice is not just to count, you know. With all your-with all of your body and mind, you should count the-count your breathing. If you do so, the counting-breathing practice covers everything. So counting-breathing exercise include everything. That is how we count our breathing in our practice: not to count our exhaling mechanically, you know-one, two, three [laughs]. That is not our way. When we count it with all of your effort, physical and mental, that is counting-breathing practice.

Some of you find it difficult-find some difficulty in counting-breathing practice. Difficulties you may have is you tend to count your breathing just mechanically. So naturally, you know, you count, you know-if you, you know, count something: one, two, three, four, five, you know, and again and again you count, and your count-counting will be faster and faster because it is easy. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten [laughs]. Just you, you know, recite Prajñāparamita-sutra: KAN-JI-ZAI-BO-SATSU-GYO-JIN-HAN-NYA-HA-RA-[starts slowly, then speeds up as he goes along] [laughs, laughter]. That is not our practice, you know, just to know how many times you count your breathing and how long you keep counting without mistake [laughs]. That is not our practice. With your whole mind and body you should count. How you do it is-you know, it is-how you do it is also how you take deep perfect breathing. So by counting you will help, you know, good breathing, good, smooth, deep breathing. So instead of saying some other thing like mu, you know, you count: "one, two."

When you do so, your mind and body will be completely involved in your practice. When your mind and body are completely involved in practice, that is perfect practice because at that time you are practicing counting-breathing practice with all things. How you do things with all your body and mind, and how you practice our zazen is not different. You know,

to-to lift something, you know, like this [gestures]-and to have perfect breathing in your practice is same. When you do something, you have some power here.[1] If you do it with your whole body and mind without some power here, you cannot lift things. And if you want to say something, you know, you need some power here, you know. If you recite sutra also you need some power here. That is how we recite sutra. You know, this is, maybe, the difference between our reciting sutra and singing. Singing can be, you know [laughs]-"ahh" [laughs, laughter]. If you make some beautiful, you know, voice with your, you know, what do you call it? Valve? No. [Laughs.]

Student: Vocal cords.

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student: Vocal cords.

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. That is, you know, singing, you know. But even so I think you need, you know, power here or else you cannot sing. You cannot put some feeling to it. Or else the singing will become like some instrument, you know. We can convey our feeling by saying something, so when you do it with your mind and body, you can convey something more than sound. So we-when we recite sutra, we recite sutra: KAN-JI-ZAI-BO [chanted slowly and deliberately]-big sound with some strength here.

So reciting sutra, and practicing zazen, or carrying something is not-we do those things in the same way. But speed may be different, you know, and duration of time may be different. Instead of doing, you know, you do, you know, smoothly and with some strength in your practice. That is actually how you practice counting-breathing practice.

And in this way we study our way. And when you do so, you have no idea of self because you are completely involved in something. You have no self. Self-selflessness is there. When you have no self you can, you know, study Buddhism. In Japanese, to study-or in Chinese also, we use two characters. It is-one is manabu.[2] Manabu means, you know, manabu or na-na-ni-nu-ne-no: it changes. Mana-manabu. Na will change into many words, many different sound. Same kind but different sound. Na-ni-nu-ne. Manabu can be manebu. Mane means-to imitate. [Laughs.] If you have a lot of self you cannot imitate. When you are only-when you are like a child, you can, you know, imitate. So manabu-or "to study," means "to imitate." "To imitate" means to be completely involved in something without self.

["WING"]

["SHU"]

Shu[3]-another character is shu. Shu is, you know-the character of shu is-upper part of the character is "wing," you know. Bird-when a mother bird teach a baby bird how to fly, you know [laughs, laughter], mother try to-like a baby, you know, try to fly like this. He can-she can fly pretty well-very well, but she imitate. [Laughs, laughter.] Teacher become like a, you know, baby bird. Mother bird become a baby bird and so baby bird, you know-that is [laughs, laughter] something possible to do, you know, for a baby bird. So baby bird will do like this [laughing], you know-mother and baby. Then they will, you know, study-baby bird will study how to fly, like this [laughter]. That is also practice, you know.

So we put more emphasis on physical, you know, practice rather than intellectual one. If you-something which is learned by your thinking mind, you know, it tend to be very superficial. It looks like very correct and exact, but actually, you know, the more something-some knowledge become accurate and exact, the more you will lose the true meaning of it. I am very much interested in your way of cooking and Japanese way of cooking. They are two extreme, you know. You mix things, you know. You-when you cook something, and you don't cook something one by one. You mix many things, and cook it, and eat it in one big bowl, like salad, you know. Oil and tomatoes and [laughs] everything is mixed up. And your soup also, you know-it consist of many things. But Japanese way is, you know-if it bean and potato, or daikon,[4] or gobo[5]-we cook separately. And if it is necessary, we put them in big dish, something like ornament, you know-ornament or decoration of the plate. We don't mix things, you know. And even shoyu sauce[6]-we use, most of the time, shoyu sauce in some special container. Goma-shio[7] is here, and shoyu sauce is here, pickles is here. So we-we make our menu, you know, with picture. And here, you know, rice which we draw a menu in white paper. Rice, soup, and [in the] middle of the tray we put otsubo,[8] in which we usually put something like bean-boiled bean, or sesame tofu.[9] And here we have ohira. So we draw a picture of tray, and we put name of the dishes, or veg- [partial word]-name of the vegetables, like this.

Your way of making menu is, you know: bean, you know, so-and-so gram. Gram or what do you call? "Pound"? Not pound. [Laughs.] What do you? Hmm? Ounces, you know. And sugar: so-and-so ounces. And you measure various things you mix, you know. And when you cook it, you mix. So you measure it by ounce-ounces-ounce. But we make our recipe by picture, you know, and by name of the vegetables. We cook it separately, so there is no need to measure, you know. But you must measure it or weigh it, because you have to mix them. To have good taste, you mix things.

And our practice also consists of two ways. When you mix, you know,

that is-when you mix things, you don't know which is which, you know, which vegetables-you cannot figure out if this is bean, or shoyu sauce, or some other seasoning because you mix. But anyway, when you eat, you know, in your tummy, all what you ate will be mixed up. But before you cook it-or even Japanese dishes decorated in various way-if we eat it, it will be mixed up. But before you mix up, vegetable was vegetable, and beans are beans, and corn were corn.

So there is two side of one practice, but both is necessary. Maybe Japanese way is one extreme, and your way is another extreme. But usually, whatever the-usually Japanese way and American way is-consists of two ways: to mix up something and to separate something. But the best way to study, you know, is not by, you know, recipe but by [slaps hands], you know, intuition: this much, this much-it may be all right. The more you become skillful, the more you can do it by intuition. So actual practice will be there when you don't need any recipe, you know, when you are able to do it even without recipe. That is, you know, why we practice zazen.

For an instance, you know, if you are not good at counting breathing practice, you tend to be counting breathing, you know, mechanically. Or you may forget, you may lose your count by thinking some other things. Both are, you know, two extreme. But when-but when you are able to count your breathing as well as simultaneously having perfect breathing, that is, you know, how we practice counting-breathing practice.

Last night[10] I talked about Dogen-zenji's saying: [11] "Those who fall on the ground should stand up by ground," you know. And his interp-[partial word]-another version of Dogen-zenji about this point, saying, is: "Those who fall on the ground should stand up by emptiness." You know, this is another advanced saying. And, "Those who fall on-fall in emptiness should stand up by the earth, by the ground."

So here again, you know, "emptiness is form, form is emptiness." Earth is form and earth is emptiness-is form. Form equal emptiness. Emptiness equal form. Why we say our earth-our practice of standing up by earth is empty is-not only earth. Earth can be, you know, many things. Can be a stick. Can be a stone. Can be a diamond [laughs], you know. Can be water.

So there is no particular thing to help our practice. Whatever it is, you know, it will cause disturbance for our practice. But that disturbance will help our-at the same time, will help our practice. So there is no particular thing which will help us. So earth or some particular thing can be many things, so it is emptiness. But even though we say "emptiness," you know, when we practice something, there there is something-some particular thing. So emptiness is form. Even though we say "emptiness," whatever it is it is good, we say at that moment you need something special, some special thing.

So if we don't understand earth in that way, if we don't understand disturbance of our practice in this way, we cannot practice our zazen in its true sense. When we can practice our way, you know, in this way, with understanding of form of-"form is emptiness and emptiness is form," so anything can be aid of our practice, and anything can be a disturbance of the practice. And he says, "What will be the difference," you know, "between the disturbance and aid?"

If someone ask you, "What is the"-excuse me-"What is the-how far it is from earth to emptiness?" If someone ask you, you may answer, "one hundred and eighty miles." [Laughs.] One hundred and eighty miles. It is a long distance, you know. But, you know, he didn't-he just says in his Eihei-koroku, in his Record of Saying. But we should not think if you go to-if you drive one thousand-no, one hundred and eighty thousand miles from emptiness to earth, you know, you may reach emptiness or you may reach earth. That is wrong understanding. Because emptiness is directly-emptiness is earth, and earth is emptiness. It is two names of one reality.

So when he said, "one hundred and eighty miles-eighty thousand miles," he meant it is far away, you know, completely different thing. It is not matter of saying how far it is-the distance from one to the other. We should understand our practice and enlightenment, too. It is two names of one reality. You cannot say, "This is," you know-"if you cross this borderline," you know, "here is enlightened-world of enlightenment. And until you cross this borderline, this is practice." It is not like that. I am just talking about, you know, our actual practice, right now. But how you, you know, understand what I mean is-just practice it like a, you know, baby bird [laughs], and by experience-to experience it. That is only way.

Maybe at Tassajara, you know, you are-I have so many student. And I am not with you always. So it is difficult, you know, to show-to show all of you how to fly [laughs, laughter] like this, you know. But the point is without having much self like a baby bird, just to practice zazen, and just to bow to Buddha, and just to recite sutra, as most Zen students do, is the best way to study our way.

We have transmission, you know, from Buddha to us. And how to transmit our practice is something you should know. Do you know the-I told you something-I told you the story[12] when the Sixth Patriarch [13] visited one big monastery after he received transmission from Konin, the Fifth Patriarch.[14] The students, you know, were in dispute concerning the-seeing flag, you know, flapping or waving in the air.

And some student said, "Air is," you know, "waving".

And the other student said, "No, the banner is waving."

I told you this story already.



And the Sixth Patriarch said, "No. No. You are wrong. All of you are wrong. Your mind is waving." [Laughs.] That was what he said.

There is same story in India too. [15] When the Seventeenth, I think, Seventeenth [Indian] Patriarch-oh, Eighteenth[16]-Eighteenth Patriarch received transmission, there was the teacher, you know. The Sixth-Seventeenth Patriarch asked the disciple, seeing the-hearing-listening to the bell hanging on the far corner of the Buddha hall, asked:

"Which is ringing," you know, "bell or wind?" [Laughs.] You know, wind bell-a kind of wind bell. "Which is ringing, wind or bell?"

The Sixth Patriarch-Seven-Eighteenth Patriarch who is-who was at that time disciple of Seventeenth [?], [answered]: "None of them," you know, "ring. But your mind-our mind is ringing," he said.

That was maybe right answer, but so far the teacher was not so sure about his understanding, so the teacher asked:

"What kind of mind will it be? What kind of mind will it be?"

And the disciple answer, "The complete calmness of them."

Both are in complete calmness. Bell and wind is in state of complete calmness. That was his answer-disciple's answer. So the teacher acknowledged his perfect understanding of it. Same story, but it is easier to understand how we transmit our way from teacher to disciple. "Which is ringing-bell or wind?" Not bell or no wind, but our mind is ringing. "What kind of mind will it be?" "The complete calmness of both of them."

My teacher, you know-my teacher[17] gave [me] a big calligraphy, you know, three characters, gogyakujo: "Both are in complete calmness."

[Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

You may see the big character, gogyakujo, and my teacher's sign. Gogyakujo is: "Both are in complete calmness."

What does it mean by complete calmness, you know? Calmness is not, you know, calmness in comparative sense. At Tassajara it is calm, but city zendo is not calm [laughs]-not this kind of calmness. It means that Tassajara is in complete calmness, and city zendo [is] in complete calmness. But you may say city zendo is noisy, and Tassajara zendo is calm. But we don't mean this kind of calmness when we say "complete calmness." Calmness of Tassajara zendo include, you know-covers everything. Calmness in cosmic scale [laughs]. The San Francisco zendo also, its calmness covers whole universe. Then, you know, San Francisco zendo, when it covers everything, it is independent. And Tassajara

zendo, when it covers everything, [is] also independent. Here forty-more than forty people are practicing zazen. Each one of your practice, you know, covers everything. And each one of you are in a state of complete calmness and completely independent from others' practice when you do it with your whole mind and body.

So if so, you know, we cannot say "bell is ringing" or "wind is ringing." If we cannot say bell is ringing or wind is ringing-if we cannot say so, we cannot say our mind is ringing, you know. We cannot say so. Then, "What kind of mind will it be?" will be the question.

So his teacher asked him, "What kind of mind will it be?" And the answer was, "Both are in the complete calmness." You cannot say even, you know, "Bell is ringing." Because if there is only one, you know, bell, who is listening to the bell? If all what exist is-if bell covers everything, leaving [?] anything, we cannot-there is no one to hear it, and there is nowhere to send the sound of the bell. Within big, you know, universe, bell is covering everything. Bell is there. So it is not matter of to listen to or to make a sound or to hear the sound. That is complete calmness.

So if teacher become teacher, you know, there is no disciple. Teacher include disciple, and teacher is independent. If student, you know, become really student, that student include teacher too. So he is independent from teacher. In this way everything exists. That is, you know, only way to transmit something to others without any trouble.

If I give you this book, you know, you may ask: "What is this book?" And, "This book was written by Hashimoto-roshi,"[18] if I say so [I may say?]. "Oh. He passed away a year before last year." "Oh, I know him. He was not so great teacher," or something. Something-some discussion or some complaint will arise. If you do something in term of good or bad, complete or incomplete, or enlightenment or practice, anyway you will get into trouble [laughs], and this trouble will continue forever. You have no time to sit in complete sense.

I want you to appreciate or to think about it-about this point, and practice our way with this spirit, you know. Did you understand? You know, this is-this explanation is both direct explanation and very abstract and logical way of explanation, so you may be bored by it but it can't be helped, you know.

But the point is to be like a child and to imitate something. Even though you don't know what it is, you should imitate. In short, that is best way to study. When you receive transmission, you know, you practice, actually you practice baby, you know-baby-like practice. It looks like very, you know-very foolish or very silly to practice our way in this way-in that way, but that is the most important thing when you really want to study our way. Okay?

Student A: Roshi?

Suzuki roshi: Hai.

Student A: We have some children here now. We've had some children here all summer.

Suzuki roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: But we ask them to imitate us-

Suzuki roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -we ask them to eat our food-

Suzuki roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -we ask them to keep silence-

Suzuki roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -and-how do you explain that?

Suzuki roshi: That is-they are actually studying our way, you know. They don't-they don't think they are studying, but actually they are maybe best students [laughs, laughter].

Student A: Well, we're certainly not imitating, you know, a child's way-not the superficial child's way, anyway. And I really don't understand.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. We have to, you know-we must have some definite reason why we should imitate in that way. Or else, you know, you cannot accept it, maybe. So there-it is necessary for you to explain, you know, in some abstract way or some logic-logical or philosophical. It can't be helped. And you will not completely, you know, become selfless unless you, you know, have some chance to experience selflessness or some definite reason why you should study with such a child's way.

But children, anyway, they are studying many things. So best thing for them is let them study something right, something good. Then they will study. Without trying to study, they will study something good, something right. I think that is very important thing, point. So to teach students or child is to, you know, to study by ourselves and for ourselves. If we study right practice, if we practice right practice, they will, you know, study right practice. They are very, you know-not "smart"-very alert. So they know exactly [laughs] what we are doing. And we try not to teach something bad, something wrong. But if we, you know, actually-if we are doing actually something wrong, even though we don't want them to imitate, they will imitate instantly without trying to imitate-good or bad, they [2-3 words]. So it is our responsibility, you know, not their responsibility. When they are young,

we have that kind of responsibility for our young generation.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (02/15/01).

[1] Possibly referring to the hara.

[2] manabu (Jap.): to learn; to study. maneru or mane suru (Jap.): to imitate; to mimic. mane (Jap.): imitation; mimicry.

[3] shu: to learn, to be taught, to take lessons.

[4] daikon: large white winter radish.

[5] gobo: burdock root.

[6] shoyu: soy.

[7] goma-shio: A table seasoning of ground roasted sesame seeds (goma) and salt (shio).

[8] tsubo: jar, pot, or urn. The prefix o- is honorific.

[9] tofu: soybean curd.

[10] SR-09-00-B.

[11] Quoting Dogen in Shobogenzo "Inmo," who in turn quoted the fourth Indian patriarch Upagupta in Keitoku Dentoroku (Keitoku Era Record of the Transmission of the Light), Chapter 1.

[12] Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan, Gateless Gate), Case 29: "The Sixth Patriarch's 'Your Mind Moves.'" Suzuki-roshi told this story in SR-69-08-18.

[13] DaijanHuineng (Jap. Daikan Eno): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Patriarch.

[14] Daman Hongren (Jap. Daiman Gunin or Daiman Konin): 601-674. Fifth Chinese Patriarch.

[15] Denkoroku, Chapter 19.

[16] The Seventeenth Indian Patriarch was Samghanandi (Jap.

Sogyanandai)  
(d. 74 B.C.E.). The Eighteenth Indian Patriarch was Samghayathata  
(Jap. Kayashata or Jayashata).

[17] Probably Kishizawa Ian-zenji.

[18] Hashimoto Eko-roshi: 1890-c. 1965. Japanese Soto Zen master.

## **5 - Summer Sesshin: Sixth Night Lecture**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Summer Sesshin: Sixth Night Lecture  
Tassajara

We discussed about the question and answer between the Seventeenth Patriarch and Eighteenth Patriarch. [1]

"Whether bell is ringing or wind is ringing?" the teacher said.

Disciple said: "Not wind nor bell ringing, but our mind is ringing."

And the teacher said: "What kind of mind is it?"

And the disciple said: "The mind of complete calmness."

And usually when we hear someone say: "No bell-or not bell or wind, but mind is ringing"-then, most people say: "Oh, that is very good answer." But that is not a complete answer. "Mind is ringing" means-if we don't hear the bell, you know, we-we can-we cannot-there is no sound. Because we-our mind hear it and our mind recognize the sound, the sound exist. That is true, but that is not perfect answer [laughs]. Why, you know?

The sound of the bell, you know, is the activity of whole universe, and blow of the-blowing window-wind is also activity of whole universe which, you know, covers everything. That we hear our activity of mind is also the activity of whole universe, not only my activity but also activity of whole universe. So one activity include everything. In this case, that mind is called "big mind" or "capital mind." My mind, you know is-our mind is our small mind. But mind which include everything is capital mind. Although the character is same, but we understand this character in two ways: small mind and big mind.

So the [teacher asked], "What kind of mind is it?" Small mind or big mind, you know. Although the teacher didn't say so, but he meant-what he meant: "What kind of mind is it? Is it the mind which hear something, which recognize something?" And disciple said: "No. That mind is big mind, which is in complete calmness." That was his answer.

Now this is, you know, how we practice zazen. How our mind work or

exist is-how our-each one's own mind exist is so-called-it in "inter-relationship." You know, my mind is supported by all of you, you know, and each one's mind is supported by all of mind. So, you know, and at the same time, each one's mind is supporting, you know, supporting everyone's mind.

So, you know, arrow [?] comes from all of you, and I am receiving it. And at the same time I am giving, you know, my mind to each one of you, like this [probably gestures]. That is how our mind exist and how things exist. That is so-called-it inter-relationship. Inter-relationship does not mean just between two but between every being which exist in this world. So, you know, it is rather difficult-it is difficult to say this-"my mind" or "your mind." We cannot say, you know, exactly if this mind is mine or yours. In this way our mind exist. But actually, our mind exist in this way, but because of our karma, you know [laughs], we are doing something extra [laughs]. We have many trouble.

Originally we have no trouble between us. But [laughs] we have home-made trouble. That is so-called-it karma. And as long as we exist, everyone has karma, and from which it is not possible to escape from it all of [a] sudden. Little by little you can change your karma, but you cannot-. We should know this point, you know, also. Even though you practice zazen or attain enlightenment, on the other hand you have [laughs] your own karma. So until you are quite free from your karma, it takes time. This point also we should know [laughs, laughter]. That is why we cannot practice zazen so well, you know-because of our own karma we suffer.

If you eat too much, you know, or if you work too hard, you cannot practice so well. But those problems, you know, in your practice is also-if you think clearly, it is also exist in relationship to others-to other activity you have done.

We have been practicing counting-breathing [laughs] practice. I am sorry-very sorry for you [laughter] for putting you in such a difficult, you know, practice. I know how difficult it is, but I think unless you know-until you know how difficult it is, you will, you know, [not] find out-you will not realize how important it is to practice counting-breathing practice once in a while to check your practice.

Actually, you know, secret of counting [laughter], you know, breathing practice is, you know [laughter]-hmm-if you laugh I will not give you-I will not [tell you] [laughter]. This is rather, you know-this secret is-must be kept only for me, but [laughs, laughter] as you have-you have been practicing so hard without knowing it [loud laughter]-why I put you in this-in this practice [is] I only wanted you to know how difficult it is! [Laughs, laughter.] Not only, you know, counting-breathing practice. Just to-to have good breathing is difficult enough. And we say-Dogen-zenji say-excuse me [drinks water]: "After all, what is your inhaling and exhaling? After all, what is it? Therefore, there is no self." "After all,

what is it? What is the exhaling and what is the inhaling? After all, what is it?" Therefore it is-maybe if you write this sentence, you know: "After all, what is-after all [laughs, laughter], what is it?"-you know, and question mark, and many dots. "And so there is no self." "After all," you know, "who you are?"-you know, question mark, and many dots. "So there is no self." Do you understand?

We are receiving many things from numberless-numberless people. And we are giving out many things to numberless people. We think we are just exhaling or inhaling, but where the air come and where our exhaling is going? To where is it going? So there is no self. No one knows what we are doing. What is even just one exhaling? [It] is not possible to know what is it. It is-we say it is inhaling or exhaling. That is-may be right, but actually no one knows what it is.

Everything is like this, you know. Jane's, you know, robe or dress is black, you know. But what is black [laughs]? If you dip the material six time, you know, in strong, black thing [?], it may be almost black but it-not complete, maybe. If you dip it ten times, it-it may be black, but almost-still "almost black." Then what is "black"? No one knows. But we know-as if-we feel as if we know what is black exactly. "Oh, that is black," we say, but if someone ask you: "Is that black?" you may say: "Maybe black. Looks like black."

It is almost impossible to know what is even black and what is human being, what is inhaling and exhaling. And if someone ask you what is Zen [laughs], you know, is it possible to, you know, answer for that kind of complicated, you know, big practice? It is not possible. And what is counting-breathing, you know, practice? The-most people may think that is just beginner's practice-just beginner's practice. [It] cannot be so difficult. "If you have strong willpower, we can do it. If you have enough sleep and eat properly, then you can do it." But not that easy. That you can think that is easy is wrong, completely wrong. Nothing can be so easy. If you start to practice with this understanding for [in] the first place, you know, you can practice counting-breathing practice pretty well: not complete, but pretty well.

Actually, your posture, you know, and your breathing, and your mudra is helping, you know, counting-breathing practice. So counting-breathing practice [is] also helping your posture, and your breathing, and calmness of your mind. So counting-breathing practice is not just counting-breathing practice. It is actually following-breathing practice. And it may be shikantaza too. So all those practice is actually many names of one practice. So it is wrong to think counting-breathing practice is just beginner's practice. It is not so. And just to follow your breathing is not following-breathing practice. Just like just to sit, just counting your breathing, is not counting-breathing practice.

To count your breathing will be, you know, for the beginner, will help your practice, like pain [in] your legs will help your practice. But at the

same time, it will be disturbance for your practice. Sometime, you know, you feel much better to sit without counting because, you know, if you count it creates some disturbance to your-for your calmness of your mind.

But the point is, without being disturbed by disturbance, or without relying on any help, to sit properly in shikantaza. So how to, you know, practice our way without relying on something, without being disturbed by something, is the point of our practice.

You may, you know, if someone asks: "How should I do when we have too much idea in our mind? What should I do?" You may say: "Let them come in, let them go out. That is how we practice zazen." To say in that way is very easy [laughs, laughter]-very-very easy. And someone who-who asked him: "Oh, that is quite easy. If you think-even though-then it doesn't matter whatever you think in your practice," you know. "Let them come in [laughs], and let them go out. That-if that is practice, Zen is pretty easy." But actually it is not that easy [laughs].

When you, you know, add something on your practice like counting-breathing practice, naturally, in shikantaza, if you sit, you know, without being bothered by anything, without rely on something else, just to sit in shikantaza. But if you add something to it, you will realize how difficult it is to carry on our practice into our everyday life. And at the same time, if you find it difficult, then there is-there is your key to open the secret. As I told you, you know, I am not giving you the, you know, the secret of the box [laughs], but so that I can-you may have a key to open the secret of the practice, you know, I put you in counting-breathing practice this time.

In dokusan I couldn't-I am sorry I couldn't see you all, but I saw some of old students and some of comparatively new students, and I found out I am very much satisfied with your answer, you know. You gave me the answer which I expect-expected [laughs, laughter]. You came to the same conclusion. I think you have same key as mine. So the problem-next thing we should do is to open the box.

Here Dogen-zenji talks about the-what is complete calmness. The complete calmness means to-to go beyond duality. How to go beyond duality is to practice something with complete effort, physical and mental. That is why we call it complete calmness is because those activity we have include everything. So when each one of us include everything, there is no duality. Even though there is no duality, there is, you know, inter-relationship, and we are helping everyone, and we are helped by everyone. This is the final, you know, conclusion of our practice. Having this understanding always in your mind, and little by little to improve your practice is, in short, how we practice zazen.

Tomorrow we will have shosan ceremony, you know.[2] The shosan ceremony will be question and answer between student and teacher.



And there must be some, you know, common ground, you know. There must be some mutual understanding, you know, to express some certain idea in words. If possible, you know, I want you to ask question about, for an instance, the-about counting-breathing practice or about something which we discussed in our lectures. I think you must have understood something, you know, [of] how we treat things, and how we express our-something which you have in your mind, and how you solve the problem, how you work on your difficulties. Having this kind of, you know, understanding in your mind, I want you [to] put it in form of question, you know.

It does not always mean to ask question is something you ask about which you don't know, you know. Even though you know it, you put it in form of question and ask me. And expect, you know, your-my answer for the question [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, more like question between teacher and disciple. It is a kind of a mutual training, you know. To ask question is not to ask some help, you know. But to mutual training. In this way, back and forth, ancient Zen student trained themselves.

So you can ask yourself some question. And answer for the question, back and forth, in your mind you should do that. And if you prepare for that [laughs] you can ask me some question, and see what I will say [laughs, laughter]. So question and answer is very interesting, you know. Even though you expect some answer, you know, my answer will go [in] some [laughs] other direction. Even though my answer is something you didn't expect, you should be able to follow the direction. You shouldn't be lost.

And teacher will always try [laughs] to put you in some confusion [laughs, laughter]. Sometime, you know, your teacher will give you some answer which you expect. But back-and-forth in this way we will-we will help with each other.

So if it is question and answer is just to ask something which you don't know-is not so meaningful, you know. When you don't know how you should help yourself, even though you have some answer, you know, it will not work so well because you will not understand what really teacher meant by it. You will not have ear to listen to it, you know. So i-[partial word] ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... to know how we should discuss things-way we discuss things.

I think this is-it is little bit earlier, but without having question and answer [laughs, laughter]-leaving question and answer for tomorrow, we will finish this evening's practice.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/21/00).

[1] Suzuki-roshi is referring to SR-69-09-00.C, p. 5. This version of the story is told in Denkoroku, Chapter 19. The Seventeenth Indian Patriarch was Samghanandi (Jap. Sogyanandai) (d. 74 B.C.E.). The Eighteenth Indian Patriarch was Samghayathata (Jap. Gayashata).

[2] Lecture SR-69-09-00.E.

## **6 - Summer Sesshin: Shosan Ceremony**

Monday, September 01, 1969

Summer Sesshin: Shosan Ceremony  
Tassajara

[Beginning of ceremony was not recorded.]

Suzuki-roshi: ... it will be the foundation of the everyday activity. That is real [1 word].

Student A: Thank you very much.

Student B: Docho-roshi, if our karmic thoughts interfere with our breath counting, just as do the flies in the zendo, should we not try to rid ourselves of them, even though it is a nice aid our practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me [2-3 words]-

Student B: If our karmic thoughts interfere with our breath-counting-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -just as do the flies in the zendo-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -should we not try to get rid of them, even though it is an aid to our practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Karma is actually something really exist- something you created, and something you feel [1-2 words] or something which you-or which drive you in some certain direction. That is karma. But that karma is not like flies. It is not substantial being. It is just our habit. So it is- there is no need to try to get rid of it. To have right understanding of it through right practice is to get rid of it. So

when you practice zazen, you should not have any idea of karma.

Student B: Thank you very much.

Student C [Katharine Thanas]: Docho-roshi, Trudy's[1] ashes are on our altar. And she is with us in our memories and in many other ways. How does she exist for us now in form or emptiness or neither-both?

Suzuki-roshi: In both-in sense of form, she exist in front of you-in each one of you. And the emptiness-she is ready to help every one of us.

Katharine: Domo arigato gozaimasu.[2]

Student D: Docho-roshi, why is it the harder I practice, the worse I feel?

Suzuki-roshi: Because-because you feel worse, you practice hard. And because you practice hard, you feel hard and worse, that's all. So don't-even though you feel bad-worse, you shouldn't be discouraged by it. That you could-that you can overcome is-means you are practicing our true way in its true sense.

Student D: Thank you very much.

Student E: Docho-roshi, I would like to say my mind, but I have a great deal of difficulty in expressing it.

Suzuki-roshi: In-?

Student E: Expressing it.

Suzuki-roshi: Expressing your mind. You are expressing your mind fully always even though you don't know.

Student F: Docho-roshi, what question can you ask a sweet potato?

Suzuki-roshi: A sweet potato? Many question [laughter]. May I eat you? [Laughs, laughter.] When may I eat enough to be [1-2 words]? Many, many question. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student F: Thank you very much.

Student G: Docho-roshi, in counting our breath practice, you said-you told us to put our emphasis-some effort on the exhalation-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: -and let the inhalation come naturally. I find my inhalation is very rugged, and it seems some-some-there seems some imbalance by putting all the effort in one direction. I wondered if there's any special reason why you emphasize the exhalation.

Suzuki-roshi: Emphasize. I mean to have complete exhale. Maybe your exhaling is not complete. Even though you try to exhale fully, may not be deep enough or complete enough.

Student G: I feel my inhalation is not complete unless I make an effort. Would there be any-would it be all right to make an effort, a slight effort, on the inhalation too?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, yes. If so [?]. But we can exhale-exhalation mean to empty your chest and to make more space for your lung, pushing everything down. So if you know how to do it-how to make complete exhalation, then naturally I think you can make good inhale.

Student G: Thank you very much.

Student H: Docho-roshi, mada.

Suzuki-roshi: Mada is-mada mean "not yet." [3] Not yet is very important words. Already because we will have-never have-we will never have a chance to say "already." [4] Mada, mada, mada is very good practice.

Student H: Thank you very much.

Student I: Docho-roshi, what is there to say?

Suzuki-roshi: Nothing.

Student I: Thank you very much.

Student J: Docho-roshi, anyways, is this it?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Long pause before and after.]

Student J: Ah. Thank you very much.

Student K: Docho-roshi, before a mirror [?] comes it has already arrived. Counting to ten never was [?] one. Walking to, there is no approaching. Crickets are chirping, and the flies fly. You tell us to extend ourself in practice. In what direction can I extend?

Suzuki-roshi: Direction? There is no direction, but not to lose anything-to be kind to everything, one by one, is the direction of the practice. So in our practice we have no particular goal or object-special object. So whatever it is you should work on it, one by one.

Student K: Thank you very much.

Student L: Docho-roshi, even if I go [4-6 words]. Is that-how can I be

with you?

Suzuki-roshi: [1-2 short sentences unclear.]

Student M: Docho-roshi, there seems to be such a difference between myself when I'm completely involved with counting my breath or in some activity, and when I have my thinking mind. I'm always hunting for some way to put the two together. Somehow it seems very dualistic to always be trying to resist my thinking mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Sometimes when you think, you should sit completely with pure thinking and not resisting thinking mind. But to rely on thinking mind is not so good. You can practice thinking, but the answer you get by thinking is not only answer you should know. You will have some direction to work on. If you have some direction to work, then you should be completely involved in the work, directed by thinking mind. That is true practice, and that is pure thinking. To think and to know the direction is two different things.

Student M: But it seems like those two minds are always battling each other beyond my control-

Suzuki-roshi: Ah-that is not thinking.

Student M: -and there's nothing I can do about it.

Suzuki-roshi: That is not thinking. That is a kind of lack of conviction. You need my stick, maybe [laughs, laughter].

Student M: Something [laughs].

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. Later I will give you big stick [laughs, laughter].

Student M: Thank you very much.

Student N: Docho-roshi, if zazen is to make us free of all things, how should we know the choice between one thing and another-how should we make it?

Suzuki-roshi: If the time come, you will completely know what [5-6 words] should be.

Student N: Thank you very much.

Student O: Docho-roshi, what am I asking you?

Suzuki-roshi: I know what you want to ask me pretty well. But as you don't ask me now, I also don't want to answer you [laughter].

Student O: But I'm not sure that I know. That's why I thought maybe

you would know [laughs, laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: I know [laughs, laughter].

Student O: Will I know sometime to ask you?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. But not now [laughter].

Student O: Thank you very much.

Student P: Docho-roshi, I always have some question, but the question is always formless-can't limit it to ask.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm Yeah. That is the nature of doubt or question. As Susan [Student O?] said, it is difficult to put your question into words-very difficult. That is why you study various teaching of Buddhism. And it will give you some way to formulate your question. That is why you study some teaching.

Student P: Thank you very much.

Student Q [Bill Shurtleff]: Docho-roshi, in walking, the floor seems smooth and cool underfoot. Several winters and several summers. Push brooms, and damp mops, and brush of feet, and foreheads from people who are here, and people who are not here, and people who are living, and people who are not living. Right here, in the midst of the three treasures, with all sentient beings, where is the mind that includes everything?

Suzuki-roshi: Whenever you feel in that way, wherever you go with that feeling, the big mind will be. But the great mind [2-4 words] more than that. But you are-you should be very grateful to know even a part of it.

Bill: Thank you very much.

Student R: Docho-roshi, although no one ever touches the bell, yet sound constantly issues forth from it. How is this possible?

Suzuki-roshi: That was-that happened [1-2 words] from beginningless beginning, and maybe [1-2 words] beginningless-endless end. That is how things exist. How to know-once you know how things exist, you know, [is] the most important point for us to work on rather than what will become of it [?] or how it start.

Student R: What do you mean "how things exist"?

Suzuki-roshi: How things exist is how you survive [?], and how you [1-2 words], and how to be kind to others, why don't you feel so good or feel good.

Student R: To understand the causes and the-?

Suzuki-roshi: "Causes" means not substantial causes. How it goes, you know, is what we mean by "cause."

Student R: How the process goes?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Because there is no substantial thing exist. Only thing we can know is how one whole big being goes.

Student R: Thank you very much.

Student S: Docho-roshi, on the sixth morning I stopped counting my breath.

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student S: On the sixth morning I stopped counting my breath. And when I inhaled I meditated on life. And when I exhaled I meditated on death. And sometimes I found that when I was inhaling I was meditating on death, and when I exhaled I was meditating on life. And on my cushion my life and death went tumbling over each other. And something I recognized was watching-something that keeps telling me it's happening the way it should. And when I am ready, I will be taken. But I still cannot accept my doubt and my fears. And when I get off of my zafu, I look for the way out.

Suzuki-roshi: When you count your exhaling and inhaling? Or exhaling only?

Student S: When I counted, I was counting exhalations.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student S: When I did this I was meditating "life, death, life, death."

Suzuki-roshi: Which?

Student S: Both.

Suzuki-roshi: Counting or-?

Student S: No, just the words. Life. Death. And-and-

Suzuki-roshi: Is there any difference between "one" and "life and death"?

Student S: They tumbled over each other.

Suzuki-roshi: Tumbled over each other?

Student S: Yes. Sometimes-

Suzuki-roshi: [Hits kyosaku (wake-up stick) twice-possibly hitting the student.] Is this "death" or "one"? Or life or death? Which?

Your practice is-your understanding of practice is not right. Okay? Think about it. What is death, and what is life? What is one, and what is two? And is there some difference between them or not? Your practice should not be tumbling over.

Student S: Thank you very much.

Student T: Docho-roshi, how long have we been sitting together, and how long will we continue to sit together?

Suzuki-roshi: No one knows. [Laughter.]

Student T: Thank you very much.

Student U: Docho-roshi, there are many beautiful rocks in your garden. Do they follow the same breathing practice we do?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student U: How do they do it? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: It is no wonder we can't know [?].

Student U: Thank you very much.

Student V: Docho-roshi! HO! [Shouted by student.] Not me. Not even a sound. What is it?

Suzuki-roshi: Sound.

Student V: Thank you for everything.

Student W: Docho-roshi, wind blows, bell rings, pain in the legs [laughter]. Who enjoys this?

Suzuki-roshi: You enjoy it. [Laughter.]

Student W: Who suffers this?

Suzuki-roshi: You suffer.

Student W: Then I am ignorance.

Suzuki-roshi: [1-2 words.] [Laughter.]



Student X: Docho-roshi, my mind says "yes," my stomach says "no!" and the result is "maybe." Yes! No! Maybe. What are these?

Suzuki-roshi: That is confusion. [Laughter.]

Student X: How do I clarify the confusion?

Suzuki-roshi: When your tummy says "yes", you should accept it. When your mind say ["no"?], you should accept it. If you cannot accept both, you should accept "maybe."

Student X: Thank you very much.

Student Y: Docho-roshi, everything is changing as I walk down the aisle. [Laughter.] I don't-I have no idea what to say. I had about a-I've had many questions, and they've all changed, and I-but I- [laughter]. I want to assert myself [laughter], so I feel I should say something. But it doesn't matter at all.

Suzuki-roshi: I don't mind at all about you. Is that okay?

Student Y: Sure.

Suzuki-roshi: Go to city right now. [Laughter.]

Student Y: As a matter of fact [laughter], can I wait a couple days? [Laughter.] Just for a while, though.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student Y: Thank you very much.

Student Z: Docho-roshi, the rice bowl is next to the soup bowl. [Laughter.] Hinyo-hinyan [Hinayana?] are not well-understand in our- and judgment is mechanical and censorial. Breathing practice is interrupted by the croakings of conceptual thought. What is it that will deliver us from our ignorance and bring us to the true light of perfect wisdom?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. If you seek for perfect wisdom, in that case there is no perfect understanding.

Student Z: What will lead usto the perfect understanding?

Suzuki-roshi: When you have brown rice, you should eat brown rice. When you have soup, you should eat soup. Whatever it is, you should be ready to take it and eat [?]. I think you can [1-2 words].

Student Z: Where is our intuition?

Suzuki-roshi: Intuition? If you know where it is, that is not intuition.

Student Z: Thank you very much.

Student AA: Docho-roshi, what is that in your hand?[5] [Silence.] What can you do with it? Is that all? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: I think you are alert enough to feel before I hit you [hits stick somewhere-sounds like table]. [Laughter.]

Sometime with laughter, sometime with tear, we could express-we could communicate our perfect practice. Now sesshin looks like over, but our actual practice started right now, like you count your breathing from one, two-and one, ten, to one. This practice will continue forever.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed verbatim by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (3/26/01).

[1] Gertrude Horton (Trudy) Dixon, one of Suzuki-roshi's students. She died at the age of 30 on July 9, 1969. (See SR-69-07-11.)

[2] Thank you very much.

[3] mada (Jap. adjective): "not yet" (with negative).

[4] It sounded like Suzuki-roshi was saying "already" in contrast to "not yet."

[5] Possibly a kyosaku.

## **7 - Sharp Iron, Pure Silk**

Sunday, September 14, 1969

Sharp Iron, Pure Silk  
Tassajara

Sunday school-a Sunday-school girl saw me in sitting, and she said: "I can do it." And she crossed her legs like this [gesturing], and then said, "And what? [Laughing, laughter.] And what?" She sit like this and said, "And what?" I was very much interested in her question because many of you have same question [laughs, laughter]. You come every day to Zen Center and practice Zen. And you ask me, "And what? [Laughs.] And what?"

I want to explain this point a little bit. I cannot-I don't think I can explain it fully because it is not something to be-to ask or to be-to answer. You should know by yourself. We-why we sit in some formal position is through your body you should experience something, you know, by doing-by formal sitting-something you yourself experience not by mind-by teaching, but by physical practice.

But to be able to sit in some form and to attain some state of mind is not perfect study. After you have full experience of mind and body, you should be able to express it in some other way, too. That happens quite naturally. You don't stick to some formal position anymore, but you can express same feeling-same state of mind, or you can convey your mind to others by some way. And even though you do not sit in some certain form-for an instance, in chair, or in standing position, or in working, or in speaking, you can-you will have same state of mind-state of mind [in] which you do not stick to anything. This is what you will study through our practice. That is the-what you will, you know-that is the purpose of practice.

Yesterday [visitor] Yasunari Kobata was speaking about something about Japanese literature. Of course, Japanese people studied Chinese culture maybe from 600-six-700 [CE], maybe. For a long long time, Japanese people are studying Chinese culture through Chinese characters. And then, as you know, Kobo-daishi[1] started kana hiragana, and then Japanese people established some [of] their own culture. You know, that is how-it is-same thing will happen in our practice. After stopping sending any students to China officially, one hundred years after stopping sending official student from government to China to study Chinese culture, at Fujiwara period,[2] especially in Michinaga's time, we had exquisite Japanese culture.[3]

Anyway, we established Japanese-beautiful Japanese culture in literature and in calligraphy too. After that period, the literature and calligraphy was not so good as we had at that time. He said some of them were too formal, and some of them is too-this is something which you may not understand-too-anyway [laughter] we could see [laughs]-we can see his ego in his writing or in his work.

Through practice we, you know, get rid of-for long long practice we get rid of our ego, you know, by training. Training means-like, you know-actually, to train in Chinese or Japanese means neru. Neru is, you know-to refine silk, you know, we wash it many times so that it can be white enough and soft enough to weave. That is neru. This part is thread, you know. To, you know, to refine the material is neru.

Or if we-sometime we use iron, you know. We-sometime the character consist of two parts. One part is just pronunciation. The other part is iron. To, you know, train-not train-how do you-what do you say? Hit iron when it is hot-while it is hot you hit iron like this. And-

Student: "Forge."

Hmm?

Student: "Forge."

Forge? No-forge is different. Forge is to-

Student: To hit the iron and you mold it or shape it-shape it.

Forge? Oh. To shape. Not to make shape. Just to make iron strong. Forge is to put something iron-melted iron in something.

Student: Temper it.

Yeah, temper. Yeah. That's the word.

We should hit it and it should-we should hit it when it is hot, you know. After [laughs] it is cold, even though you hit, it doesn't work [laughter]. Training is something like this, you know. When you are young, and when you have a lot of ego [laughs], when you have a lot of desires-evil desires, so-so to say. Even though, you know, evil desire, if you, you know, rub it, you know, and wash it, you will be quite soft, pure white silk. Even though, you know, you have various desires, and too much strength [laughs, laughter], if you hit, you know, if you temper it enough, you will have strong, you know, sharp iron like Japanese sword. This is, you know, how we training-train ourselves. He said-I was very much interested in what he said.

After that, there-after Fujiwara period, in comparison to Emperor Saga's work or Kobo-daishi's work or Tachibana Hayanari's[4] work-not so good, you know. Some of them is too-too much ego in it, you know, and some of them are too formal. You cannot see anything-any characteristic-any personality in calligraphy. The personality we see in their work should be well-trained, you know, personality-not much ego in it. The difference between-you may-I think you may understand this point: the difference between personality and ego. Ego is something to-which covers your good personality. Everyone has his own character, but when that character is-if you don't train yourself, your character is covered by ego and you cannot see-you cannot appreciate your personality. So in their work, you know, he said, we cannot completely accept-appreciate their work as he appreciate the calligraphy in Fujiwara period.

That was, maybe, because of war-civil war. Or too heavy control over people like Tokugawa government. To control people by force-by some policy or force, is not the way how to train people. The people themselves, you know, try to train themselves, not by government or force or policy.

Fujiwara period we had a lot of freedom. But at that time, there were various scholars and artist who studied arts and philosophy or religion in various way. They tried various way, and they had pretty good teachers. Anyway, this is why we practice zazen. By ourselves and for ourselves we should practice zazen. To give more pressure on yourself, you know, we say-as Dogen-zenji said: "We settle ourselves on ourselves."  
[Laughs.] Actually, Dogen-zenji was born 1200-right after the Michinaga's time. And he did not care for any fame or profit. And he devoted himself just to the truth. And he thought it may not be possible for people at his time to understand his way. But some other day, in future, someone may understand his spirit and his way. And he-that is why he wrote so many books for his descendant.

This kind of thing is not something I should talk about, but something I must show you [laughs], you know, by my everyday life, which is not so good [laughs]. And I am afraid you will study only my, you know, weak point [laughs]. I think Zen Center is developing pretty well, but we are not, you know, not yet completely on the track. We should know why we should practice zazen, and we should be able to acknowledge something really good from something which looks like good [laughs]. There is a big difference something which looks like good and which is very-really good. Unless you train yourself by hard practice, you have no eyes to see; you have no feeling to appreciate something which is very good. Only when many people have this kind of eye to see or feeling-to feel something good, will we not [sic] have really good teachers and students. This is a mutual practice, as Buddha said. That Buddha was great is because people were great. When people were not ready, there will be no Buddha [laughs]. That is very true. I don't want every one of you to be a great teacher [laughs]-I don't. But most of us must have to [two?]-must have eyes to see which is good and which is not so good. This kind of mind will be acquired by practice.

Another thing he said was-no, he didn't, you know, say actually in this way, but-he said perhaps even in Fujiwara period Japanese people did not completely-were no so good as Chinese people-Chinese culture in calligraphy. He was talking about-mostly about calligraphy. As you know, Chinese people, you know, use always brush more than Japanese do. And Chinese people-in China they have various brush. And we Japanese has-have no material to make good brush. We have many bamboo [laughs], but we have not much sheep or various animal ...  
[Tape turned over. Sentence was probably not finished. Original transcript continued with: from which to make brushes.]

... of it.

So our-Japanese people's training in calligraphy cannot be so good as Chinese people. That will be the reason-main reason. But before-before [Japanese] people master Chinese calligraphy completely, they started already some unique-unique calligraphy to Japanese people-Japanese-as a Japanese calligraphy. This point is very interesting point. Before

Japanese people completely study Chinese way, Japanese people already started his own way too-Japanese way too. Maybe that is the destiny of the, you know, some people who was born in some particular place.

But Buddhist has been-have been very sincere about his point. That is why we have transmission. Especially Chinese master put strong emphasis on transmission. And Japanese people-Zen students or teachers-put emphasis on transmission. That is a reason why is to master, you know, teacher's way completely. And-and then you should be free from it. That is very hard practice. That is why it takes so long time to be a Zen master. It is not knowledge. It is not some power. The point is whether he is trained enough to make himself pure white material and very sharp iron. At that time, without trying to do anything, you will have-you can express your true personality in its true sense. If we cannot see any personality in his work, or in his personality, means that he is not yet eliminated his habitual way.

You know, my habit [laughs], you know, is absentmindedness [laughter]. So naturally I am very forgetful [laughs]. Something wrong with my, you know, with my brain, maybe, or this is my inborn tendency. I worked on it pretty hard. I started to work on it for-when I went to my teacher.[5] Thirty-I was thirteen years [laughing, laughter]. I was very forgetful, even when I was thirteen. It is not because of old age that I am so forgetful. Not because of my memory, you know; that is my tendency. I worked pretty hard on-on this, but I couldn't do anything about this. But while I am doing this, you know, I became more and more-I could get rid of my self, you know-selfish way of doing something. If the purpose of, you know, practice-training is just to correct our weak point, I think it is almost impossible to renew or to correct your way-habit or way. It is almost impossible. But it does not-even so, it is necessary [laughs], you know, to work on it, because if you work on it, your character will be, you know, trained and your ego will be got rid of.

People say I am very patient, but actually I am very impatient character, you know. My inborn character is very impatient. But while I am working on my forgetfulness, now I don't try to [laughing]-to correct it. I gave up. But I'm-I don't think I-my effort was in vain, because I studied many things. I have to be very patient [laughs], you know, to correct my habit. And I must be very patient when people criticize me, you know, about my forgetfulness. "Oh! He is so forgetful. [Laughing.] We cannot rely on him at all. What should we do with him?" And teachers scold me, you know, every day: "This forgetful boy!" [Laughs, hits stick on table several times.]

But I didn't like to leave him, you know. I want-just I wanted to stay with him. I-I was very patient whatever-with whatever he says-he said. So I'm-I think I am very patient with some others' criticism about me. You know, whatever they say, I don't mind so much. I am not so angry

with them. Actually, if you know how important-how important it is to train yourself in this way, I think you will understand what is Buddhism. And this is the most important point in our practice.

As Buddha said: Nin-nin is patience, endurance, virtue of endurance-is greater than virtue of observing all the precepts we have. The virtue of endurance is greater than the merit of asceticism. That was what Buddha said. I think this point is very important for our practice, especially, I think, for American students.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 8/4/00.

[1] Kobo-daishi: Posthumous name of Kukai (774-835): creator of the hiragana alphabet and founder of the Shingon school of Japanese Buddhism.

[2] The Fujiwara family dominated the Japanese Imperial Court from 867-1160 CE by means of a succession of regencies, chancellorships, and imperial marriages.

[3] Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027): dajo daijin (chief minister of state) under whose leadership the power of the Fujiwara dynasty rose to its zenith and Japanese literature in particular flourished (e.g., The Tale of Genji and The Pillow Book).

[4] Emperor Saga (Saga-tenno, 52nd emperor of Japan, reigned 810-823), Kobo-daishi, and Tachibana no Hayanari(d. 842) were the three great brush-pen calligraphy masters (sanpitsu, "Three Great Brushes") in the early 9th century during the Heian period (794-1185 CE).

[5] Gyokujun So-on.

## **8 - Why I Became a Priest**

Tuesday, September 16, 1969

Why I Became a Priest  
San Francisco

I have not much chance to think about why I came to America or why I became a priest, but today when-while I was talking with Peter[1] about something-my personal history-I had to think about, you know, why I came to America. And right now, I am thinking about why I became a priest [laughs].

My father[2] was a priest, and his temple[3] was quite-not small, but very poor temple. We haven't not-we had very difficult time, even though he-my father wanted to give me some better clothing, he-he haven't-he hasn't-he hadn't not much money.

I know-I remember his father was making candle. When I came to America, you know, sometime I made a candle by the left-over candle, you know, with left-over candle. It is pretty, you know-usually no one make candle, you know, to sell, but he-he made a lot of-he was making a lot of candle with iron, you know, he made himself some-something to make candle, and he sold it-not near my temple, but he went [to] Oiso City,[4] maybe four, five miles from my temple.

And I think that was the time when my father [was] expelled from [laughs] another temple[5] and came to that temple.[6] I can imagine how poor we are by that-only by that story. So even children wear hakama. Do you know hakama? [7] A kind of skirt-skirt-like-ceremonial, you know. When we have celebration we would wear hakama.

But I haven't any hakama,so I have to-I would attend the ceremony[8] at-in my school without hakama, and I was, you know, very much-I didn't feel so good, you know, because I had no hakama to wear. But somehow he bought hakama and gave it to me to wear for the ceremony. And he, you know, gave [me] the hakama, and-and I-when I wear that hakama in the-as my friend did, my father said: "That is not the right-correct way to wear it. You should wear like this, and you should tie hakama this way," you know. [Sounds like he is gesturing.] No one tie hakama at that time in that way. Maybe that is too formal [laughs].

So when I almost went out of my front gate-front gate was big gate, you know. Even though temple was very poor, but that temple-once that temple was very big temple in that area, so there was a big gate. As soon as I get out of the gate, I, you know, untie [laughs] the hakama-untied the hakama, and tied it as my friend did, without knowing my father was watching me [laughs, laughter], you know. He was very angry with me, untied the hakama, and tie it in some other way.

And he-I remember he was very short-tempered. When I noticed he was running out of the temple with some-something-maybe stick or something [laughs.] He was running after me. Of course I already started to run away from the [laughs, laughter]-temple. It must be-it might be very happy for him-wearing his boy, you know, new hakama for himself and go to school as most people wear-most people do. But, you know, but he was very angry, you know. I think that is why he was so angry, you know. After a great effort, he bought a hakama for-for myself and-but at that moment, you know, I didn't appreciate his kindness so much and untied [laughs] the way he untie the hakama and



change the style. And I think how he felt-I think I understand how he felt, but-

And background of this kind of difficulty for-for priest was the policy of Meiji government. At that time, almost all the-at the beginning when he was born-my father was born, most temples-Buddhist temple destroyed, and the property which belonged to various Buddhist temple was-was offered to shrine-Shinto shrine. And before Meiji period, Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple was in the same site. And Buddhist rather taking care of Shinto shrine. And-but policy of Meiji government was to make Shintoism as a national, you know, religion. But Meiji government didn't have not much-not much power to afford various shrine, so what they did is to take away the property which belonged to Buddhist temple and change the property to Shinto shrine's property. And-and so they-they lost almost all the property at that time.

There-my father told me what has happened in his time in various temp- [partial word]-in Bud- [partial word]-various Buddhist temple at that time. For an instance, there were-there is a big shrine called Hattasan near my temple.[9] But that-all the-all the property which belonged to Hatta shrine was property of small temple in-near the shrine-Hatta shrine. Or that temple, Tendai temple, was taking care of Hatta shrine. Not only the changing the title of the property to Shinto, but also they destroyed Buddhist gate for the building, you know, for Shinto shrine. Even Shinto shrine-Shint- [partial word]-had Buddhist gate which is built like a Buddhist temple. [On] both side there were, you know, guardian of Buddhist-Nio-sama-two Nio.[10] And that is not proper to-for the Shinto shrine. So they had to destroy that kind of gate. So after destroying those gates and throwing out the guardian for the temple, they made those temple into a shrine-Shinto shrine. That kind of things happened in various famous temples in Japan.

We have Hattasan-Hatta shrine, or Akiha Shrine,[11] which was not Shinto shrine. Akihasan or Hattasan was not Shinto-Shintoism. It-it was famous for Buddhist temple. But now it is Shinto shrine, and there is no Nio-sama in those temples-shrine. After throwing out those Buddhist symbols and images, the governor of the district burned it and told someone who was taking care of the shrine to make ofuro-ofuro. Do you know? Ofuro-it is "bath"-hot bath [laughs].[12] And he-he said: "It is nice to have-to make a-to have a bath made by Buddhist symbol-symbols." [Laughs.] That-the old man who was taking care of the temple for a long time said: "It may be Buddha's mercy," you know [laughs]. "Buddha"-or "Buddha is so kind to make unusually," you know, "unusual bath for you." It was so-he was-he-"I was amazed at his mercy to make," you know, "to make you a good bath."

So [laughs] that kendai-means "governor"-Hayashi-his name was Hayashi.[13] Hayashi-Governor Hayashi was scared of [laughs] that statement, or scared of him [the caretaker]. And in one week he became a blind-he became a blind man. I don't know why, but [laughs]

people say that is because Hayashi the government-governor acted very severely for the Buddhist. That is why he became a blind [man]. And he believed, you know.

Since then he became afraid of power of Buddhism, and he went to Aburayama.[14] Aburayama is small-not small but pretty big old, old Buddhist temple where there is no Shinto shrine. So he went to Aburayama and to pray for his eyes. There was hot baths in that-in the shrine. Everyday he-he stayed at that shr- [partial word]-at that temple and taking hot baths there, and prayed for his eyes. I don't know what has happened to his eyes, but people remember. People-this is a famous story which people tell with each other. In this way, Buddhist temple at that time had a very difficult time.

My father told me this kind of story once in a while. As I was very young, I was very much impressed by that story-by that kind of story. As I haven't not much, you know-I-as I couldn't have usual life as my friend had, naturally, you know, my friend sometime making fun of me, you know. I have no money to, you know, to go to barber, or my father didn't have money to buy clipper, you know. So he would shave my head [laughs] with his razor, you know. This is the most-this is the less expensive way to shave. Whenever I appear in shaved head, you know, my friend making-would make fun of me, slapping my head [laughs, laughter], and feeling my head. So my life at school was not so happy. So I was rather stay, you know-I was rather to stay in classroom than play with my friend in schoolyard.

I th- [partial word]-I think that is the time when I made up my mind to be a priest, again [?] [laughs], you know. But, you know, not usual priest. I wanted to be a unusual priest to-with, you know, to tell them what is Buddhism and what is the truth, or good enough to give some lecture to-to the-to them, you know. So I determined [laughs] to be a good priest.

And my teacher would-used to tell me how to be a great man [laughs.] "Unless we have difficult time," you know, "no one can be a great man." So the people in that district-there is no-there was no great man in that area because the people in that area, Kanagawa Prefecture,[15] does not like to go to Tokyo and study hard. People at that-in that area stay always-anyway, doesn't have enough courage to go out of the country or state or prefecture.

"So if you," he said, "if you want to-want to be successful, you should go out of this state or prefecture." So I determined [laughs] go out of the Kanagawa Prefecture. So I decided, anyway, to leave my home, and I was thinking about where should I go. But once in a while, maybe twice or three times a year, a priest, my father's disciple,[16] would visit my father. So I know him pretty well. And I liked him so much. So I asked him, you know, to take me to his temple [laugh], and he was amazed. And he said yes. So I asked my father to go to my-to go to

Shizuoka Prefecture, to go with him. So my father also agreed with it, and I went to my master's temple[17] when I was thirteen years old.

I had, of course, very difficult time at my teacher's temple. I was too young, you know, to follow the training of that temple. When I was there, when I arrived at my teacher's-my master's temple, one hundred days of training was going on. There were seven or eight monks, and they have-they had their special training, getting up pretty early and reciting-practicing zazen, reciting sutra.

At that time I saw famous a Zen master-Oka Sotan-and his disciple Oka Kyugaku,[18] and those famous teachers were there. I was fortunate to see them, even though I-I didn't know they were so famous. But training was very strict.

The-Oka Sotan-roshi was a-did not become a archbishop, but under him we have many noted scholars and monks and Zen masters. He is, maybe, the-one of the most important person in our Soto history in Meiji period. Yasutani-roshi's, you know, grand-teacher is Oka-roshi. And my-of course, my master's teacher is Oka-roshi. And Eto [Sokuo]-Professor Eto's teacher was Oka-roshi. And there is numberless powerful teacher under him-appeared under him. So I think I was lucky to be there. And I was encouraged by-by them.

But difficult thing is to get up-as I get up. Although they didn't say "You should get up," because I was so young-so they-they didn't say "You should get up." But I tried to get up anyway. Sometime I was too sleepy, so [laughs] I was listening to their reciting sutra in bed, you know: Kan ji zai bo satsu-[laughs] That is-was-that is the first sutra I learned by heart, you know [laughs, laughter]: Kan ji zai bo satsu gyo Hanya Haramita.

It is quite easy to recite sutra if you listen to it when you are quite young. You don't need any instruction, as you haven't [laughs], you know-you don't-you don't have-without telling you how to recite Prajñāparamita Sutra, almost all of you can recite it.

But, you know, to me, at that time, layman was my enemy [laughs], you know, who would make fun of Bud- [partial word]-monks and Buddhists, and young, you know, young Bud- [partial word]-young trainee, you know. At that time, the-as the policy of government was like-was like that, the policy of government at that time [was] how to make weaker-make Buddhism weaker, and how to make Shinto powerful as a national religion. That was the fundamental polic- [partial word]-religious policy of Meiji government. Maybe that is why in Meiji government, we have a pretty good priest, you know. They were well-trained priest by wrong policy of Meiji government [laughs]. You know, they were so-anyway, Buddhists at that time suffered a lot, directly or indirectly. But until I understand this kind of history or policy of Meiji government, I was rather angry with people, at least who treated me

[laughs], you know, so badly.

I think-I think that is the reason why I became a priest, you know. And this reason also is the reason why I came to America, you know. After I studied why we had so difficult time, I could solve the-some antagonism towards people. I have no more antagonistic, you know, feeling against them. But how to, you know, make them understand Buddhist way was my next, you know, problem, which is-which I found it almost impossible. So I gave up. I almost gave up. [Laughs.]

So I decided to go abroad. Or if-if I cannot go to somewhere like America, I thought I-I would go to Hokkaido, you know, where there is not much people who knows what is Buddhism. But when I asked-after my schooling, after I finished my schooling, I asked my master to go to America. And he said no. "Then how about Hokkaido?" [laughing] I said. He was, you know, furious and mad at me. So, you know, I knew there must be some reason why. And I knew he loved me very much. So I thought I should give up my former nation-notion of going abroad.

But my, you know, heart didn't change [laughs]. So after finishing what my teacher told me, I came to America. But it was-maybe I was already too old to come. And as I gave up study of language, you know, I almost forgot all the English I-I studied at school.

But anyway, I arrived at San Francisco ten years ago. And-and so I feel very happy to be here, you know-to have many unknown [laughs] students who don't know not much about Buddhism [laughter]. You think Buddhism is something good-some good teaching, and that makes me very happy [laughs, laughter]. If you have, you know, some preconceived idea about Buddhism like some Japanese, you know, people, I-I don't think you would be a Buddhist, partly because, you know, because of misunderstanding.

So naturally I was, and I am maybe, very critical with old style of Buddhism. I was always curious about why people does not like Buddhism, you know. So I was also very critical with Buddhist way. I have had very negative feeling about Buddhis- [partial word]-Buddhist way in one side. But on the other hand I know what was, you know, true Buddhism. I s- [partial word]-

I haven't-I have not much time to study Buddhism in some scholarly way, or I haven't not much time to practice even zazen, because I was busy in everyday life of-everyday activity of-everyday activity as a priest.

So what we, you know, wanted to establish-what I want to establish here is some, you know, Buddhism in some pure form. Even though it may be difficult, but it is much-you will be happy even though it is difficult to study something pure and something original, forgetting all about bad, demoralized, so-called-it "traditional," you know, Buddhist

way. The Buddhist way we have in Japan is a outcome of various element like government policy. Some, you know, people use-have used, you know, Buddhist power for himself. Some ruler of the-some of our rulers tried to ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... for the Buddhist. And some of the bad side of Buddhism is created by Buddhist rulers or Buddhist-they created-they destroyed Buddhism by themselves, sometime.

So there is no wonder why, you know, Japanese people has-haven't not much good feeling about Buddhism. But here not much people knows what is Buddhist way, so it is easier to restore the Buddhism in its original form. Right now I regret, you know, that I didn't study so hard-more deeply, more widely. I didn't study Buddhism. But I think you will study, you know, our way more freely and more deeply and more widely. That is my hope, you know. I -I don't think I can do it, but my successor will achieve it.

This kind of feeling is the feeling most, you know, monks and priest in my age may have. Not only me, but also almost all the priest in my age will have it. And the feeling I have, you know-I had will be the feeling the-almost all the young priest may have, even in-in nowadays.

So I-I hope you will have various supporters. If you become sincere enough and pure enough to study Buddhism for sake of Buddhism-not for sake of yourself or sake of fame or with some gaining idea. If you study it for sake of Buddhism or for sake of truth you will have, you know, many supporters. Not only American people but also Japanese people will support you. That is, I think, quite sure. Even though you are not so successful right now, in five or ten days, I think, you will have many friends. I think that is quite sure.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: Is there any abstention without repression?

Suzuki-roshi: Without what?

Student A: Repression.

Suzuki-roshi: Refreshing?

Student A: Do you know the word "repression"?

Student B: Repression. Making yourself forget about something.

Suzuki-roshi: Is there-will you repeat your question?

Student A: What I am interested in is the-well, I don't know how to-well, like in this culture the Christian thing gets a little schizoid, you

know, and- [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Without-

Student A: -because of its dogma, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: Now my question is like-about-well, the way you see Buddhism in terms of abstention is-through the activity of abstention is there inevitably repression, so the word "repression" being a denial of a-of a rightful energy of your organism?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. [Laughs, laughter.] I think I understand what you mean. That we-we-how to do it is to know more about our organic, you know, power, or to know more about our desires or tendency. That is the study of human nature, maybe.

And you-you can say, you know, Buddhism is a kind of study of human nature, you know. That is Buddhism. To know human nature is to know-to understand Buddhism. As Dogen-zenji said: "To study Buddhism is to study ourselves-to study yourself or ourselves." So if you study ourselves you will-it means that you are studying-already studying Buddhism. And to study Buddhism, to study ourselves' human nature means, you know, to have more-deeper understanding -or deeper and more balanced-more wide understanding of each of our human nature which is analyzed in various way.

But usually we think we have, you know, so much desires and so-so many numbers of ideas, you know. But it is not so, you know. One desire will include everything, you know. To know one desire fully means to know-should be to know various desires we have. To have this kind of understanding for each one of our desires is another way of studying our desires, you know. Do you understand?

For an instance, there is nature of man and nature of woman, you know. But if you understand what is woman-nature of woman fully, you will understand what is the nature of man and what is fundamental nature of human nature. This kind of understanding is more advanced and more deeper understanding of some special nature of human being. The Buddhists understand things in that way-not only understand some special nature, but also we understand various nature in term of inter-relationship. This kind of thing is what I am talking [about] always, you know, so I think you may understand it-what I mean.

So, you know, without controlling some, you know, special desire, with, you know, more deeper understanding of it, we, you know, act, and we extend our desire-not some special desires, but all desires we have. In short, more harmonious way. And that is not-that is more than harmony of desires which you will acquire by our practice.

Tonight I wanted to talk about something like this, you know-like polishing tile, you know: story of polishing tile?[19] Or the-Nangaku[20] said, you know: "When a cart doesn't go, which is better: to hit a cart or to hit a horse?" [Laughs.] Or he said: "If you want to practice zazen-zazen has-not to sit," you know. "If you want to achieve buddhahood, there is no special-there is no special type in buddhahood." That kind of statement express the truth, you know, which we have before you analyze our activity: "this is zazen practice and this is everyday practice," or "this is zazen and this is not zazen," or "this is buddhahood and this is not buddha." I think I-we must study this point more. Do you have some other question?

Student B: Roshi, you said we should study this point more. When-when do you think we should study? How should we study it?

Suzuki-roshi: How you study?

Student B: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: [Whack!] [Hits table, probably with the end of the teaching stick.] Like this! [Laughs.] Do you understand? How you study is, you know-if you-if you become really a member of Zen Center, that is how you study. [Laughs.] If you are completely involved in our activity, that is how to study. I think we can do it, you know, even though we don't know what will happen to us [laughs, laughter]. We may starve to death at Tassajara. But, you know, I don't think we will starve to death in Tassajara or in new building.[21] I don't think so. So if we determine to study Buddhism, you can study it. And you will have chance to study.

Some-some questions? Hai.

Student C [Reb Anderson]: You have talked before about how we should be a obstacle to our practice-

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] It means that, you know, when you-Buddhism is not something else, you know. Buddhism is you yourself. When there is some obstacle, you will-because of the obstacle, you will see it. You will see what is right. You know, if there is no obstacle there is no right. You cannot see it. Because of something-because of the moon, you know, we can see sunbeam, you know, by-by the reflection of it. Because of the moon we can see the sunbeam. So when you find yourself as a obstacle of the truth, you know, that is rather negative expression of reality.

Maybe, you know, you feel as if you are-you cannot be a Buddhist, you know. You will be-you feel as if you are always obstacle of truth. But you-you yourself is already a part of Buddha. So-so whether you feel, whether or not you feel you are Buddha, you are Buddha. It means that.

So don't be disturbed by-don't be discouraged by your practice. Just you practice it-there is Buddhism. I cannot explain it so well, but the word [s]-that we are obstacle of truth-is very good way to express it, to understand it. One more question please. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, I understand you to say that the government policy against Buddhism is what influenced you to become a priest. Is that right? Or did it help?

Suzuki-roshi: I couldn't follow you. Excuse me?

Student D: Did I understand you to say that the government policy against Buddhism helped influence you to become a priest? Is that right?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. It helped us, you know. Because of that I, you know-Buddhist had firm confidence-or not "confidence," but fixed their mind to study it completely. And they had chance to check up what is Buddhism, you know. When we are spoiled [laughs] by people, we have no chance to study ourselves. I thought, you know, there must be some reason why they didn't like Buddhism, or something wrong with-with our way. Maybe I thought in that way. I think for Buddhism that is very good.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (2/12/01).

N

Zoun-in temple, Mori-machi, Shizuoka-ken: I

Hattasan temple, SE of Fukuroi-shi, Shizuoka-ken:

Source: <http://kankou.pref.shizuoka.jp/english/WESTERN/east.html>

[1] Peter Schneider interviewed Suzuki-roshi for the Wind Bell on Nov.



9, 1969 (SR-69-11-09). This reference was to a different occasion.

[2] Butsumon Sogaku Suzuki (c. 1858-1933).

[3] Shogan-ji is probably the temple Suzuki-roshi is referring to: the temple where he was born and lived until the age of eleven. It is located on a hill above the village of Tsuchisawa, on the edge of the city of Hiratsuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan (D. Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber*, p. 4). Hiratsuka is approximately 20 linear miles southwest of Yokohama.

[4] Oiso-machi (town) is three linear miles southwest of Hiratsuka-shi (city) on the north shore of Sagami-wan (bay), Kanagawa Prefecture.

[5] Zoun-in temple, Mori-machi, Shizuoka Prefecture, central Japan. Mori is approximately 23 linear miles west of Yaizu-shi and 12 linear miles north of the Pacific Ocean. Butsumon was abbot of Zoun-in from April 1891 to circa 1901 (*ibid.*, p. 7).

[6] That is, Butsumon returned to Shogan-ji-circa 1901.

[7] Traditional men's full trousers in the shape of a split baggy garment.

[8] In 1912, schools observed a ceremony marking the beginning of the Taisho era, the reign of Taisho Tenno (personal name Yoshihito).

[9] Hattasan temple is located just southeast of Fukuroi, western Shizuoka Prefecture. The temple S.R. mentions is probably Zoun-in, as it is approximately 8 linear miles from Hattasan temple.

[10] Nio or Nio-sama or Nio-son ("good kings," "kings of compassion") are the two guardian figures placed on either side of a monastery or temple gate to banish evil spirits and thieves and to protect children (e.g., L. Frédéric, *Buddhism*, Flammarion, 1995, p. 248).

[11] Located at the foot of Mt. Akihasan (north of Mori and northwest of Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture, central Japan), Akiha-jinja is one of the oldest shrines in Japan.

[12] ofuro (Jap.): o (honorific) + furo, bath.

[13] Possibly a samurai family of the Shizuoka clan (E. Papinot, *Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan*, Vol. I, Ungar, reprinted 1964, p. 147).

[14] Aburayama-kannon is located near Mt. Aburayama, 5 linear miles south of Fukuoka-shi, in central Kyushu Island, Japan.

[15] S.R. is therefore referring to the years at Shogan-ji temple.

[16] Gyokujun So-on. For a discussion of his age, see SR-69-10-14.

[17] Zoun-in.

[18] Spelling is confirmed, but biographical information is not yet known.

[19] In Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), translated by Thomas and C. C. Cleary in The Blue Cliff Record (Appendix, p. 566).

[20] Nangaku Ejo (Jap.) or Nanyue Huairang (Chin.) (677-744): Chan master; dharma successor of Daikan Eno; master of Baso Doitsu. The exchange referred to by Suzuki-roshi took place between Nangaku and Baso.

[21] City Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco.

## **1969 oktober (1)**

### **1 - Question and Answer**

Tuesday, October 14, 1969

Question and Answer  
San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: Since I resigned from Soko-ji Temple, I-my mind become more busy than before. It is ridiculous, but actually it is so.

Physically I am feeling much better. But mentally [laughs]-I'm not confused, but I'm reflecting on what I have been doing for ten years. And as I do not stay with you so long time when our members [are] increasing a lot, I feel a great distance, you know, between you and me. That is another problem for me. Anyway, I think we must find our way. And I think it is a time for us to find out some way to develop our buddha's way.

As I have nothing to talk about tonight, so I want you to give me some question. And I want especially new students to give me some questions. Whatever it is, that is all right. So please give me some questions. Hai.

Student A: I just finished reading something that said everything in life is necessary. Do you agree?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student A: I just finished reading something that referred to everything

in life as necessary: the actions, the things that happen, are all necessary. In other words, the war, peace, love, hate, they're all necessary in life. Is that right?

Suzuki-roshi: Necessary. You mean there is some reason for everything to happen? Or-

Student A: I guess you could call it that, or something that-no matter what happens, it's the individual that counts. It doesn't matter what's happening in the whole. It's just the individual that will eventually count in the end. That's what I'm referring to-that you can't do anything about the whole but you can do something about yourself.

Suzuki-roshi: That's pretty big question. It is-I think you are asking me about Buddhist view of life-human life. Is it?

Student A: I guess I'm asking a question about the way I've felt in the past months-the way I look at things. And it seems as though when I look at things in this way, everything seems to have fallen in place. Everything seems to have meaning. It doesn't seem to trouble you at all.

Suzuki-roshi: Meaning. Yeah. When we say-you know, you-your question, I think, more than, you know-actually what you mean-that question may be the question of why we practice zazen, you know, or why is it necessary to set up some rules or why is it necessary for human being to have some certain culture. The meaning of life-when we say "meaning," it is already problem of-question of some certain view of life. When you see or when you understand our life from some certain viewpoint, we say, "It is meaningful," not "It does not mean anything." But when you say, "Everything is meaningful," maybe it means we should have a wider viewpoint without sticking to some certain viewpoint. Then everything will have some-will have meaning. Everything which happens in our human life or in nature has some meaning-has meaning.

From Buddhist viewpoint, as you know, everything happens by some karma, you know, good and bad karma or good-no, excuse me, karma. Good and bad-when we say "good and bad" it is-it has already problem of morality. The karma is actually the causality. When something happens [it] has some reason why things happens. So without any reason, nothing happens. That is karma in its wide sense.

But it doesn't mean in this sense, in its wide sense, we do not have any idea of some particular being, you know. Things which we see in some form or color is a tentative form and color. But by itself there is no self-nature. But what exist is just karma. And it-karma appears in various way. That is, maybe, the ka- [partial word]-idea of karma in its wide sense.

But this kind of karmic life for us, each individual, may be good and bad karma: agree or something which we want to accept, easy-easy accept it-which could be easily accepted, or which is not so easy to accept it. In this sense, we have good and bad karma. And this karma, in its more narrow sense, will explain why we have problems in our human life.

So in its narrow sense, if you do something bad you will have bad result. And that is karma. But we should not-no one-or everyone want to be free from karma. That is-naturally we have that kind of desire to be free-how to be free from karma or how to improve our karma. When we think-when we come to this problem, that is the problem of practice, or problem of good understanding of our teaching. Teaching is provided to solve this kind of problem.

So in our-especially in Mahayana Buddhism, instead of karma, idea of karma, we have bodhisattva vow. And to be free from karma-it is not possible for us to be free from the law of cause and effect. But it is possible for us to use-to have good use of it. To help others, you know, we suffer. And to help others we [are] involved in karma. You know, that is-because there is law of karma we can improve our life, and we can-and even though we suffer, we can-by this-by suffering or being involved in karma, we can help others. So idea of the bodhisattva's way to help others even before to help ourselves is closely related to the idea of karma.

It does not mean-everything has-the point is not to understand everything, to say, "Everything is meaningful" because everything has some reason why it appears in that way. Everything has some reason why it appears. It's, you know-it's more, I think-it does not mean so much. You know, it is same thing if I drink a cup of water we will not-I will not be any more thirsty [laughs]. It doesn't mean so much. That is-that may not be the meaning of karma-all [?] the meaning of karma. But it is one of the many-one of the understanding or interpretation of karma in Buddhism.

Another, you know-when we misunderst- [partial word]-when we-there is some danger, you know, when you say, "Whatever it is, there is some reason for them to appear. So it is meaningful," you know. It-it means we must find out some reason. [For] even a stone in roadside we must find out some reason, we must [not?] ignore things, we must find the value of it. In this way, if you-someone may understand in this way, but someone may say, "Whatever we do, that is all right," you know, "because there is some reason," you know, "why I do this kind of thing" [laughs]. If you understand that way, that is not our understanding.

We say, you know, there is no natural buddha. Even buddha-if they do not practice, you know-if he didn't, you know, follow bodhisattva's way, he couldn't have-he couldn't be a buddha. So we say there is no natural buddha. Buddhahood is called kai.[1] Kai? Ka is fruit. It is, you know, "result"-no, "point," some point which he attained by some practice.

That is kai, "result." In morning service[2] we say: kakai muryo no kensho, instead of saying all the sages in religious world. Kakai is the sea of the fruit world. So fruit has some, you know, some cause or some flower, you know, result. Fruit-"sea of fruit," we say. [Kakai muryo no kensho means] "innumerable buddha-innumerable sages in the fruitful world." The-all the sage is supposed to be someone who practiced hard to attain that kind of stage.

Okay? Some question? Hai.

Student B: Roshi, before-two weeks ago, you said that you weren't altogether satisfied with our practice here.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: I didn't know exactly what you meant.

Suzuki-roshi: Altogether satisfied? [Laughs, laughter.] I forgot why I say so. Maybe at that time, not altogether [?]. At least I think we are, you know, making genuine effort, I think. Maybe that is why I said so. Some-some more questions?

Student C: Roshi? Could you say something about food practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Fruit?

Student C: Food.

Suzuki-roshi: Food practice-food practice, oh [laughs, laughter]. Our practice is more prac- [partial word]-special practice than just physical one. Maybe to provide some strong, good food will be important, but the more important point will be the attitude to eat, to take food.

Maybe Buddhist food practice is one extreme, but very spiritual. We emphasized spiritual side. You know, when I came to America-I think some of you already knows about it-about what I am going to say-talk about-you know, there is-there-there is Toyo market, you know. Before my wife came, that market-that store was opened, and she had not much customers. So naturally, they haven't fresh vegetables or fruits because she hasn't not much customers. And she had to throw [away] a lot of fruits and vegetables. I didn't ask her to give me the vegetables, you know, which she put them in garbage can. But I-I-I would. I couldn't help taking old, you know, apples or old-the most, you know, old green onions because I was, you know, I-it is a kind of habit, you know, to use something old first, leaving something fresh for next meal. This kind of-this is, you know-most-some people told me that is very foolish way. If you, you know, take the best one you will have best one always. So to use worst one is the most foolish way.

I thought I agree with him-I agreed with him. But actually [laughs], you

know, I use-I would use something old first. My master[3] would told me, "Your father," you know-my master was my father's disciple and I went to my master when I was thirteen years old. And he would-told me, "Your master always-your father always picked up some vegetables in the-in the stream." Maybe some farmer up a river throws [away] some old vegetables. And my father-he said, "Your father would pick up old vegetables. That is our way," he said.

I think this is-I don't think this is best way, but we rather emphasize the spiritual practice rather than physical practice-which food has more power, or which food is more rich or stronger. I think this side should not be forgotten. How to make best use of food will be the point, without throwing away-without-with some respect for our food will be the most important point. Hai.

Student C: What do you mean by spiritual practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Spiritual practice? To-what I mean-to-to-to have-everything has buddha-nature, you know, so we must respect them. Everything has-because it is closely related to our practice especially. So, the-to treat food is-should be like to treat our physical body. That kind of attitude is important. This is not just vegetable. It is a part of our body. As Dogen says,[4] to-you should treat a piece-a grain of rice as you treat your eyes. That is what I mean by spiritual practice. Or without maybe-without discrimination, we should accept-we should take food, whatever it is. Whatever it is, if something I offered with respect, then we should not refuse it. This kind of practice, I mean.

Student D: Can you speak about how we can help the zazen grow stronger in everyday life, in everyday practice?

Suzuki-roshi: I think if you continue your zazen even for one month, if you don't practice, you know, you will see the difference, you know. The day you practice and the day you didn't. So-

Student D: Sometimes-

Suzuki-roshi: Some [laughs]-sometime, you know, you-yeah, that is maybe everyone's problem. Sometime you may not, you know-you may-you don't want to, you know, get up so early, or you will be tired of it. That is quite natural, you know. But to be natural [laughing] is not always right. "I should be natural, so when I am s- [partial word]-we are sleepy, we should sleepy-we should sleep." That-I don't think that is best way.

Student D: Sometimes our sitting-in our practice of sitting, is very regular. It seems to be getting stronger. And our everyday life is going in another direction. So I'm confused.

Suzuki-roshi: Reaction. [Laughs.] Confused. We have some tendency,

you know. And that tendency is-all the tendency-if we follow our tendency always, we will be lost. The tendency may be based on some various desires. So I think it is necessary for us to-to have some harmony or someone said reason, you know, in our life. To keep some tone or reason or harmony, it is necessary to-to give some control over various desires, I think. So, you know, we are liable to-we are some tendency-we have various tendency. But I think if you try to-try not to-not follow your tendency, you know, you will-I think, if you try always not to follow your tendency, then you will have some-mostly you will-you can control-or not "control"-you will have some harmony in your life. Control or-that is a kind of negative expression, but that is very adequate expression although it is not complete suggestion.

You may not agree with me [laughs], but it is true. Our tendency is to have something good-to eat something good always. But if you eat always something good, your tummy will be sick [laughs]. But our tendency is to try to eat something good always. Hai.

Student E: Roshi, while you were gone, back here there was an earthquake here.

Suzuki-roshi: Earthquake, yeah. Mm-hmm. That morning I came back.

Student E: [Sentence unclear. Sounds like: Is it bad for us?]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: Oh. What would then is the meaning about our everyday practice if this whole community had been destroyed that night?

Suzuki-roshi: Everything swept [laughs] up?

Student E: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: What will be the-our practice [laughter]-

Student E: No-

Suzuki-roshi: -in that situation?

Student E: No. I guess I was reflecting. What is the meaning of our practice if at any moment we can die, as a community or as a person. It occurred to me that there was nothing protecting us from death-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -ever. For the [1-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. [Laughs, laughter.] I think that is why, you know, I don't firmly believe in our next life or, you know-I'm sorry I have to say

so, you know. I have to confess [laughs], you know. I have-I haven't very strong belief in next life. But some people, you know, believe in it very firmly. And those people, you know, has-mostly, those people has good practice. I envy their practice. But at the same time, to believe in that kind of belief extremely strong, that may-that will be-that will not be so good belief.

You know, we live in the actual world. And at the same time we believe in the world which should be, you know-which we want to be like that, you know-the world which should be like that or which we want to be like that. And our next life will be the life, you know-our next world or life is the life which we want to be like that. Actually we live in this world. Without this kind of world we cannot survive. I think everyone has this kind of strong desire-not conviction, but more-more original and more fundamental desire which is more than usual desire: desire to eat or desire to survive.

[Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... which we are aiming at. Do you understand [laughs]? To go beyond, you know, whether, you know-to go beyond the idea of our future life. To go beyond everything, that is so-called "nothingness." Hai.

Student F: Anyway I think that [?]-about this gentleman-that respect for your actions now and present actions-what you're doing now determines your existence at this very moment. That is a moment away. If that happened right now, whatever cause that made you what you are, what you are made up of, will determine your next existence. So the most important thing to remember is to carry out this philosophy of [1-2 words]. Cultivate this and you don't care when you go [laughs]. You know that your next existence will be at a higher consciousness.

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student G: Roshi, can you speak to us about the practice of silence-the value of silence in-

Suzuki-roshi: Value of silence? Value of silence, that-it will be-if your mind is not calm enough, you know, you cannot think properly. And you cannot get over the thinking mind when-especially when you should go beyond thinking mind. You should have complete calmness in your mind. That is calmness of your mind. It, you know, sh- [partial word]-not just calmness, but it express the direction of your practice-not stage but, you know, bottomless calmness. That is actually what we mean by calmness. You know, when you sit-calmness with some effort, with some power. That is calmness, actual calmness. Unperturbability is not something like this [probably gestures], you know, but continuous, you know, actual state of being which is calm and stable. So it follows some effort. Not just like stone [laughs], but, you know, there must be some strength in it. That is calmness. Hai.



Student H: Is it possible to love without attachment?

Suzuki-roshi: Without-

Student H: -attachment.

Suzuki-roshi: -attachment. I don't think so. With-but still, we know that, you know, even though we love someone, you know, we cannot love someone forever. That is what we know, you know. Actually, we know that. If you say, "I will love you forever," you are telling lie [laughs]. Still you have to love someone. Then how you-what do you say? Or, what kind of attitude do you take? If I say, you know, when you love someone, you know-if I say, or-excuse me, it may not be something which I should answer [laughs], you see? You know that, you know, without attachment you cannot love anyone. But still you have to love someone. Then what will be your love? And you should figure out that point. It is not something which I should tell you, but-which-you have to accept the teaching of detachment is [as] something Buddha told you-not something Buddha told you, but it is actual fact.

So what you should strive for is how you love someone in its true sense without fooling someone. Then the way you love someone will be nearly the same as buddha love someone. That is actual detachment, not teaching of detachment. Hai.

Student I: Is it possible to get a good understanding of Zen and develop it well without emphasizing or practicing Buddhism?

Suzuki-roshi: Is it possible?

Student I: How important is it-I'm kind of distinguishing between Zen and Buddhism.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student I: To some degree Buddhism aims to study Zen. But is it possible to study Zen quite apart from Buddhism?

Suzuki-roshi: Apart from Buddhism? Buddhist-you know, our-maybe there's no Buddhism without zazen practice, you know. All the Buddhism has zazen practice, but Zen Buddhism put emphasis on zazen practice especially because that is fundamental practice and it is because it is for every one of us. Actually, there is no difference between-not much difference between various schools of Buddhism. You know, outlook is-approach is different. But without zazen practice, Buddhism cannot be Buddhism. Hai.

Student J: Roshi, you were once, I think, talking about war, and you said about war that in our feelings about it that we should first accept

that there will always be war.

Suzuki-roshi: Some war, a kind of war, some kind of war, you mean?

Student J: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, maybe.

Student J: And then after we accept that there, I guess, will always be some kind of war, then we can go on and try to make our best effort to stop war.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. To stop war means to, you know-for someone it may be a war, you know, or-most of people making effort to fight [laughs], to me it looks like so. They may not actually [be] using a gun, but by words and by everyday activity, everyone creating a kind of, you know, war. And result of, you know, our everyday life, I think, is war in its big scale. That is a kind of karma, human karma. So, you know, how to get out of karma, or how to get out of war may be the most important point. And to accept things as it is means not to accept, you know-to have right understanding of our everyday life. Those who has-those who do not have right understanding of our life, you know, [are] creating war.

So we must have right understanding of our life, and we must strive for right-maybe we must, as a Buddhist, we must follow the Eight Holy Path or Four Noble Truths. That is, you know, our life. Where a Buddhist life, where there is no war in its true sense. So to-when you accept things as it is, we will naturally follow Eight Noble-Eight Holy Path and Four Noble Truths. Because we have-our understanding of life is not right, we create war. There must be various, you know-this is, anyway, big problem for us, the most, you know-so our traditional understanding of, you know, war is like this. But we should make this point more clear, and we should help stopping war with a great effort, I think. Maybe this kind of teaching is right but not strong enough or adequate enough in our world situation. Hai.

Student J: Do you mean that the teaching of following the Eightfold Path or the Four Noble Truths is perhaps not strong enough?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] It is, you know-it should be strong enough, but, you know, our understanding may not be strong enough or something like that. We just literally understand it, but we haven't, you know, enough strength to take it in our actual life. Hai.

Student K: Could you say something about Zen and marriage?

Suzuki-roshi: Zen and what?

Student K: Marriage.

Suzuki-roshi: Marriage? Oh. [Laughs, laughter.] That was a problem I had suffered [laughter], but-for me, you know, at that time when I got married, you know, I was thirty-thirty-one.[5] At that time, you know, that was not the problem of marriage. That was a problem whether I should be a priest or a layman [laughs]. I thought if I get married I will not be a priest anymore, or monk anymore. So I have to think a lot. But-so I don't have actual-that was not, you know-my problem was not the problem you may have, perhaps.

Student K: I think that when a man falls in, he just goes toward it all the time and it takes ahold of him and just goes wherever it leads him-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student K: [Sentence unclear. Sounds like: -right into the wall.] [Laughs.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I think if you get married your life, anyway, will be more difficult. If you don't marry, your life will not be so difficult anyway. So that is also true with priest or monk. To have family is a great-we will have, anyway, great difficulty. So I don't think that is just problem of monk or you, but problem of everyone. If you don't-if you get married, your life will be more difficult in one sense. But on the other hand [laughs, laughter], you will have some advantage. That is how our human life goes. Always not sweet [laughs, laughter].

I think Buddha-what-when Buddha said, "Our life is life of suffering," that is very true, I think. Anyway, we have suffering. As long as we seek for something good, you know, we have suffering.

Do you have some more question? Hai.

Student L: I'm getting attached to the idea of transmission of mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Transmission.

Student L: Yeah. I'm getting attached to transmission of mind from you, because you came and sat down beside me, like, and I knew it before you were going to do it, and I'm attaching to it. And I find that I am one of the [1-2 words]. What should I do?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Just try hard [laughs]. That is very true. Sometime the more you make effort, you know, the more you will be far away from the goal. So-but even so, we must make our effort. It is almost a kind of fight [laughs] between teacher and disciple. [Taps stick on table three times, laughs.] Not, you know-we don't fight physically or-but we shouldn't give up. And experience I have-I had-the experience various-my teacher had and maybe Buddha had. You will reach this kind of conclusion. Buddha suffered in this way, and my teacher had same

experience as me. Then you have transmission already. Actually, there is nothing to transmit [to] you [laughs]-what you have-something you have will be found out by your effort.

You may almost run away from Zen Center, you know, but then I may say, you know, "Wait! Wait! [Laughs.] Stay here! But I have nothing to give you." [Laughs.] That is why we have to suffer, you know, as a teacher. Nothing to give you. But I have to say, "Don't go away! Stay here!" But I have nothing to give you. Some people may say, "If you don't have anything, I will go away. Then that's all. No transmission." [Laughs, laughter.] Some question?

Student M: Could you speak about when you sit zazen away from Zen Center, and you sit alone? Could you speak about that?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, sit alone. By yourself? True zazen, you know, cannot be sit by yourself, you know. That you sit there means that every one of us [is] sitting with you. That kind of zazen is true zazen. Even though you are sitting in Japan or Tibet, you know, you are sitting with all the people in the world. That kind of feeling you must have in your zazen. You include-your practice include everything. That is our practice, you know. When you are you on your cushion, everyone sitting on their own cushion. That is our zazen.

When you think of someone, you know, in zazen, "Oh, there she is sitting. There he is sitting. Anyway, I am sitting with all of us," you know. That is our feeling of sitting. One more question? Hai.

Student N: Do you think it would help our practice if there were more opportunities to have private interviews?

Suzuki-roshi: More opportunity to what?

Student N: Private inter- [partial word]-dokusan?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I think so. But, you know, we are try- [partial word]-I am-at least I am trying my best to have more time. But as we have too-maybe too many students, so that is pretty difficult. So maybe in this way, in this kind of occasion, you know, to-when I give lecture, sometime this way to ask question will be helpful, I think.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed by Diana Bartle (10/10/00) and checked by Bill Redican (3/26/01).

[1] kai: the stage of fruition or effect; the stage of fulfillment of bodhisattva practices; the stage of buddhahood.

[2] Line 3 of the Second Morning Eko (dedication of merit): jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kensho ("the all-pervading, ever-present Triple Treasure, the innumerable sages in the ocean of enlightenment").

[3] Gyokujun So-on, at Zoun-in temple, in 1916. In SR-69-09-16, Suzuki-roshi gives the same age: "I went to my master's temple when I was thirteen years old." Thirteen reflects the Japanese way of counting age (one at birth, two on the next New Year's Day). By Western counting, he was 11 or almost 12 years of age (1916 - 1904 = 12) [see also Crooked Cucumber, p. 14, which gives 11, almost 12 years].

[4] In "Tenzo-kyokun," a section of Eihei-genzenji-shingi.

[5] In February of 1935 Shunryu Suzuki married Chie Muramatsu.

## 1969 november (8)

### 1 - Interview with Peter Schneider

Sunday, November 09, 1969

Interview with Peter Schneider

[Tape starts with background group chatter. Then the mike is set up, and more group chatter follows. Then Peter Schneider asks Suzuki-roshi a question.]

Peter Schneider: I would like to ask Roshi a question for the Wind Bell that I was going to type-tape just with him, but I think it's a-would interest you, so-. It will appear in the next Wind Bell.[1] And the question is to have Roshi talk about Mrs. [Miss] Ransom.

Suzuki-roshi: No. [Laughter.] I must tell you she was my old, old girlfriend [loud laughter].

Peter Schneider: I'll have some water. [Loud laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Almost, but not quite [laughter]. When I was young, even from a boy, I couldn't [wasn't] satisfied with Buddhist life, you know, because of many reasons. So I wanted to-to be a good teacher when I was very young, and I wanted to [1-2 words unclear] people who-who did not priest-did not respect priests so much. But I-at that time, my ambition may be directed to wrong direction [?].

But anyway, I made up my mind to leave my home and to study to practice under strict teacher. So I went to my master's temple. And my

master [Gyokujun So-on] was a disciple of my father.[2] And my father, when he was young, [was] very strict with his disciples. And my master was one of the-his-my father's disciple who [was] raised up in very, very strict way. And he was-my master was always talking about my father's strictness with him. And I-that was very, you know-that was hardest situation for me to accept, you know. My master almost blaming of my father. "Your father," [tapping repeatedly] you know, "raised me in this way." [Laughs.] That was very hard to-to listen to. Anyway, this is not what I want to talk [about]. But-

So naturally, this kind of spirit I have all the way maybe I became-until maybe thirty or more. After my master's death, I have not much feeling. That kind of feeling changed into the-into opposite way, and I became very much-I missed my master very much.

So when I was-when I was at school-college, I studied English pretty hard to go to abroad [laughs]. I have no idea of America or Hawai'i or-anyway, if I am going to some country, I thought I have to speak English. And I studied English pretty hard when I was a student. And when I was at Komazawa University, Miss Ransom was teacher of conversation.

Once a week, we-Miss Ransom taught us conversation. And after I finished her class I attended English course lecture. And meantime, Miss Ransom found me and asked me to be-to help her in shopping, or when some Japanese come, or when she had student-her private students. Of course, I couldn't help her so well, but I tried pretty hard. And at last she asked me to stay [at] her home with two more students who were helping her in shopping and conversation with Japanese people.

But the other students, Kundo and-and I don't know the-I forgot one more student's name-Kundo was student of Komazawa.[3] And one more student is from Bundikadaima before that school was normal school-normal high school. And that school changed their system and became a university. And the other students were studying English-English course students. And both Kundo and that student left Miss Ransom's home. I was only one student who helped her. And meantime I-there were many interesting stories between Mrs. [Miss] Ransom and I. Don't be so inquisitive [laughs, laughter].

No, no, no.

Student: Is it alcoholic? [S.R. may have picked up a cup of water.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

She was-before she come to Japan, she was a tutor of last emperor of China, Sento-Emperor Sento,[4] Emperor of Manchuria. And at that time, Japan became more and more ambitious, and trying to [for] some chance to fight with that northern part of China. Emperor Sento's capitol

is in-I don't know what is the name of the city right now. At that time it was Choshun.[5] And when he-the Emperor was there, he-she was a tutor of the Emperor. And she is a daughter of very-I don't know who he is, but [he was] very famous naval general [admiral].

She was a [had a] very strict character, and at the same time she complained always about Japanese people: at school what kind of things happened, and at the car what kinds of things happened. She was always complained about Japan. I was only person who listened to her complain [laughter]. But I have also many complaint with her. For an instance, she had a beautiful Buddha-sitting Buddha as big as this which was given to her by the Emperor. But she put-it was all right for her to put it in tokonoma-on tokonoma, but she put her shoes besides the Buddha [laughs, laughter]. That was tokonoma, you see. Tokonoma is a place where we put some antique, or scroll, or some valuable things: object of worship, or something like that. But she used to put her shoes as soon as she come back from school, you know. That was very, you know, embarrassing to me. But I didn't say anything, you know, but I offered, you know, tea every morning with small cup like this, you know, putting it on-in front of Buddha, and offered tea every morning [laughs]. She started to [be] amused about me, and-but she didn't ask anything. And I didn't say anything about it or about her shoes [laughs, laughter]. Maybe this kind of, you know, silent cold war [laughs, laughter] last maybe for two-three weeks, and I was waiting for a chance to start hot war [laughs, laughter], as my English was not so good, you know.

Dan Welch: How about the matches, Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm?

Dan Welch: The matches.

Suzuki-roshi: So I have to study pretty hard, you know, preparing for the polishing the weapon, you know, to speak. And I, you know, studied some important word to speak about it [laughs, laughter]. And when one of her friend visited her, she-they were talking about my funny, you know-things, you know, about me. "She is-he is very strange Buddhist, offering tea [laughs] for the wooden figure, sometime offering," you know, "incense." They were talking about it. I could understand what they were talking about. And he started, you know-his friend started to put matches, you know, in Buddha's mudra [loud laughter]. And he left, you know, sometime matches [and] sometime, you know, in-cigarette [laughter] in incense holder.

Student: Oh, no.

Suzuki-roshi: Still, hot war didn't start. And at last, you know, I don't know how the hot war started, but she asked me about, you know, about the figure- Buddha's figure. [S]he thought Buddhism is a kind of

idol worship. So I explained it, you know. It was very difficult, but I could manage to explain why we worship wooden image or Buddha or what is the real Buddha-maybe about Dharmakaya, Samboghakaya, or Nirmanakaya Buddha.

She was rather amazed, you know [laughs]. She didn't know Buddhism is so profound. And she started to become interested in Buddhism. And soon she converted to Buddhism. And she start to study Buddhism, because if she want to study Buddhism, there were many professors, and some professors could speak some English.

So [1-2 words] she had-in one year, I think, she had a pretty good understanding of Buddhism. And one day she took me to the downtown to buy some incense and some incense bowl, and she started to offer it. I felt very good. At the same time, I could have some confidence in our teaching, in Buddhism. And in that way, I thought I had a kind of confidence in-not "propagate," but-in making them-making Caucasian people to understand Buddhism. Or I thought for Caucasian, Buddhism-Buddha's teaching may be more suitable than [for] Japanese, you know. You know, when-for Japanese to study Buddhism in its true sense is pretty difficult because of the wrong tradition or misunderstanding of Buddhism. It is difficult to change their misunderstanding once they have that kind of wrong idea of Buddhism. But for Caucasian who doesn't know anything about Buddhism, like we paint in [on] white paper, it is much easier to give right understanding of true Buddhism. I think that is the, you know, that kind of experience I had with Miss Ransom resulted in my coming to America, I think.

And as soon as I finished my schooling, I asked my teacher-my master, [6] to go to America or Hawai'i or some-to go to anywhere abroad. But he became furious [laughs], and she [he] wouldn't allow me to go. So I couldn't come to America. And I gave up my notion of coming to America for a long, long time until I forget all about it. But ten years ago, at last I came to America.

And five years-fifteen years ago,[7] actually, I had chance to come to America. But because I didn't finish fixing our main building [at Rinso-in], which was my duty left by my master, so I thought I have to finish his order first, so I didn't come to America at that time. And maybe five or six years later I had second chance to come to America, and I decided to come to America.[8] It was pretty hard to come, but anyway I managed to come to America.

After I finished my schooling, I went to Eihei-ji. And Miss Ransom came to Eihei-ji and stayed for one month at Eihei-ji, and sitting there, and practicing pretty well. And when I went to-two years after, I went to Kasuisai monastery.[9] At that time, she came to Kasuisai and stayed for one month also. And she-and then she went to China again: Tientsin-Tensin-Ten?-Tientsin, yeah, near Peking. And she went to England. Once in a while I wrote to her, and she wrote to me, but since



I came to America I haven't written so often. She wanted to write something about me, you know: various experience we had between us, you know. And she asked me to give some date or event. But that is too much, you know, so since then I didn't write to her, you know, because it was too much. Whenever I write to her she asked me many things, you know, which is almost impossible to write her back. So I didn't. And, you know, she may be very angry.

At that time [Grahame] Petchey was in England, and he started-he started Zen group at her home, you know.

Peter Schneider: Her home! I didn't know that.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] So whenever Petchey went to her home, she [he] was the one who listened to her complaint [laughs, laughter]. So I- I know her very well, you know. Even though she complains, it doesn't mean so bad. So, you know, I thought it may be all right. But that was my mistake, you know. She passed away last year, before I write to her.

I trusted her very much, and he-she trusted me so much. So whether I write to her or I don't doesn't make much difference, I thought, but I don't know. As long as she is alive it is all right. But now, I think, I regret a little bit about my not writing to her.

Anyway, I think she was a good Buddhist. After she went to Tientsin, she sent me a picture of same Buddha, you know, who get into trouble between us, you know. And she made-she enshrined the Buddha in the wall where there is some-something like big hole in the wall like this [gestures], you know, and she said she is offering incense every day [laughs].

Dan Welch: What happened to the shoes, Roshi? Did she ever take them off?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, of course [laughter]. And I taught her how to clean up tokonoma.

One day she told me to buy-to get some daffodil bulb, you know. I bought pretty big one for her, but she didn't [wasn't] satisfied with them. "Oh, this is too small. Get me some big ones," you know. I tried, you know, to find best daffodils in Tokyo, at least in Shibuya district. I visited several florists, and I got the largest bulb we can get-I can get. But she didn't [wasn't] satisfied with it. So she makes me very angry [laughs]. So I bought some onion [laughing, ongoing loud laughter]-buy. "Here, I got very big one. Here they are." And I left, you know, her room. But I was careful, you know, watching her-what did happen. She opened it and saw the big bulbs, you know. "Oh, this is very good!" she said. I felt very good, [but] at the same time scared of him [her], so I ran away from the room, you know-from outside of the room.

And at last-she didn't like onion, you know, at all. Of course, that is onion so it smells [laughter]. "Oh! This is onion!" she shouted, and looking around for me. But I wasn't there [laughter]. But I couldn't help burst into laughter-a big laughter, so she found out-she found me out. With onion in her hand, she started to chase after me. She was a big, tall, girl [?], you know. So I went to upstairs, the second floor, and from the second floor to the roof. Something-that kind of thing happens pretty many times.

I had to come back [to] her home before ten o'clock. But it was rather difficult, you know, to come back before ten always. So when I was late, you know, I-I know how to open the doors. You know, Japanese door is sliding doors. The lock is between two door, you know. Lock is go this way, you know, to-like a nail driving down, a nail for two doors. So it is not possible to, you know, open this way, but you-if you lift two doors [laughter], it is quite easy to take out two doors [laughter]. And I sneaked into the-my bedroom and slept.

And at last she found me, you know, what I was doing. And she, you know, didn't trust me any more [laughs], and she didn't trust the safety of the Japanese building any more. And she determined to move out from that-from that house, you know. And I was told to find out some good safe building, which was almost impossible, you know. Almost all the buildings are Japanese buildings. If it is Western building, we have to pay a lot of money. So I gave up to find out that kind of safe building.

But it was good for me to go out with some reason to find-finding out some good apartment. And sometime I went to barber shop, or sometime I visited my friends, you know, instead of finding out some good apartment. And at last I decided to ask some good, old carpenter to explain, you know, how safe Japanese building are from thieves and how to fix the lock you know, so that no one can get in. And I-we could convince her not to move out.

As she was a English woman, she is-she doesn't-even though rotten old knife, she wouldn't throw them away. And she-sometime she asked me to get [them] polished. But in Japan no one can polish any knife for anyone, you know. If she has carpenters or gardeners, she may-he may do it, but she wanted me to get [it] polished immediately. That was a big problem for me. And-and she said, "In England," you know, "if you go to a department store we can get them polished up immediately. So go to Mitsukoshi and ask to get [it] polished." Her idea was ridiculous for Japanese people, you know, to polish. It was pretty beautiful, good knife. But even so, no one can polish it. "Oh, this is old," Japanese store may say. "This is very old. Why don't you get new one?" You know, that is what they may say.

When-do you know Japanese ofuro? When the, you know, cover of the ofuro will easily be get rotten, so she asked me to get lid only. But that was also difficult, you know. If I-unless we buy whole thing, they

wouldn't sell the wooden ofuro-bathtub-wooden bathtub. I think English way may be something quite different from American way.

That's all [laughter]. Nothing more than this.

Student A: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student A: She was the first-Miss Ransom was your first Westerner you helped to convert to Buddhism?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student A: Who was the second person-

Suzuki-roshi: Second?

Student A: -after her?

Suzuki-roshi: -after her. Maybe Jean Ross or some old students of Zen Center. Since then I had-until I come to America, I had no chance to see any Caucasian or any foreigners-gaijin.

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student B: How did you get an idea to teach Caucasian people long time before you'd met any Caucasian students?

Suzuki-roshi: How? Just, you know, I visited her home when it is very hot, just because I want to have a-some cold drink, I visited her [laughs]. It was so hot, you know. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... without she will give us something, you know, some drink or watermelon or something like that. She gave me a big, you know, watermelon, cutting in two, and putting some sugar in it, and with big spoon she offered half [the] melon, big one.

Peter Schneider: And you determined to come to America [loud laughter]?

Student C: Hey, it's the watermelon, man. That's what it is.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, maybe so because of watermelon.

Student D: "Watermelon Zen."

Suzuki-roshi: "Watermelon Zen."

Dan Welch: If I remember right, Roshi, there was another Zen master in Kyoto who got caught by a watermelon [laughter].

Student E: What's that story, Dan?

Suzuki-roshi: Dan, don't you-it may be good idea to send a picture of watermelon, you know-picture of Zen Center student eating watermelon [laughs, laughter]. Some Zen teacher like me may come [laughs, laughter].

Dan: Publish it in the Dai-horin.

Suzuki-roshi: She was very tall, maybe as tall as [Grahame] Petchey, you know. Very tall girl.

Student E: Petchey's about 6'-2", I think.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter throughout paragraph.] She used to put white, big hat like this, and she was very tall, and I was very small. When we go to shopping, I have to almost run. Because she had no one to talk, you know, to talk with, and as soon as she come back from school, she start to talk with me in fireplace. So I was always studying in fireplace-in the corner of fireplace. I couldn't study anything, you know. I couldn't have any study-any homework, so I decided to buy big, big screen. I told her for Japanese it is necessary to use, you know, big screen. So she bought it for me, and so I was very pleased-just to prevent, you know, her talk. But she was so tall! Taller than screen-watching down. Didn't work at all. I gave up. Very big.

Another professor, Sugioka, [10] would visited our home many times-maybe twice a week or weekend. She was-she-he is-according to her, he is a big scholar in English, you know. He knows more vocabulary-he has more vocabulary than Miss Ransom herself, she said. And he was-she was very much proud of him. But he was also very short-as short as me, you know. I don't know why she liked so short people [laughter]. The man who translated Uchiyama-roshi's [11] book, you know, small book. [12] Someone said it was not so good translation.

Student E: Which book is that, Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Small.

Student E: Uchiyama-roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Palms.

Student E: With the hands?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. With hands.

Student E: Oh. Why did you leave her?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student E: Why did you leave her-did you leave her?

Suzuki-roshi: Because I, you know, because I have to finish my thesis. So five-six months before I finish my schooling, I left her. And she went to Tientsin-went back to China again. She was a good friend of Premiere Yoshida.[13] She is-he is a famous premiere who signed the treaty after the war-

Student E: Russian war [of 1905] or-?

Suzuki-roshi: -treaty of-at San Francisco, you know, treaty of complete surrender. He is the premiere who signed.

Dan: Roshi, what did you write your thesis in?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Dan: Roshi, what did you write your thesis about?

Suzuki-roshi: About Shobogenzo. Study of Shobogenzo, focusing on "Raihai-tokuzui"-the chapter of the meaning of bow.[14]

Student C: What?

Student F: "Vow" or "bow"?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: Bow?

Student E: Bow.

Suzuki-roshi: Bow.

Student E: Is that because your master bowed so much?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. I didn't notice it. Maybe so. I was the last one who submit my thesis to the office [laughter], because I was too busy, you know. Most student finish his d- [partial word]-unit, you know. Maybe most students leave three or four units for last year, but I had twelve-I had twelve units more to go. So I was very busy in writing thesis and finishing twelve units. That was why I bought screen, but it didn't work [laughter].

Student F: Roshi, could you tell us something of what you wrote your thesis on?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student F: Could you tell us something about your thesis?

Suzuki-roshi: Study of Shobogenzo, focusing on the fascicle of bow.

Student F: Could you tell us what you wrote?

Suzuki-roshi: Too long.

Student F: In-in a capsule? In [laughter]-

Suzuki-roshi: Essence? You have to bow anyway [laughter]. That is why you have to bow nine times, you know, maybe. My thesis was very good, you know, but my oral question was not so good, you know, because I didn't study so much. Some other questions?

Student G: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student G: A few years ago, at a lecture at that-in the basement of that big church-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: -that big church downtown on [2-3 words unclear], you were giving a lecture-no, Dick was talking, and you were just listening.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: And you had your hands-your mudra upside down. The right-the right hand on top of the left hand.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: And then sometimes-and then I was sitting right in the front row, and I was staring at your hands. And you weren't looking at me, I don't think, but you fixed them, and you put the left back on top of the right. But then you'd be listening to Dick, and your right would go back on top [laughter]. And I-and I thought that something was strange was going on. And I looked real hard, and you put your sleeves over your hands [laughter]. My question is, what were you up to [laughter]?

Suzuki-roshi: That was your study [story?], then.

Student G: What?

Student E: "That was your study, then."

Suzuki-roshi: Usually this is-I have not much feeling on this, so-.

Student E: Why not?

Suzuki-roshi: Because I cut my finger from here to here. Sometime I don't feel so good, you know, and I do like this [laughter].

Student E: Oh. He-he-he-he's doing this. See? Like this, though.

Suzuki-roshi: You know, this finger. So if I don't feel so good, I do like this and go back to the mudra like [gesture]. Sometime I am doing like this one.

Student H: Roshi, do you still hear from some of your master's disciples, or other Zen masters?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student H: Some of-some of your master's disciples-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: Who were studying with you. Do you still hear from them?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student H: Uh-huh.

Suzuki-roshi: My younger, you know, brother in dharma[15] was taking care of-once in a while after I left Rinso-in came to my temple and helped my boy [Hoitsu-roshi] or a priest who was there always.

Student H: There was a fire in your temple?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student H: I didn't quite understand. There was a fire there?

Suzuki-roshi: No, no. When you know, after I left my temple, you know, there must be some qualified, you know, teacher in my temple [laughs, laughter]. Someone like me must be there. So my brother in dharma was formerly or officially responsible for my temple, but actually someone else was always there. But another-my elder brother in dharma[16] is now in the temple which I enter for the first-after I finish my schooling-Zoun-in.[17] And then as soon as my master passed away, I took over my master's temple and my elder brother, you know, took over my place.

So still we have three dharma-brother in dharma. And one is now-I don't know what he is doing. He is not priest anymore. And we-I was actually the youngest one. At that time there were four more disciples, and I-I was the youngest one. And four disciples run away from my master because he was too strict.

Student H: Could-could you give us some example of his strictness-of what he did that was so strict?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] You know, he is very, you know, unique character. And he would sit in the corner of dark room, and when someone enter his room he stares at him like this and without stopping eating [laughter]. Most people [were] scared of him very much. Just to look at him is good enough. Before he say something he would strike me-strike us-bam! [Laughter.] A little like Tatsugami-roshi also does. For Tatsugami-roshi, there is no need to speak English. His hand will speak fluently [laughter].

Student I: They'll laugh now-[laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: And he's pretty humorous, you know, sometime-very much humorous. And he was very good friend of us in some way. For an instance, when we came back from village after finishing memorial service for our members, three of our-three or four [of] our disciples-his disciples were with him, and we are coming back to my temple. When we came to dark, you know, dark slope, you know, he told us to take off-oh-told us to go ahead, you know. "As you boys [are] wearing tabi, [18] so may be better for you to go first. I will-because I have no tabi, I will follow you," he said. So we, you know, went back ahead of him. As soon as we arrive at our temple, he told us to sit in front of him. "You boys sit here and listen to me. When I don't wear tabi, why did you wear tabi?" That was his, you know, question. "Why did you wear tabi? When I don't wear-"

Student H: What-what is turby?

Students: Tabi.

Suzuki-roshi: Socks.

Student H: Oh.

Student J: White socks.

Suzuki-roshi: "Moreover," you know, "when I told you," you know, "to go ahead, you four boys went ahead of me without noticing that I have no tabi. How about that? [Thumps several times.] You goose!" you know. "You foolish boys!" He was very mad at us. You know, at that time I took him very seriously, but I think-now I think-I think apparently



he was teasing us, you know. He was playing game with us. He was enjoying, you know, our innocence [laughter]. "Sit here," and we four boys sit [laughter]. We didn't know what will go on, you know. No one could figure out what is-what was wrong with us [laughter].

[One day] when he was not at temple, one chicken died [laughs, laughter throughout]. So we decided to eat it, taking off all the feathers. But it was very difficult to cut, you know, with blunt temple knife. Very difficult. So we ate only one leg. And rest of the chicken we buried. [We recited?] small, you know, sutra. Unfortunately, next morning my master found it, you know, when he was weeding. But he didn't tell anything, you know. That was the day before Obon festival. And after we, you know, prepared altar for the various soul, we had dinner [?]. Tomorrow is, you know-oh, that was August 13th when we have Obon festival. And [at] breakfast time he told us, "I had a funny-very funny dream last night. One-legged hen came to me-"

Student E: "One-legged hen said to me-"

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. "One-legged hen came to me and said, 'It-the altar is too high for me. So please move it lower.' And the hen asked me, 'Do you have some good idea?' he asked us. All of us. All of us." We couldn't see [look at?] him either. What he meant by that?

Student E: Obon festival is the festival for all spirits.

Dan Welch: The dead spirits.

Suzuki-roshi: The dead spirits. The one-one-legged hen-hen came to the altar, but he couldn't climb up.

Student K: The spirit of one dead hen, or-?

Student E: One-legged hen.

Suzuki-roshi: One-legged hen, because we ate, you know, one leg and buried, you know, the hen around the tree. And my master found out, unfortunately. And he-he didn't say anything at that time. It was the day we have Obon festival. And after-when we have breakfast, "I had a very funny dream last night." [Laughter.] We were listening to him. One day [the hen] came [to him], he said, so-[laughs, laughter].

Student E: Where did the chickens come from? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: We were raising them. We were [4-8 words unclear], and unfortunately one of them died.

Student E: They were at the temple?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. So we ate [laughter] one only. Because it is too

difficult to cook it-cut it, so we gave up and buried it, you know, in the garden.

Student E: So what did he say when you were like this, Roshi? [Probably gesturing.]

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know. I don't remember, anyway, you know. We have no words.

Student L: Was that all he ever said about it?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student L: Was that all he ever said about it?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Dan Welch: Isn't that enough?

Suzuki-roshi: That's enough, you know. [Laughter.] "Do you have some idea to help him?"-that was what he said. We are not so alert students anyway-disciple, you know, because we have no words for him. Hai.

Student M: Is he the one that kept some yokan [?][19] up on a very high shelf?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. He is the-

Student M: Will you tell us about that?

Suzuki-roshi: Ohh. Whenever he had something-some special thing, you know, for guest, he would keep it in high place where we cannot reach, you know. But, you know [laughs and laughter throughout paragraph], we know how to take it, you know. So almost all the time, I-we took it down and cut a little bit corner of it-slice by slice we cut. And-and then, looking at it, when we feel-anyway he will find out, so we took [?] all of them. That is what we would do, you know.

One day, you know, it was too high for us to reach [laughter throughout paragraph]. So my-our eldest disciple asked me, who is the smallest one, to reach it. And he said, "I will carry you on my shoulders. Then you can reach for that." So I, you know-he carried me on his shoulder. And it was still-we were not still high enough. So I told him, "A little bit more." So he stood on his toe, you know, like this, and he lost balance. He throw me out on the kettle-boiling kettle.

Student: Oh God.

Suzuki-roshi: I got big, you know, burned here. Still I have some, you know, mark here. But I couldn't say anything about it [laughter].

So when mealtime come, so I, you know, enduring my pain, I sit in my seat. And we start-I started to eat, but this was pretty terrible injury. Someone told me to use some oil on it. So by oil I hardly, you know, recovered. I have still, you know, some mark here. Alm- [partial word]-we did almost all the mischievous thing, almost. But when we do it with all of us, he didn't scold us so badly.

But one day, we ate some big persimmon-four or five persimmons, which he kept it until it is-until they are good enough to eat in rice-in rice. And when someone ate it, you know-I don't know who did it-but when he found out someone ate several persimmons already, he asked me who ate it. So i-actually I didn't know, you know. "No, I don't know," I said. And he started to find out who did it. Finally he found out two of them-two of us had eaten. At that time he was very angry, you know, not because we ate it, but because he-they didn't share the persimmons with all of us. He was very angry. I think he was very-pretty kind to all of us, I think. Maybe with skillful mean.

Student: What time is it?

Student: It's 9:30.

Suzuki-roshi: Just right [laughter] [1-2 words unclear].

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: Partial transcript by David Chadwick and City Center original tape. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (2/12/01).

Kasuisai Temple

Western Shizuoka Prefecture

[1] It did not.

[2] Suzuki Butsumon Sogaku (c. 1858-1933).

[3] Komazawa University, Tokyo.

[4] Sento (Jap.): name pertaining to a former emperor-in this case Henry Pu Yi (Manchu AisinGioro, 1906-67, last emperor [1908-12] of China).

[5] In Chinese, Changchun, later renamed Xinjing.

[6] Gyokujun So-on.

[7] 1956 [see Crooked Cucumber, p. 153].

[8] Suzuki-roshi left for San Francisco, via Honolulu, on May 21, 1959, at the age of 55. He arrived in San Francisco on May 23.

[9] Near Zoun-in temple, in the city Fukuroi, western Shizuoka prefecture.

[10] Professor Kido Sugioka of Komazawa University.

[11] Uchiyama Kosho-roshi (c. 1912-1998).

[12] Kosho Uchiyama [English order of names], Modern Civilization and Zen. Administrative Office of Soto Sect, June 1967, 36 pp.

[13] Yoshida Shigeru (1878-1967): Prime Minister of Japan for most of the period between 1946 and 1954. Negotiated and signed, in 1951 in San Francisco, the Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers and Japan.

[14] Suzuki-roshi's graduation thesis for Komazawa University was entitled "Raihai-tokuzui" no maki o chushin to seru Dogen-zenji no shukyo (Dogen-zenji's Religion as Seen Especially in the "Raihai-tokuzui" Chapter of Shobogenzo). His thesis advisor was Professor Nukariya Kaiten.

[15] That is, a fellow student or peer, not a brother by birth. This was probably Kojun Noiri-roshi.

[16] Probably Kendo Okamoto (Crooked Cucumber, p. 90).

[17] Zoun-in temple, Mori-machi, Shizuoka Prefecture, central Japan.

[18] tabi (Jap.): Thin white socks traditionally worn with sandals.

[19] Phonetic guess only. According to Chadwick, this was a cake (Crooked Cucumber, p. 24).

## **2 - Question and Answer**

Tuesday, November 11, 1969

Question and Answer  
San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: If you-if you have some question, I am happy to answer for the question. And in that way, if necessary, I will refer to the Lotus Sutra. Hai.

Student A: What is "no outflows" mean in the Lotus Sutra?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? No?

Student A: "No outflows."

Suzuki-roshi: No outflows. "No outflows" means, you know, by-because our practice is not, you know, sincere or not complete, there are many leakage [laughs] in your life and practice. That ["no outflows"] is the opposite of to have many leakage. It means mostly desires, you know: to let your desire, you know, as it goes this way, that way. That is leakage. And to control our desires [is] like to build a big leather [?] ball [?] without any leakage. That is "no outflow." It is more, you know, more arhat kind [of] practice: very, maybe, negative practice. Some other questions? Hai.

Student B: In the Lotus Sutra they say the Buddha-seed arises from conditions.

Suzuki-roshi: Buddha's what?

Student B: The Buddha-seed-

Suzuki-roshi: Seed. Uh-huh.

Student B: -arises from conditions.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: Do you know what that means-what they mean there?

Suzuki-roshi: What-conditions-seed-if you, you know, sew a seed, seed will be the cause of-because of the seed, of course, plants comes out. And it will have fruits-flower or fruits or branches. But without aid of rain or manure it will not, you know, grow. It means, you know, aid or things, you know, result by seed and by aid of something. I think you-your culture put more emphasis on aid. If aid is good, you know, result will be-you have good fruits. And how to improve the social condition is the most important point in your culture. But some other culture put emphasis on seed more, maybe like Communism.

Student B: Could you explain that?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Explain it more?

Student B: I don't understand how Communism puts emphasis on the seed.

Suzuki-roshi: You know, Communism is-I don't so well, so-I'm not Communist, so [laughs, laughter]-but in Soviet Union, you know, if you put emphasis on, you know-if you have some-some-whatever the study may be, sociology or anthropology or whatever it may be, if you put emphasis on aid, you know, the government will not accept your theory. But both-I think both is too one-sided, I think. Seed is important, and aid is also important.

In Communism, the social structure [is] nearly the-nearly the same to everyone. [It is] supposed to be, but actually I don't think so. Someone who has great power-great enough or strong enough to control people, they have more chance, although social structure looks like same [chance?]. So the aid is same to-equal to everyone, but there is some, you know, there should be some difference between people. Someone may be-may be a secretary, someone may be a just, you know, working by normal [?]. How-this kind of difference is original. If someone's seed, or someone has good seed, you know, he has that much chance. But in our society, we put more emphasis on how to-if we improve-if we improved politics or if we give people chance to develop, people may be happy. And we don't put emphasis on the difference of the-so-we don't put not much emphasis on who is more capable or who is not. We treat people in the same way.

So we sort of ignore the each one's-each one's original or each one's own ability. That is what I meant. Hai.

Student C: I don't understand the difference between the egg [sic: aid] and the seed-how you're using it.

Suzuki-roshi: Seed?

Student C: The basic difference, you know, between the two things.

Suzuki-roshi: Basic difference, you know-it is cause and affect. The, you know, relationship cause and affect is more seed, you know. If you sew a seed, you will have some certain kind of plants. That is seed. And seed and relationship-seed and fruit. The rain or, you know, wind or sunshine is not direct-is not real-is not seed, you know. Aid for seed-some factors, conditions which will make-which will help the relationship between cause and affect. That is what I meant. In Buddhism we say innen: [1] in is seed, en is aid. And in and aid are-[both] seed and aid is necessary for something to go or something to result.

Student C: Is the egg like the condition? The egg is something that has met certain conditions-has grown somewhat?

Suzuki-roshi: Aid is something to help, you know-to result something from seed [laughs].

Student D to Student C: Aid. "A-I-D."

Student C: Oh, I thought he said "E-G-G"-egg. [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me [laughs]. You know, egg-for egg [laughs], the, you know, temperature of mother hen is aid [laughs, laughter]. Some other questions?

Student E: In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha seems to make a distinction between nirvana, or the stopping of pain, and complete perfect enlightenment-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -which is also tathagata [1 word].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: Could you talk some about the difference between these two things?

Suzuki-roshi: Nirvana is more, you know-it is same kinds of words as "no leakage," you know. Extinction of all desire is nirvana. No leakage, no outflow is nirvana. And enlightenment or anuttara-samyak-sambodhi [2] is enlightened stage more in a positive expression of same stage. But one is more Mahayana way, and the other is more Hinayana way. For an instance, arhat-before-arhat keeping various precepts and following Buddha's teaching, he may attain arhat. The practice of arhat is more passive and more negative. And the other is more active, you know, more positive-to have Buddha wisdom. And here there is many words for that. For an instance, we have term-or technical term like issai-shu-chi.[3] Issai-shu-chi is "various wisdom." The difference between our wis- [partial word]-our knowledge and Buddha's knowledge is our knowledge is accumulation of, you know, various knowledge. Not much, you know, not much relationship between one knowledge and the other knowledge. Not much system between various knowledge we have, you know.

But Buddha's knowledge is one which include-each one of the knowledge include the other knowledge-that is issai-shu-chi. So if you pick up-if you understand Buddha's knowledge-one Buddha's knowledge, you know, about-for an instance, about human nature, then the other knowledge will be included. That kind of knowledge is buddha-knowledge. And that kind of way of observing things, or that kind of practice, is enlightenment. It looks like completely different approach, but it is just two ways of expression of one knowledge. Hai.

Student F [Bill Shurtleff]: In the Lotus Sutra, the chapter "Duration of the Life of the Tathagata," this-the chapter is preceded by a building-up-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: -in which we learn that we're about to hear some very, very important truth.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: And after this chapter, it's emphasized again and again and again how important this truth is to keep in mind: the "Duration of the Life of the Tathagata."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: And in that chapter, the Tathagata reveals that he actually attained enlightenment innumerable kalpas before-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: -and that he is only making an appearance of extinction, but in fact there is no-he was not enlightened as Shakyamuni and will not obtain extinction as Shakyamuni. Is this the same thing? Is this another way of saying what Dogen says when he talks about all beings already being in enlightenment and manifesting their enlightenment from day to day-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student F: -or is this something else that is being said?

Suzuki-roshi: It is same thing, you know. It is-if we say we are all- originally we are all enlightened people, you know, to attain enlightenment just to know what we have in our sleeve [does something with his sleeve] here. But although you have it, if you don't know that you have, you know, that is same as you don't have it. So this kind of idea-all of-all of us has buddha-nature. This kind of idea is more- although Lotus Sutra has two side, but Lotus Sutra put more emphasis on everyone has buddha-nature.

So if you practice hard enough or long enough you will attain enlightenment. But that attainment is not to have something to acquire something from others-from other source. Just to find out what we have is, you know, to attain enlightenment. And when Dogen put emphasis on this point, he also put emphasis on real self, or essence of mind, or buddha-nature. Or he-he mostly use the word anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, which is something, you know, we have and something we attain by effort. It is both-it is both attainment, and it also something we have originally. When we say-when we translate it "supreme



incomparable bodhi," it is something-it sounds [like] something which we attain by our effort, but it is actually something which we have. So when he explain it, he says, "Wisdom seek for wisdom," and anuttara-samyak-sambodhi is actually wisdom. "Wisdom seek for wisdom."

So wisdom we have seek for wisdom. That is actually what we are doing. Only when you discriminate your practice, you know, it looks like there is good practice or bad practice. By good-only by good practice you will attain enlightenment. That is more usual understanding. But according to Dogen, whatever we do, that is actually-actually "wisdom seeking for wisdom."

But because you discriminate it, you know, because you are involved in some ego-Peter said ego [laughs] outside of-outside of itself. That is very good, you know, short and strong way of expressing ego, you know. Outs- [partial word]-true ego is buddha-mind. And ego outside of itself is projected ego, you know, of which you will discriminate, you know, good or bad. "Good practice" or "bad practice," you say. But that, you know, good practice or bad practice or ego is not true ego. Ego [laughs] outside of itself, you know, [is] projected ego. And you discriminate about projected ego as if there is some ego-as if there is good ego or bad ego. That is actually what we are doing. But who is doing that kind of-who project, you know, our ego objectively? Somebody is doing that. Someone is true ego which is always on your side, and which you cannot tell who he is or what he is.

To realize this p- [partial word]-if you realize this point clearly, you know, we have originally buddha-nature, which is universal to everyone. Ego on your side is the same, you know. But only when it is projected there is difference between Ego 1 and Ego 2. Do you understand this point?

Student F: Could you give an example of Ego 1 and Ego 2?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Your ego and my ego, you know [laughs, laughter]. You know, I have-I have big eg- [partial word]-small ego, and you have big ego [laughter]. We say so, you know, because I project my ego as if my ego is very small, you know, and you are [not] bold enough, you know, to say "my ego is big" because you are student, you know. Because I am teacher, you know, I must say my "ego is very small" [laughs, laughter]. But small ego or big ego is, you know, ego outside of itself. Ego is here on my side, not there. I said your eyes never can see themselves. It is not possible. That ego is, you know, true ego and big-big ego, maybe. Hai.

Student G: You said before that outflows have [are] in some sense related to desires.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: And it is said in Zen, a lot of times, that to do something fully-

Suzuki-roshi: To do something fully.

Student G: To do something fully-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student G: -when doing something, to do it fully-that that is, sort of, one of the goals-something that we should want to do, and that we should do. Sometimes in our use of the word "passion," we sometimes refer to the kind of action that is done fully, and rapidly, and without hesitation. I wonder if you could, from a Zen point of view, explain the relationship between desire and passion?

Suzuki-roshi: Passion and desire and full?

Student G: Maybe I could just ask the question what is passion?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Passion is, you know, when you are, you know, involved in or when you are caught by outside-things which looks like exist outside, you know, and to which your mind or strength or energy is directed. That is mostly-most likely passion or attachment. Actually, that kind of thing does not exist, you know, but you think as if something exist in that way and if possible, you know, hopefully forever [laughs].

And you-that hope already will create something, you know, some passion or some desire. So what is necessary is-what we should do, or how we should act, or how we should do with things which looks like exist objectively is without, you know, being involved in-too much in the idea of being or substantial being. You should do it naturally, and that activity should be activity which you do in that moment. In that way, we continue our life that is perfect life. Next question may be, you know-actually, you know, to act in that way is possible or not will be the next question.

To answer this question, it is necessary for me to explain more on this point-on the other point, which is we say things does not exist forever, you know. Things exist just right on this moment, in this moment-does not mean to acknowledge things or to do things just for this moment because each moment-when you say "this moment," this moment has its own past and future.

So when you do it, you know, at that time if you do not try to make some excuse, or if you do not have preconceived idea, naturally you will accept-you will have feeling of past and future. And you will see some difficulty in your future-in the future of that moment. And you will see the past of that moment that is always included in each moment.

Actually you cannot do, you know, things just for that moment, forgetting all about its past and future. Do you understand? You cannot do so, bec- [partial word]-when you do something, you know, without thinking or intuitively, you have to acknowledge its own past and future. And the past of this moment and past of yesterday may be the same, you know. I th- [partial word]-I understand it may be the same, and it is same maybe, but when we say "it is same" that is too far, you know. There is some logical jump in it, because each moment-the quality of each moment can- [partial word]-no one can say it is always same. Maybe different. We should accept this point too.

And strictly speaking it is not same. Because it is not same we have some chance to make some effort more or to improve our karma. If it is exactly the same, there is no chance for us to improve our life. So it is same, but it is not same. There is two side in the truth. So if we think past-my past is always same, even though we don't know our future-my future, but past was always same. That is not, you know, perfect understanding. Future is-cannot be same, and past also cannot be same.

Student H: Isn't it confusing if you use the word-if you use the words "past and future"? To me it's confusing, because to me the way you're using them it all sounds like the present.

Suzuki-roshi: All sound like present. That's right, you know. You should understand in that way. Always present, you know. The different present. Maybe same, you know. There is some relationship-must be some relationship. But strictly speaking, you know, it is accumulation of smallest particle of time-smallest particle of present.

Student H: What do you mean when you said before, when you act in the present moment you consider the past and the future of that present moment.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: Do you mean there is some kind of thing or idea or concept or something that you consider? Or is it-or do you just consider the present moment? I mean, it sounds like [4-6 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: Time doesn't exist, you know. Actually time doesn't exist, you know, but things exist. And things has some continuity, you know. So we say time exist. Instead of things we say time, you know. Time include many things. It is a kind of idea, not actual thing. It, you know- instead of saying "many things," we say "time." Time include everything. When we say this moment, it include many things. And the center of it is me, you know, right here.

Student H: Do we consider-I remember Dogen talking somewhere about the fire-the wood burning becomes a log and becomes ashes. But when

it's ashes we don't-do we-are we supposed to remember that it was a log or do we just consider it ashes? Or when it's a log we don't say, well [2-3 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: Log has its future and past.

Student H: Do we consider them?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Its own past and future. But we cannot say log become ash [laughs]. It is so, you know. Because, you know, here is log-wood, and here is ash, you know. Usually you say "wood become ash," you know, but ash has its own past and future, you know, and this is independent. And ash has its own past and future. Two different thing.

Student H: In a practical way-I'm trying to be practical about it.

Suzuki-roshi: In practical way it is so [laughs].

Student H: If I look at you and say you're my teacher-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student H: If I look at you and I'm listening to your lecture trying to learn something, and if I say to myself, well in the past Roshi has been a very good teacher and I've learned a lot-

Suzuki-roshi: Past Roshi is not present Roshi.

Student H: -and now-and now-and now I'm looking at you, and if I remember that as the past, there's something wrong in that. I won't say wrong but there's a hang-up. I'm attached or caught to some other idea. But if I look at you, and I'm listening to you, and we're talking, and I just accept the now, and I don't know you as a teacher, I don't know that you're a Roshi, I don't know anything, then you're just talking to me, I'm talking to you. That includes everything without having to know anything else.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is so. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.] ... understand something like me, you know. But this is just-maybe looks like logic, you know. But it is not just logic. Because we are liable to be-fall in one-sided view, contin- [partial word]-idea of continuity or idea of discontinuity. And actual being and continuous and discontinuous-that is true. Like time is continuous and discontinuous. I always say it is nine o'clock. When we say it is nine o'clock, you know, when we say so, it is-idea of time is discontinuity, you know: "nine o'clock." It is not going. But when we say time, it is something continue from this moment to the other.

So if you are too much involved in this kind of thinking, you know, you

will lose everything. When we-I talk in this way, you know, more logically, you will not think in this way actually, but-but you are making this kind of, you know, mistake always when you think something objectively. So the important thing is to sit and to go beyond this kind of thinking mind. And when you act, when you do something without being involved in too much about objective world or scientific world or logical world, we should-you should do more intuitively, more freely, you know, without being involved in too much this kind of argument or too much idea of attachment. Okay?

That is what I mean. That is what I mean. "Just to sit" means don't be involved in good-idea of good practice or bad practice, how long it will take before we attain enlightenment, or what is enlightenment. You know, this kind of idea is result of thinking which is shadow of your own mind. Your mind is always on your side, watching everything, understanding everything, who-which-who knows everything, and who is able to know everything. And you should trust that, you know, kind of you. And you should prac- [partial word]-trust your practice too. And trust your intuition too. Then you will not make not much mistake.

Why you make mistake is because you make some excuse always: "Because I am Buddhist, we shouldn't," you know, "have any idea of good or bad," [laughs] you know. "Because I am Buddhist, Dogen-zenji said live on this moment. So whatever I do it doesn't matter," you know. This is just excuse and just, you know, logic or argument, you know. But actually because you don't feel good when you do something wrong, you know, when you do something which is not real, which you don't accept completely, you make some excuse. That is why, maybe, many people study religion [laughs]-to make some excuse.

You know, in Japan in family system, you know, if someone-someone's son get married with someone-some, you know, some lady, she is their family, and the old couple may go to temple everyday-not everyday, once a week or so. And what the old couple will run from in temple is "You should do this kind of thing. You shouldn't do this kind of thing." And after and they come back, they apply the teaching for the, you know [laughs], for the wife of the son. You know, I-"Today I went to temple, and priest told me so-and-so. I think that is right [laughs]. He means that you are wrong [laughs]. What priest said was right, and what you do always is wrong." That doesn't make any sense [laughs]. To authorize his, you know, egoistic idea, people may study something. That is not how to study Buddhism.

We should trust our own, you know, feeling and our own intuition. Maybe more physical one rather than-rather than some idea or some thought or some moral code or precepts. Hai.

Student I: Sometimes I have been very aware of-that the moral faculty in me or the moral part of me. I'll be doing something and-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student I: -Doug once expressed this to me as kind of a very gray feeling, and a little voice in the back of your head saying, "Why you stupid" or-or this is-"What are you doing? This is terrible. You-you're being very bad now."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm

Student I: It's sort of a-

Suzuki-roshi: Voice.

Student I: Yeah, a voice that when you're walking into the kitchen toward the bread box [laughter] begins as very small. Sometimes it's very small [laughter]. Sometimes it gets so big that it's actually screaming at you, "Stop!" [Laughter.] But there you go doing it anyway. It's very difficult to sit through experiences like this with any composure [laughs, laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: No composure [laughs].

Student I: I mean, except-except that the moral part of human being, because people have that thing in them that says, "This is right and this is wrong"-or I do. Most people do.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Most people, you know-I don't know what to say, but I don't know why is-why do we have that kind of feeling. But we know, you know, pretty well. We can trust ourselves pretty well without any teacher [laughs] maybe. But if you have teacher, you know, you will-you will not be fooled by anything, and you can put more faith in yourself-in your feeling. This is very-this kind of way of thinking or way of study is very different from other religion maybe, which put more emphasis on some moral code, or something you should do, or you shouldn't, or precepts. Hai.

Student J: Could you say something about mindfulness?

Suzuki-roshi: Mindfulness?

Student J: Mindfulness on breathing?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, mindfulness-it is, you know-

Student J: Mindfulness on breathing.

Suzuki-roshi: Breathing-mostly breathing-you cannot have good breathing unless you have good posture. And good breathing means, you know, to have, in zazen practice-to take inhaling and exhaling with your whole body and mind. Do you understand?

Student J: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: That is-that is good breathing, you know, so if you practice in this way, naturally your breathing will be deeper and deeper actually. That is good breathing. Mindfulness means to-to-to have-to obtain the oneness of mind and body. If you have oneness of mind and body, or if your mind pervade all-whole-all parts of your body, that minds pervades, you know-that mind is at the same time buddha-mind which include everything.

Student K: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student K: If we find something that we feel helps us sit in that way, maybe with some it's he breathes through the pores and in the skin. Someone else practices not moving any muscles-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student K: -some things that we experience-I experience something as being oneness of my mind and my body. Should we sort of use what seems to us by our experimentation? I mean, can we trust ourselves? I say to myself-just afterwards I say, "Oh, that was my whole mind and body. So that's something very good to do, and I should practice that."

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, if you have that feeling that is it, you know. And you-if you-if you think your practice is not good, and if you don't know why it is not good, you should think, you know, whether your mind is fully pervaded every part of your body or not. That is so-called it shikantaza. So shikantaza-background of shikantaza is the mind, which is always include everything, which is with all things which exist.

When I say "with all things," [I mean] all things we see, strictly speaking. There must be many things which we don't see-which we cannot see. But we feel as if we are seeing everything, you know. When we see the stars, you know, I-we feel as if we are seeing all the stars which exist. Maybe actually we are seeing it. But in that case, I don't-I am not talking about the stars which we don't see or which human being never reach. What I mean is, you know, things Buddhist talk about is mind and materialistic and spiritualistic being. We don't talk about just material or just spiritual.

This is one important point when you think, you know, but actually-or when you discuss something about Buddhism. But in your everyday life it doesn't make any sense. Why I have to argue this kind of thing is, you know-sometime our mind goes too far, you know, unnecessarily goes too far. So if we go too far this way, you know, we should go, you know, pretty far this way too. That is why I have to say more, you know-I

have to argue, you know. Because you go this way too far, because you make too big mistake, so it is difficult to say, "That is mistake," you know. "Why it is mistake is such-and-such," you know. So it is necessary to make everything clear. But actually there is no need if you don't go too far, you know. If you just sit-if you are able to just sit without much-making much mistake, it is all right actually.

So it doesn't-you may think what I'm saying doesn't help you so much. Without realizing you are go-you are already went too far away, you know, from reality. So to pull you back to present, you know, I have to say many things, that's all.

So what I just said is-we must-Buddhists never talk about something just material or just spiritual.

Student L: How about in the sense of practicing on our bodies-you know, forgetting about-or rather practicing in a just-material way?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: Is that something Buddhists don't do-we shouldn't do?

Suzuki-roshi: No. We don't do that, you know. "Just material" is already wrong. The one side is missing.

Student L: If I try and sit very still, without moving at all-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -and counting my breath-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -and disregarding whether or not my mind is moving-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -just concentrating on my body not moving-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -what mistake am I making?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, what mistake you are making at that time?

Student L: Am I neglecting something by concentrating just on the body-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.



Student L: -if I forget?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that mistake will be, you know, if you think, "This is-this is zazen," you know, "Zazen should be like this." If you say so-if you understand in that way, that is mistake. But if you just do that, you know, without much-without authorizing your practice too much, you know, just sit. Then there's no mistake there. Or if you think, you know, "I'm just-what I can do is just to sit. I don't understand his lecture [laughs]. This is," you know, "all what I can. So I may sit in this way." If you, you know, think in that way, that is also a mistake.

So what you should do is-with some understanding of Buddhist teaching and what is reality and what is real practice, you should sit. Then you have actually no-not much things to think. Just to sit is enough. Mistake will happen if you go too far, forgetting what you are doing right now. When you eat you should eat, you know. When you sleep you should sleep. When you sit you should sit. But the true understanding of it is-you should understand it in-from various viewpoint.

Student M [Peter Schneider]: Roshi, suppose someone says to us-you keep saying just to sit as if it were something that everyone does, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Peter: They could say "just to sit"-that's going much too far.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Peter: That's some sort of extreme, that's some sort of abnormal behavior.

Suzuki-roshi: Just to sit?

Peter: Yeah, "that's not natural," they would say.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Peter: Like suppose-I mean, like, if you're from America, and you're from somewhere very far away from California-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Peter: If they see a Zen Center student sitting, they think that's incredibly unnatural.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Peter: They would say that that balance is off, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Peter: Like, "just to sit"-that's on the other side of one dualism, of being very active.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Peter: So to keep saying "just to sit," that's like for them saying-that's like saying "be very passive."

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Peter: They say that's not the American way [laughs, laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: American way, you know [laughs].

Peter: No, what I'm trying to say is that-

Suzuki-roshi: What is Zen, you know, what is American way, you know? That's, you know, just argument, you know. Doesn't much make sense. To me it is very natural, and to them it is not natural [laughs], you know. What is natural? So that is something which we cannot decide: which is natural or which is not natural. Just, you know, there is some mistake. Why I must say this kind of long talk is because we liable-we are liable to stick to one side. The-for Buddhist, the two major heresy is understanding of continuity and understanding of discontinuity. This is two major fault we make by thinking or by understanding-intellectual understanding. So intellectual understand cannot include this kind of opposite idea in one statement or in one practice.

So, you know, just to sit-that is why I have to explain what does it mean by "just to sit." When we say "just to sit," it include more, you know, actually. But why I don't say you can move, you know [laughs], is you may think "just to sit" means whatever you do that is "just to sit," and you will have completely different understanding of it. When I say "just to sit," you know, you should accept sitting posture as long as you practice zazen. When you eat you should eat, you know. We cannot do two things together. So we should do things most naturally as you can do. If we practice our way by group, you know, we cannot do different things. So when you sit you should sit. And you should be able to accept that. That is what I mean by "just to sit."

Most natural thing, you know-natural things is-most natural things has very strict rule in it, you know, or else you cannot be natural. When you-even though you think this is natural, but it may be most unnatural thing, you know, because you cannot survive so long in that way. Something wrong with the idea of naturalness. So naturalness itself has, you know-the other side of naturalness is very strict-has very strict sense of controlling things. Like, you know, you manage a ship, you know, or a car.

Student N: The word "natural" comes from nature, and nature is completely strict in that it does the same thing all of the time.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student N: The leaves fall off the tree, and the time the sun rises and sets.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student N: So to be natural is really, then, to be completely in form. "Form is form," and completely in nature-

Suzuki-roshi: Aha, yeah.

Student N: That's what "naturally" means.

Suzuki-roshi: I see. Yeah. That is, you know-so naturalness has, you know, two side: Looks like [sounds like he makes a gesture, laughs]. And when you do something like this, there's some reason. And that reason has some rules behind it. But we, you know, unnecessarily because of our thinking, you know, we push ourself-selves unnatural way. That is actually what human being does, you know, which-and which plants and animal doesn't.

Almost time. One more question, maybe? No question?

Student O: Roshi, I'm firewatch tonight, and I was thinking about what Craig [Student I] was talking about-the bread box [laughter]. Craig was talking about this thing-going into the kitchen to the bread box. Well, that's what I always do when I'm firewatch [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: I don't understand what you said.

Student O: The bread box is in the kitchen where they put the leftover slices of bread from lunch.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student O: And-

Suzuki-roshi: And-that is bread box. Okay.

Student O: Pardon?

Suzuki-roshi: Okay.

Student O: Yes. And I wanted some advice from you about how to handle that sort of situation [laughs, laughter]. I know-I guess we're not

supposed to eat between meals [laughter], but I have my heart set-all week I've been thinking [laughter] that I'm going to be the only one awake, and I can go in there and have my slice [?] [laughter].

Student P: Maybe not the only one! [Loud laughter.]?

Student O: How-if you were firewatch [laughter], how would you handle yourself [laughter]?

Suzuki-roshi: You know, you should feel, you know, as if you are great Zen master [laughing, laughter]. "Oh, this is bread box" [laughs, laughter].

Student O: I'm going on vacation [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Actually, you don't-you don't, you know-when you are student you eat, you know. When you become a teacher you don't. Or when you become jisha[4] you don't.

Student O: Don't what?

Suzuki-roshi: Don't eat [laughter].

Student O: I thought that's what you would say [?].

Suzuki-roshi: When you're just beginner or just, you know, student, you may-I think you will do it. That is naturalness [laughs, laughter]. When I was a, you know, little disciple of the-of my master's temple, I ate many things, and I steal many things from my master. But when I became a temple priest, you know-you know, naturally I didn't [laughs]. Not because I [laughs, laughter]-

Student P: Look how much you brought for all of us to [1 word] [laughter]-

Suzuki-roshi: How-how did you feel?

Student O: I felt like a great Zen master [laughs, loud laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Say it to yourself, "I am a-the best student at Tassajara, and my future will be a great Zen master." [Laughs, laughter.]

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape transcribed by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/19/01).

[1] innen (Jap.): "In is the inner and direct cause by which the result occurs, while en means the external and indirect one. According to the Buddhist doctrine, every action occurs in the harmony of both in and en" (Daito Shuppansha, Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, 1965, pp. 129-130).

[2] anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (San.): the Buddha's or the highest enlightenment or wisdom.

[3] issai-shu-chi (Jap.): one of the three types of wisdom; the wisdom of the Buddha.

[4] jisha (Jap.): attendant to a priest.

### **3 - Form is Emptiness, and Emptiness is Form**

Thursday, November 13, 1969

"Form is Emptiness, and Emptiness is Form"

Tonight I am supposed to explain "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." In-last night, we came to the point to make to clarify especially "emptiness is form," which is rather difficult to make it clear. But actually, form is so-to-say "big mind"-no, emptiness is "big mind." And big mind as sky, which contains-which doesn't-air or sky, empty sky. But-"empty sky," we say, but everything grow-when plants and everything grow into the sky, sky doesn't care, you know. And the sky is always ready to accept things in it.

And-but our mind is not-should be like a sky, you know, our big mind. We should accept things as it is, and we should not discriminate things, as the sky doesn't discriminate things in which many ex- [partial word]-in which many things exist. Various being is quite free in the big sky. But our mind is not so. "I like this. I don't like this. This is beautiful. But this is not so beautiful. I like him, but I don't like him. I like this part of him, but the other part is not so good." In this way, our small mind always discriminate things and sometime reject things. That is small mind. So small-in the realm of the small mind there are many objects, there are many beings, and that beings exist as if they have self-nature, good nature or bad nature-a beautiful nature or ugly mean nature.

But Mahayana-in this way, even though Theravadan teaching accept the teaching of selflessness, their way is more like small-mind way-small-minded way because they acknowledge things, various being which has-which is not empty. Dhamma[1]-when we say dhamma, you know, it include our sense organs and mind. So we have six-five sense organs and mind. That is six. And sense object, object of thinking and objects of our sense organs. And the world which sense organ and sense objects create-get [?] with and create some world-world of sight, world of

sound, world of taste, world of feeling. In this way, each sense organs has world, its-their own world.

In this way, in-Theravadan canon acknowledge things-some substantial things. They count seventy-five dhammas. But that is actually-not-actually, dhamma we say, but that is actually the beings-more psychologically analyzed elements of being. So this is-it-it doesn't- instead of self, Buddha's teaching is teaching of selflessness. So actually instead of saying self, they say five senses, or five elements, or six elements, or six sense objects, or six worlds of each-for each sense organs.

So even though they do not say "self," actually they, you know, acknowledged a self which is as permanent as-as things, dhammas. The Hinayana teaching is, in one word, the teaching of existence of dhamma [and] nonexistence of self. That is Hinayana canon.

But actually, they-when they say-they-when they acknowledge objective world of objective being, it is same thing to acknowledge self which is observing objects. Do you understand this point? That, you know, to acknowledge lamp means to acknowledge my mind which is observing, you know, lamp. Moreover, you know, when you think, "I am seeing, observing a lamp," you know, as I said before, my mind, my eyes or my mind, or self of mine is projected, and you are reflecting your past experience. You say "I am observing," but actually I observed a lamp, and you are thinking about "I" which is-who is observing lamp.

So, it-it is same thing to acknowledge self. When they say, especially when they say "lamp is existence, lamp exist like this," means I exist and I am observing a lamp. So even-they say, you know, "teaching of selflessness." They never say "self." But actually they-what they mean is, when they say "here is lamp," it means that they acknowledged self which is existent and which is permanent. This is their nature of canon, or weak point of canon, or immaturity of understanding.

When we understand things in that way, it means that in our mind we have various objects. And it means that we are discrim- [partial word]-it is sa- [partial word]-as soon as you have some substantial idea of many things, you start to discriminate, and you start to have some feeling of good or bad. So in that way, we cannot actually obtain big mind which is empty, which is called emptiness. No big mind actually exist as long as they understand things in that way, objective world in that way. I mean substantial way and attached to something specially. That is the nature of, you know, the teaching: five skandhas are not empty, five skandhas are existent. Five sense dhatus is existence, or eighteen dhatus is existent. [2]

So Prajñāparamita-sutra deny this thought. In Prajñā- [partial word]- according to Mahayana, everything [is] empty, not only self but also everything is empty. There is nothing which is not empty. It means that

in big mind we should include everything as our own children, as our own family. In our family, you know, they are all a part-they are all part of our parents. And parents treat them as they treat their own hands and feet. Actually, there are-childrens are part of parents. So in that sense when they treat-love children, they have no idea of loving children. But actually he is-they are loving. They have no idea of parents, you know. But actu- [partial word]-that is parents. When they have no idea of children, they are actually really parents. You know, if parents has some idea of parent [laughs], they are not parents. Parents, you know-for children, you know, if they think, you know, "I am good boy, good children of my father or mother," he is not yet so good, you know. When he thinks, "I am very bad boy, I am not his-not-I don't worth as a children of my parents." Then he may be a good children. So when parents has no idea of parents, when children has no idea of children, they are, you know, good parents and good children.

The same thing is true with dhamma, with our everyday life. When you think, "I am doing-I am practicing zazen," you know, you are not actually practicing zazen [laughs]. Maybe very painful zazen, or maybe very sleepy zazen-"Oh! It's terrible." [Laughs.] When you, you know, want to know what time it is, "ten more minutes [laughs], five more minutes." That is not zazen, you know. When you don't know what you are doing, that is true zazen.

The big mind is same thing, you know. When there is no idea of anything, that is big mind, that is emptiness itself. Now, "form is emptiness" is all right. Form-forget all about form and color. The form was not observed as some certain form. That is emptiness.

Then "emptiness is form" is maybe next problem, how we understand the "emptiness is form." Maybe I already explained it, you know, right now. Emptiness-when-from emptiness, you know, when everything are in state of emptiness, everything, you know, start to appears in its true sense. Do you understand? You know, when parents forget himself, he is true parents. So when emptiness take place, the form appears in its true sense. That is "emptiness is form-emptiness is form."

If I explain it by our actual experience-if I explain it more maybe psychologically or biologically-emptiness, the word emptiness is directed, actually directed to our mind. It looks like-against Theravadan canon, Prajñāparamita-sutra put emphasis on no eyes, no ears, no nose, no mouth, no body, or no mind, like this. They put emphasis on emptiness of things, but actually Mahayana teaching is directed-is actually-denies the teaching of-put more strength on emptiness of self. To realize or to experience-how to experience emptiness of self is to practice zazen. And actual-in actual everyday life we-to experience oneness of objective and subjective world, you know. When you attain enlightenment it is like this [taps stick twice], you know. It-we call-we, figuratively speaking, you know, it is like-our zazen is like a chicken in its shell. When we are ready to come out, you know, the mother-not

"mother chicken" [laughs]-hen?-or what do you call?-hen will peck it and help the chicken comes out from the shell. That is, you know, enlightenment experience.

So in your zazen, if your zazen is-if your practice is full practice, you know, it means that you are ready to break the shell and jump out as a small chick, you know [laughs]. So, you know, at that time there is no self, you know. It looks like he is in a shell, but he is ready to break the shell, and at that time, you know, mother hen will peck, peck. That is oneness of your practice and enlightenment. Fffft! At that time there is no hen or no chicken-chick. They are one. They-he is one with everything.

So in emptiness everything exist-obtain same world. If ten people are practicing zazen, this world is each one of ten student. So actually, the world of emptiness is one. But-it is one, but at the same time that world of emptiness could be thousands of people's world, past and present and future. That is "emptiness is form." Emptiness is one big world which belongs to everyone. When you forget yourself, you know, you own whole world as a small chicken [chick]. He is not anymore a small chicken-no, chicken, chick?-or what?-I don't know how you say. Each one of them, if they are ten, you know-each one of the ten chick has obtained the same world but, you know, they are enjoying their own world. But the world they enjoy is one big world. That is what we mean [by] "emptiness is form." Mmm. Does it make some sense?

So, you see, when you-your zazen is very good, you know, if a bird come and, you know, sing, you will-the world of bird appear, endless world. Now we say-in autumn we say, in early autumn, if one sick leaves-what do you say?-not so strong leaves in September, maybe. Right now almost all the leaves are coming down, but in September or end of August when all the leaves are sick green, one or two leaves may fall. We say to see one sick falling leaves-seeing one sick falling leaves, we know autumn is all over. One sick small leaves are our big world. Autumn is all over. Or when a bird sing, you know, one bird sing in the mountain, we know that how the calmness of the mountain all the more. You know, calmness of-it is not matter of sound, you know, if the bird sings it should be noisy [laughs], you know, but because of the one bird we feel the complete calmness of the whole mountain. When the one bird enjoy whole world, that is complete calmness, that is real calmness, that is real emptiness. And that is real form of form. When you think, you know, "This is bird. I am here," or "This is sick-just sick falling leaf," that is not real falling leaves. That is the silt[3] of your thinking mind.

Oh, yeah, each year at this time of the year, you know, many leaves comes down, fall down. "Oh, it is troublesome to see it" [laughs]. If you feel in that way, that is more Hinayana way. Or you attach to the idea of falling leaves because that falling leaves are silt of your experience, not fresh vivid experience. That is, you know, "emptiness is form." By form-



when form appears from emptiness, there is true form. The form we know or we acknowledge as a result of thinking or silt of experience, that is not true experience or that is not true form. So first of all, we deny the silt of experience, subject or object-objective world or subjective world. First of all, we deny this kind of idea. And we come back to the more original, vivid experience. And there we experience the emptiness and form too. At that time we cannot say, you know, form or emptiness. Everything is both form and emptiness. So that is why we say "emptiness is form."

Okay? [Laughs.] Emptiness is form. Not-it is very logical discernment, but it is not just logical. It is more based on our actual experience of everyday life. Not special teaching but, you know, something-some teaching which could be approved, which could be experienced by practice and through everyday life.

Hmm. [Laughs.] Okay? Did you figure out what I want to say? [Laughs.]

Student A: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student A: When you say "big mind"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -you seem to say big mind in the same way that the Theravada says dhammas.

Suzuki-roshi: No. Theravada-when Theravada says dhammas, it is, you know, based on idea of existent. That is why Nagarjuna, you know, rejected that kind of thinking. Whatever statement it may be, there is four statements. But if there is no more than four statements, but whatever the statement may be or understanding may be, if it-it is based on idea of being or idea of nonbeing-this is pair of opposite (being or nonbeing)-it is not right understanding.

They say, you know-as long as they acknowledge some substantial dhamma it means that they don't acknowledge the big world of emptiness. They say our-those-self-nature is empty, but actually they acknowledge, they accept objective substantial dhammas. When they accept objective, substantial dhamma, they are already accept it, the objective, projected self, self out of self. It is not true self, you know. Self you reflect on in some experience. Actually, I attained enlightenment [laughs] on this point. My first enlightenment was-did I tell you? [Laughs, laughter.] I shouldn't say so, because I am Soto priest [laughs]. You know-

Student A: Tell us anyway.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm? You know, I had very difficult time, you know- bodhis- [partial word]-oh, no-doshin-doshin-way-seeking mind. What is way-seeking mind? To practice something without any gaining idea. We should not practice our way for sake of ourselves. For sake of others, no [t] sake of Buddhism even. For sake of practice, we should practice. That is famous statement-very impressive statement, isn't it [laughs]? Very encouraging, you know. You should practice true way, not even for sake of Buddha. Not sake of for others. You should practice our way for sake of the ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

So I wanted to practice our way for sake of practice. I started the practice, you know. That practice was to get up thirty minutes earlier than other student. I was in dormitory at that time. And before they get up to clean, you know, restroom so that they may not notice me cleaning restroom. But as I was cleaning, you know, many things happens actually. I had many times some people coming to restroom. I saw many room lit up, you know. "Oh, he may come," you know. "Because he [laughs]-he get up, he will come pretty soon." So at first I escaped, you know. I hide myself somewhere so that they may not notice me. But even so, you know, while I'm hiding myself, funny feeling [laughs]. I didn't know what kind of practice I am practicing [laughs], you know, hiding myself from people [laughs, laughter], so that they may not notice me, you know. Very strange feeling, you know. If I'm doing something good, there will not be no need to be afraid of anything. But I was very afraid of people at that time. I couldn't solve this problem, you know. And I didn't know whether I am practicing, you know, my prac- [partial word]-our practice for sake of practice. The conclusion was, anyway, this kind of practice cannot be a real practice. But at the same time, I couldn't give up, you know. I was rather obstinate. So once I determined to do it, I must do it.

But the practice I am practicing is very awkward. I didn't know what I was doing. At that time, when I was-we have to study-we have to take some unit of psychology. And Professor Iriya[4] once told me-told us that if you-it is impossible to actualize your past experience again. If you think about it, it is already-it is not already actual experience you experienced. And it is not psychological state which you had. That word struck me:

"Oh. I shouldn't think about my practice anymore. I shouldn't think about my," you know, "state of mind or my experience. I shouldn't criticize my experience. Maybe whatever happened it doesn't matter, so if I do it because I have to do it, that's all, you know. You shouldn't say- I shouldn't say my practice is pure or impure, or for sake of others or for [laughs] sake of Buddha or sake of practice."

That is useless thing to think about, so I gave up to think about my practice.

Since then I didn't mind [laughs]. Whoever come, I clean. "Just a

moment, I'm cleaning this," you know, "this place. So you should go that way. You should go the other restroom." So when you, you know, when you think about-when you feel as if you are doing something, you know, at the same time you are accept[ing] it. You projected "you" outside of yourself, and you are criticizing "you" which is outside of yourself. It is not true you. True you is on your side always, which cannot be criticized [laughs]. It is foolish, you know, to criticize yourself. I had that kind of, you know, enlightenment at that time. [Claps hands together.] "Okay!" [Laughs.]

That is what-exactly what Mahayana Buddhist started to think about. To name various elements, you know, eighteen<sup>[5]</sup> or seventy-five,<sup>[6]</sup> it is maybe very foolish thing. Whether that is empty or not empty [laughs] is very far away from our actual life. And when you think in that way, you are involved in that kind of thinking, far away from the buddha-mind. Some more question?

Student B: Then what is small mind used for?

Suzuki-roshi: Small mind-in this case I mean, you know, small mind is mind which attach to many things, you know. Why you attach to things is you have a kind of idea of substantial-you acknowledge substantial element in things. Because you think, "Here is a cup," you know, you attach to it. But actually, the cup is not some independent-something which has its own self-nature. Because you see the cup, you know, cup exist. If you don't see it, there is no cup. Because cup exist, I exist here, you know. That is teaching of interdependence. Because I exist, cup exist. Because cup exist, I exist. If I don't exist, cup doesn't exist.

Student B: If you see the cup, but you don't say to yourself, "I see a cup"-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: -if you see the cup, but you don't attach any particular thing to it, like saying it's a cup.

Suzuki-roshi: No. It means that when I say, "I see a cup," means I-this cup is mine [pats self], a part of me, a part of big self. Not something which exist outside of me. And that, you know, that "me" which actually observing a cup is not the self which is projected to somewhere, you know, and "I have a cup." This self is picture of true self or picture of big mind which include everything. So we are always talking about projected self as if that kind of self exist. But it doesn't!

You know, if I say whether I am doing right practice or not, that is projected self which can be criticized, you know. But even though you criticize it, that is not myself anymore. "I am here always [pats self], true self is always with me, and moment after moment with me. And we are-I am completely involved in something which I am doing right now."

Our life is continuity of this kind of life. I am here, here, here. And on each moment we are including many things. That is true "I." But projected self or self which is the object of thinking mind is not true self.

What was your question, by the way [laughs]?

Student B: I asked you what was the use of the small mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Small mind-use of?

Student B: Yeah, what is its-it's there, but you, of course, say it doesn't exist.

Suzuki-roshi: Small mind doesn't exist actually. It is the silt of thinking mind. Small mind doesn't. You think as if, you know, it is quite natural for us to think in that way. But actually, if you think more, and if you, you know, want to do something, you know, as Buddha told you, you know, with that kind of mind you cannot do anything. Projected mind doesn't work at all. It will create always many trouble [laughs] because it is dead one, you know, it is not active one. And moreover, it changes, you know, like a ghost. True self, when it changes there is-must be some reason. But without any reason, you know, if someone criticize this [taps on something like a water pitcher] projected self, you think as if you did very bad thing. If you think, you know, "I did very nasty thing," you know. "Why you get up so early and clean the restroom? You nasty fellow [laughs]," you may say. You yourself will criticize you, you know. That "you" is not here, not me, but there-self which you think there was two, three days ago [laughs]. That's-it doesn't mean anything. That is why we have to live in each moment. It means that don't criticize your projected self. Self it might be in future; self it was in past. But that is-that kind of self doesn't exist. At least useless, you know. No end in treating that kind of self.

Student B: Roshi, is it possible to criticize yourself in the present?

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student B: It doesn't seem like it wouldn't [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: It doesn't seem like it wouldn't [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Criticize yourself? Criticize yours- [partial word]-whether you are fully, you know, fully occupied or involved in what you are doing or not would be the point. When Dogen says you shouldn't talk about the teaching which is lofty or which is not so lofty. You shouldn't say so. But you should know whether your practice is true practice or not.

Student C: So if our practice is lazy practice, then we should just let it

be lazy. I was thinking that it is lazy, so we shouldn't try to practice hard because that's then projecting something. That's wrong understanding to be practicing hard.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] But you can say so, you know, by words [laughs]. But if you-if your practice is-why, you know, you have lazy practice is, you know, [because] just half of yourself is working or something, and half of it is-belongs to past or somewhere else, you know. You are not here, and-you are not actually here, and you are not actually doing thing lazy. When you are lazy, you know, when you, you know, feel very sleepy, you know, at the same moment, "I must stay in bed. Why I was so sleepy," you know, "I am so sleepy?" In this way, you will have-your s- [partial word]-the self will be projected in various ways. That is why we become lazy. So the best way is to get up as soon as you hear the bell [laughs], before you think anything. That is, you know, the practice. We are always involved in thinking mind and, you know-

Student C: But supposed we just don't get up to the bell. Should we say to ourselves, "I should get up for the bell" or should we just-or just not do anything at all but just stay in bed [laughter]?

Suzuki-roshi: You see, there is interesting argument [laughs, laughter]. You know, this, you know-when you hear the bell, that moment include your past and future, you know. And next moment include its own past and future. So, you know, when-the moment you get up, you know, it has the-has its own future. Zendo is in your-zendo belongs to that moment. And to wash your face also included at that moment has its own past and future. There is no-noth- [partial word]-no experience or no activity which has no past or future. It belongs to each moment. Maybe you can call it intuition because there is no time even to think about. It appears in that way. Because I, you know, explain it by words I have to say its own past or future. But intuitively, you appears in empty world in that way. That is your own emptiness.

So what is bad? That which we cannot do is bad. What is good? Something which you want to do, it is good, you know. That is why Dogen said so. At that moment intuitively we know that. If you think there is many things to say, but before you think-the world you have before you think is actual world on which you should strive for. Hai.

Student D: Did you say that the cup is a projection of self?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: Is that a projection of the small mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Project-not real projection, you know. It is something which arise in relation to the objective being. The more you think, you may lose the point, you know. [Laughs.]

Student E: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student E: Suppose I-

Suzuki-roshi: In-in-in-just a moment-in one word, you know, your thinking is involved in, based on, you know, the idea of being. That is the trouble [?]. You are caught by illusion or shadow of the being. That is a trouble [?]. Because you think, you know, something exist here in this way, that is, you know, idea of being. The opposite background of thinking is non-being. Just to think whether lamp exist here or not exist here. When we say "nothingness," you know, you may think the opposite of being, you know. There is no such thing like lamp exist. That is, you know, the opposite of thinking of being. Being or non-being. Complete-there is no complete idea of being or complete idea of non-being. Nothing arise from nothingness. Nothing vanish into non-being. But, you know, I don't know why, but-

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: -when we think, we think in that way. Hai.

Student B: When the breath goes out, and we count "one," and then "two," are we attaching to breathing?

Suzuki-roshi: No. No. No. Watching.

Student B: Oh by-yeah, by watching it, creating an object, thinking mind seeing something happening-

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student B: -breathing happening.

Suzuki-roshi: No. Moment after moment, you-that is, you know, the subtle distinction from real breathing, counting-breathing practice, and not true one, you know. You don't count just to know how many, you know [laughs, laughter].

Student B: Couldn't handle it [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student B: We stopped at ten and go back to one.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: But what is it that perceives a breath going out to call it

"number one, number two," and so forth.

Suzuki-roshi: Number two. The-we choose the most simplest activity on which we don't-about which we don't think. It is another practice of following-breathing practice. The point is not to count but to-not to one [?] with your practice.

Student B: If-if you don't make-can you get mechanical that way, like just "one" [2-3 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Not mechanical, you know. My understanding of mechanic is just to do, you know, just to work, just to count [to] ten, you know. And something which produce ten something, you know, ten breathing, that is more mechanical way. And without using not much body or mind, you can produce something. That is mechanism.

Student B: Yeah

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. But when you count your breathing it is very simple to count from one to ten, but each breathing should be, you know-on each breathing all of your mind and body should participate. With whole body and mind you take one breathing. And instead of saying something else you say, "one, two." See? That is practice.

Student B: Thank you, Roshi.

Student F: Roshi, when you're sitting counting your breathing like that, and you're involved in saying "one" and following your breath out, it seems like there's a kind of split of one part of you or you being involved in the following of the breathing-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Student F: -and another part on another side was something being aware of the whole action taking place, of being aware of your concentration on following, and another that seems to be aware that's not even involved in it but aware of it taking place.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Aware of-I don't know what do you mean by "aware of," but-

Student F: Well, count like-you're following your breath, and are you counting as you're breathing, and you're-say you're very carefully trying to follow your breathing, and yet at the same time you're aware of all of it taking place. All-you're aware of your action, aware of your counting your "one," your "two." Seems like there's a split.

Suzuki-roshi: S- [partial word]? No.

Student G: One part is observes the other.

Student F: One part is observing. You're doing this action-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: -or is not just observing but just aware that it's taking place-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I see.

Student F: -even-even if-

Suzuki-roshi: You are watching, you know, yourself. Oh, that is-that is not the way. Why you count is-some element, you know, of watch-to watch yourself [is] involved. Because you go-if you go "twenty" or "thirty," "Oh my!" [Laughs.] That much, you know, observation is involved. But I don't mean on each breathing you should be very careful, you know. Instead of being careful about what you are doing, you should take your breathing with your whole body and mind. Then you have no time to watch.

It is same thing as you make calligraphy, you know, your-or penmanship. Maybe you're watching, you know, so that you may not-your penmanship doesn't go outside of your line [laughs]. But not to go outside of your line, you know, you are making best effort. And that is not you observing it, because-why you think in that way is maybe, I think-the zazen practice is-looks like too easy, you know, so you have time to think about it [laughs]. But even when you are doing very simple easy thing, you should be able to do it as if you are doing very difficult thing. And at the same time, so that you can do difficult thing as if you are doing very easy thing, you sh- [partial word]-we should practice zazen. Do you-do you understand the point?

A cats, for an-a tiger, or an instance, use whole attention and whole strength even when he catch small fish. Ffft! [Laughs.] His attitude is same as to catch a big, you know, animal. The tiger has no fear, you know, even though he catches big animal, he can do it as if he catches small fish. Even when he is catching small fish, his way is same way as he catches big animal. How he could do so is the point.

Usually, you know, human being, we-if it is easy, you know, that is quite easy: "Maybe I can do it tomorrow" [laughs]. That is our way mostly. "Oh, this is quite easy." And you don't make-your attitude is quite different from when you do something difficult. That kind of person has big difficulty when he confront with something great-great difficulty. Someone who looks like very bold and very strong is not actually so strong when he face, confront with some big enemy or big difficulty. He will be the first one who may run away [laughs].

When-if someone who is doing-who will do small things with-not "care"-but with-we say, suki no nai.[7] Suki no nai means-I don't know what.



If, you know, this cup has some leakage, it is suki aru.[8] Suki no nai is "no-no-no gap," or "no chance to take advantage of." If a lady-if a young beautiful lady want to protect himself [herself] from wolf with black hair, long and short [laughs], you know, the way is not to shout or to run away, but we say suki no nai taido.[9] Suki no nai taido. No-she behave quite natural and beautifully, maybe sometime charming [laughs], but no-he-she doesn't give any chance to be taken advantage of. That is suki no nai.

You know, that kind-zazen practice is something like that. [Laughs.] Even though you are always making face, you know [laughs], it doesn't protect yourself from cats and dogs [laughs]. Even though you are quite natural and charming enough, but-"Oh my!" [laughs], they will run away, you know, if they have some ambition.

That is what is told in Lotus Sutra. Even though you met with big snake, snake cannot bite you. If you are going to be cut by big sword by bandit-what do you call [it]?-hmm?-

Student G: [1 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: -by black-masked [bandit], you-the sword will be broken piece by piece. That is, you know, suki no nai.

So, you know, zazen practice is always, you know, figuratively ...

[End of original tape.]

---

Source: City Center original tape transcribed verbatim by Diana Bartle and checked against tape by Bill Redican (5/4/01).

[1] Suzuki-roshi pronounced it "dhamma" throughout, so the Pali spelling is used in this transcript, rather than the more common Sanskrit "dharma."

[2] dhatu (San., Pali): region, realm, element. The 18 dhatus are the physical and/or mental elements that determine all mental processes (e.g., organ of sight, mind-consciousness, etc.). The five dhatus Suzuki-roshi referred to may be the five skandhas.

[3] Suzuki-roshi pronounced "silt" very clearly here and later in the lecture. If he had looked up the word in a dictionary before the lecture, as he often did, he would have found a definition like: "a sediment consisting of very fine particles."

[4] Professor Yoshitaka Iriya, an authority in Tang colloquial language.

One of the authors (with Sasaki and Fraser) of *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*. (1971); author of *Rinzairoku* (1989) *Gensha koroku* (Comprehensive Record of Xuansha) (1987-1989), *Zengo jiten* (1991), and other works. He was director of research for the First Zen Institute of America in Japan, and he contributed significantly to the research for *Zen Dust* (p. xxi).

[5] The 18 dhatus.

[6] Possibly the 75 Sarvastavadan dharmas, which constitute the final, indivisible, real units of existence.

[7] *suki no nai* (Jap.): *suki* = opening; unguarded moment, flaw, space, or room; *no* = of; *nai* = no. Hence, to be always on alert; to be thoroughly guarded. See also SR-71-03-02 for a similar term.

[8] *aru* (Jap.): some, certain.

[9] *taido* (Jap.): attitude.

#### **4 - Not Priest, Not Lay**

Sunday, November 16, 1969

Not Priest, Not Lay  
Shunryu Suzuki-roshi

This morning, I want to talk about our practice.

And here in America, something special is happening: that is our group. Our students cannot be categorized in the same way we define Zen student-Zen Buddhist in Japan, because you are not-you are not priest and you are not complete-completely layman. I understand it this way.

That, you know, you are not priest is easy to understand, but that you are not completely layman is-I think you are special, you know, people in our society. [Laughs.] Not hippie. [Laughs.] But something like that. [Laughs, laughter.] So I don't know what to say.

So-that is, I think you want some special practice, you know: not exactly priest practice, not exactly layman's practice. And-but we are on the way to have special, you know-to have some different way of life for us. That is our Zen community, I think-not community, but our group. And-and so we have to have some-some appropriate practice for-for us.

Before I talk about our special way of practice, I think it is better to understand-better to understand what is original-what is Dogen's practice. He says, "Some may," you know, "attain enlightenment. Some may not," he says. This is, you know, the point I am very much interested in. "Some may attain enlightenment and some may not," what mean-which means although we practice same way, same

fundamental practice, but some may attain enlightenment and some may not. It means that even though we do not have enlightenment experience, you know-experience, as long as we sit in proper way, proper right understanding of practice, that is Zen. The main point is to have right understanding of practice and practice our way seriously. And what is important point in understanding of our practice is-we say "big mind," or "small mind," or "buddha-mind," but that kind of, you know, words means something-something we cannot-something we should not try to understand in term of experience.

"Enlightenment experience," we say, but it is not, you know, some experience which we will have good-in term of good or bad. It is special experience which is beyond those feeling or a kind of consciousness. So we should not, you know, ask what is, you know, enlightenment experience. Even though you ask someone-that you asks that kind of under- [partial word]-ans- [partial word]-question means you don't know what is Zen experience-enlightenment experience. Enlightenment experience is difficult, or impossible, or something you should not try to ask in your ordinal [ordinary] way of thinking. When you give up this kind of-when you are not involved in this kind of understa- [partial word]-this kind of way of thinking, you have chance to understand what is Zen experience. I want to, this morning-I want to make this point clear as much as possible.

We say "big mind," you know. "Big mind." Big mind is not something which you can experience [in] some objective way. Big mind is something which is always with you, you know, which [is] always on your side, not, you know, objective side-always subjective side, here [pats something]. So you-you see, you cannot see your eyes, you know. Eyes cannot see themselves. The eyes only perceive things outside: objective beings, not eyes itself.

So, you know, we cannot see the big mind, because it is always with us-here-right here. [Laughs.] If you, you know, reflect on yourself, that self, you know, is not your true self anymore. You project-when you think about yourself, you project "you" as some objective thing, you know. Do you understand? Your mind is there. And your true mind is watching the mind outside. So mind outside of itself.

When I discussed this point at Tassajara, after lecture, Peter [Schneider?] said, "mind out of itself." This is very han- [partial word]-very good, you know, interpretation of big mind/small mind: mind outside of itself. You know, mind is here, you know, and you project your mind there, and you say this is my mind, and that is self-so-called-it "self" or "small mind," a limited mind. When you understand your mind something like this or like that, you know, it is-you are limiting-you put limitation to the true mind, or you object- [partial word]-objectify your mind, your subjective mind which is always with you.

Why I say so is, you know-this mind is-which is always on your side, is

not just your mind. This mind is universal mind, which is-which is always same, and which is not difference [different] from other's mind. It is big, big mind. And interesting thing for this mind is, whatever you see, you know, your true mind is always with it, you know. When you see something like this, you know, although you don't know your own mind, but when-at the moment you see something, your mind is here. [Sounds like he is tapping on the nyoi stick. Laughs.] This is very interesting. [Laughs.] Always, you know, your mind is always with things you observe-you see. So this mind is at the same time everything.

We Buddhist, you know, traditionally talk about this kind of mind and this kind of being which is always one with mind, you know. Usually you may think, "My mind is watching this cup," you know. Usually you say so. You understand: my mind is here, and cup is here, and I am watching it. As I [laughing] tentatively explained, you know, [laughing], my-my mind is always with it. But this is rather opposite, you know.

Real being is something which is, which-which has two side. You may think this is mind, or this is cup-it is rather confusing. [Laughs.] But did you understand what I mean?

When we understand mind in this way, that is big mind, which is always with things. And subjectively speaking, it is mind which is always on this side, not there. We Buddhist-from Buddha's time, we Buddhist do not have any idea of material only, or mind only, or we do not say our mind produce things, or mind is a kind of attribute of materialistic being.

We always-in Buddhism, mind and body, or mind and material is always one, and we are talking ab- [partial word]-always talking about this, even though sometime we say "dharma." That dharma means, you know, mind and body being-or mind and material-spiritual and material being. We are always talking about it. But, you know, if you carelessly, you know, carelessly listen to it or hear it, we are-as if we are talking about some material and some spiritual being.

So when we say "material," or when we say "big mind," that will be version of it, maybe. Mind which is always with being, with objective being, or mind which is always with-on this side [pats something three times], that is true mind. So enlightenment experience is, you know, to figure out, or to understand this mind which is always with us, which we cannot see it.

So that is why Dogen-zenji says, "Don't think," you know, "we will have-don't expect all of us who practice zazen will attain enlightenment about," you know, "this mind, which is always with us." It-it mean that if you think, you know, big mind is somewhere outside of yourself, then that is mistake. If you practice zazen ex- [partial word]-expecting something outside of yourself, that is mistake. Did you understand this point? Because the big mind is always with us.

If you try to, you know-when you try to attain enlightenment as if you see the bright star in the sky, "Oh! That's beautiful," you know. "This is enlightenment." [Laughs.] But that is not true enlightenment. That is more-for us that is heresy, you know. You, you know-you found out [laughs] something there which-which was-which is-object of yourself, you know.

So when you understand the enlightenment experience in that way, that is more-strictly speaking, that is heresy. You, you know, have idea of material only. Even though you don't feel in that way, but version of your enlightenment experience is exactly like that. There is something material only, or object of your mind exists there, and because of good practice of yourself, you could found out that bright star. So in this statement, there is the idea of, you know, self. And idea of the objects. That is not, you know, how to seek for enlightenment.

When-the morning I left Tassajara, students has-had discussion. And someone said, being and doing, you know-we are discussing about our practice of, you know, eating and sleeping. [Laughs.] And we started to discuss about sex, but that discussion about sex doesn't work so well. [Laughs, laughter.] I thought it is impossible to, you know, discuss about sex. Even though you try, it is very difficult-very difficult discussion. You will be involved in very, you know, endless, you know, discussion, because sex problem, or sex is-if you say "sex," whatever we do [laughing] is sexual activity. So to talk about sex means to talk about our life, to talk about whole Buddhism. [Laughs, laughter.] So I thought it doesn't mean, you know, to talk about only sex. [Laughs.]

If we want to talk about sex, we have to, you know, talk about-we have to discuss about what is Buddhism from the beginning. That is almost impossible to discuss. Too big problem. Actually, if you understand sex in that way there's no more sex problem. [Laughs.] No more sex because there is no-nothing to-problem-problem of sex is not any special problem. That is, you know, that is our-to-that is actually our life.

You say, "Oh, how beautiful this flower is!" When you say so, that is already sex. [Laughs.] We understand in that way. Our version of, "Don't be immoral," you know, means, "Don't say this is wonderful," you know. That is-our unders- [partial word]-our version of the fourth precept. I shouldn't be involved in this kind of discussion right now, so [laughs] I have to skip this [laughing, laughter]. Ex- [partial word]-I don't want to explain it right now-what I was going to say, by the way [laughing].

Doing and being. When we discuss about being, you know-being-we are already involved in something material only or something spiritual only. When we, you know, try to understand doing-doing is practice, you know, then our discussion is Buddhist discussion. When we discuss

doing, doing include two sides of be- [partial word]-two sides of-include two side anyway: being and non-being, right and wrong, good and bad.

When you think, you know-you see whether I want to stay in bed, you know, one minutes more. On the other hand you say, "I must get up," you know, "right now, to practice zazen." That is more idea [laughs] of being, you know, being in bed. You are thinking about being, you know, your being in Zen meditation hall, and you cannot be two beings at the same time. So there is conflict.

When you understand yourself-who is ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... then you think you understand yourself by doing, by getting up when you try to lays your head, or support your body by your, you know, arm, there there is true practice. You are right there. When you are thinking about your being in bed or your being in zendo, naturally your-your mind will be divided in two-split in two, and it will create problem. So someone said this is, in short, the problem of doing and being. I think this is very-he, you know, he had-when he said so, he had key point of our zendo life.

Why I started to talk about this point-about this kind of thing is-priest-as a priest, you know, I think we-at least we have to have deeper understanding-more accurate understanding about our practice. And we should have some enlightenment experience, at least. We should be, you know, not only able to-being able to talk about-about practice, we should experience, you know-we must have full experience-better experience of our practice. And for-for someone, you know, it is necessary to have-to put confidence in your big mind which is always with you. And you should be able to appreciate things, you know, as a expression of the big mind. In short, you must have some faith in big mind, which I explained.

It is-actually, if you understand what I said now, it is actually more than faith, you know. It is ultimate truth which you cannot reject. Whether it is, you know, difficult to practice in that-whether it is easier or difficult to understand or to practice it literally, you-this is the absolute truth which you must accept. And you must have anyway strong confidence in your big mind which is always with you, which you will find wherever you go. I think this is-if you, you know, have strong confidence, at-I think you are already, in its true sense, Buddhist even though you don't attain enlightenment. Your, you know, your practice will develop, and you have not much danger [of] being sick or being in confusion.

Mostly, you know, physically and mentally when we become sick, you know, it is lack of confidence in your self which is always with you, and [you] seek for something, or try to be something else. You know, when you are sick, you should be sick [laughs] because there is true you. You will find true mind at that time in your sickness. So, you know,

supported by everything, being supported by everything, you just lie on your bed like this, you know. The bed will be very comfortable, you know, warm, nice bed. When you have this kind of feeling, I think your sickness is already maybe 80, 90% over. You are recovered already. But most people struggle, you know, in the cold bed. "Oh! I should-I [laughs]-I must recover," you know. "Tomorrow we have party, so I cannot stay in bed." So he may struggle. "I have a baby, so I must get well."

In this way, if you struggle in your bed, that is very serious illness. Because of lack of understanding of yourself, and because you don't understand what is "you," you become sick. I am sure-I am quite sure, most people is ill, not healthy at all. But when you do not think you are sick, you are healthy. When you think you are sick, you are sick. [Laughs.] That's all. You may have some opposition to this kind of statement, but this is very true.

So how-I want to help people, you know, sick people, mentally or physically. I wish I could give my, you know, my understanding to him or to her. But it looks like-quite-very difficult for them to understand, to- to put faith in themselves, to understand big mind. I think best way is to practice our way before you are involved in this kind of, you know, sickness caused by yourself, caused by lack of understanding of yourself. Especially, you know, people whose parents or grandparents had some special illness. They are always in fear of getting same illness which their mother or father or grandmother or grandfather had. This is terrible thing, you know. Even though you are healthy, mentally you are ill, seriously ill. You are always confronting with the fear of being sick. Whether or not it's-their parents are, you know, mentally and physically healthy or not, he will be sick if he has-if they have that kind of fear always.

So how to get out of this kind of fear is to practice zazen. And to get out of-or to get rid of the mind outside of yourself. And to resume to your practice, to your actual being and practice, to find out yourself as doing-someone who is doing something, who is always with everything-with Buddha-and who is supported fully by everything. Then you are quite safe. When you are safe this moment, it means that you are-in future you are safe. When this moment of yourself is not safe, next moment of you will be sa- [partial word]-will be in danger.

For us, you know, today-tomorrow is future of this moment [tapping stick], you know, nothing but future of this moment. So when you think you are in danger right now, you know, tomorrow also you will be in danger-for you, I mean, for you right now. So when you continue this kind of confidence in yourself: today will be all right, tomorrow will be all right, and always with-you are on the-on the track. When you lose this point, you know, that is-you will be lost, and you will continue this kind of dangerous life, and you will be in fear always.

So it is necessary for you to be able to be-get out of it in this moment, right now. You may say "It is not possible," but it is possible. Even in one moment you can do that. That means it is possible. That you can do it in this moment means you can do it always. So if you see this kind of flash of lightning in dark, fearful, you know, sky, "Oh!" that is it. That is your enlightenment experience. You have great confidence in yourself.

This is, you know, how to be a Buddhist in its true-true sense. The difference between layman or Buddhist is not big problem. Whether we attain-whether we have, you know, enlightenment experience or not is minor problem. So someone may attain enlightenment, someone may not. But they are all Buddhist.

I have been thinking about future, you know, [of] Buddhism in America pretty long time. And if we concentrated on this point, naturally this kind of problem will be solved. Anyway, you know, it is good thing. I feel in America the young generation has a great opportunity to find out the true way of life for human being, because in Japan or in undeveloped countries, they have to have-be-they have to be involved still [in] materialistic problem. Here in America you haven't, you know, this kind of problem any more. Maybe you have, because you reject it. [Laughs.] The people in [laughs] Japan, they have this problem-want of material, so they-always to gain it, that is problem. But you are rejecting it, rather. "No, I don't want any car. I don't want bankbook [laughs]. I don't care." "I don't care" is very good, I think. But there is no need for you to reject it. That is too much.

Anyway, I think you started Zen practice in best condition, and with very pure mind. So you will understand Buddha's teaching in it-as he meant, exactly. Something will happen to us anyway, I think. In-in maybe-I don't know when [laughs]-tomorrow or next year, I don't know-maybe after I-maybe I will see you from the-I will see you from the ground, like this. [Laughs, laughter.] I don't know when, but something must happen. It is very clear.

I didn't join the-you know, yesterday's peace walk, but I heard of it, and I was very-very much encouraged by it.

I think it is the time to start our practice in its true sense, forgetting all about robed person or hippy-style person [laughs].

Let's-Gya te, gya te-recite Gya te, gya te, ha ra gya te,[1] and join the procession, join our practice. Thank you.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Judith Randall and Bill Redican (11/6/00).



[1] The start of the Prajñāparamita mantra in Japanese version of Sanskrit, recited at the end of the Heart Sutra: "Gone, gone to the other shore ...."

## **5 - American Precepts**

Saturday, November 22, 1969

Opening Lecture at Page Street Zendo: American Precepts  
City Center, San Francisco

I am so grateful with you to have chance to practice zazen in this, maybe, magnificent [laughs] building. I think we must be very grateful for Buddha and our successive patriarchs.

Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

I don't think I have much time to speak, but first of all, I want to express my gratitude and-and my confidence or my-I want to express my confidence in practicing with you. Whether we will be successful or not is, for me, out of question. I-if we [are] bothered by that kind of idea, we cannot do anything because our practice is always concentrated on present moment. If our practice in this moment is good, then next moment we will have good practice. And in this way, if we continue our practice, naturally we will have good practice forever. That is, as you know, our confidence in our practice.

Our group is now pretty many. We have many students now. When Hyakujo-zenji[1]-Hyakujo-established monastic life in China, many people came to monastery and wanted to practice with him. So Hyakujo-zenjiset up Hyakujo Shingi. Hyakujo Shingi means-I-because Hyakujo established the rules of monastery, we call it-shingi is monastic-"pure rules." And because he established, for the first time for the Zen monk, the "pure precepts" or "pure rules." We call it Hyakujo Shingi.

Since then, in China, Buddhist or Zen Buddhist started to practice zazen according to-mostly according to the Hyakujo Shingi. In India they have precepts, but in China, before Hyakujo, they-Zen Buddhist did not have special precepts for themselves.

Precepts is, you know, two sides. One is, you know, prohibitory, negative pa- [partial word]-side, and the other side of it is to-how to generate our spirit-how to do something good. It is more positive side of the precepts. So the positive side is called sazenmon[2]-to do something good. And the negative side is shi-akumon.[3] Shi-akumon means to, you know-prohibitory side. There are two side.

I think we will have-we will naturally need some way of life as a group. It may be difficult to set up all at once, but if we try hard, we will find out our precepts which include both side-will be established. This is very important point for our practice and for our practice to help others and to help themselves-to help ourselves.

That we have our own way of life means that you encourage people to have a more spiritual and more adequate way of life for human being-not only for ourselves, but also for people we must study our way. It is something which we must create or something which we must establish as it is-as our rules are actually for ourselves, for human being.

As a Chinese, Hyakujo-zenji established Hyakujo Shingi. I think we must establish, maybe, American shingi. I'm not [laughs]-I'm not saying this jokingly. I am pretty serious. But I don't want to be too serious [laughs]. If you become too serious, you will lose your way. If you are playing game of [with] it, we will lose our way. So little by little, with patient [patience] and endurance, we must find out our way for ourselves.

On this occasion, I want-I want to introduce you one [of] Hyakujo's word.[4] A monk asked, you know-a monk asked Hyakujo, "What is the special practice?" "What is the special practice?"

And he said, "To sit on the summit of Daiyuhō." [5] Daiyuhō is the name of his mountain. "To sit on the top of mountain Daiyuhō."

After all, various way of practice is just to sit on the top of mountain Daiyuhō, you know. If you want to sit well, you must organize your life. So Hyakujo tried to help his people to organize their life so that they can sit on the top of mountain Daiyuhō with him. Tokusan[6]-Daiyuhō: to sit on top of the mountain Daiyuhō.

Let's practice hard. And let's concentrate our life on zazen practice and organize our life so that we can sit well.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 9/26/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Hyakujo Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai): 720-814. Ch'an master of T'ang period. Dharma successor of Baso Doitsu.

[2] sa (make); zen (good); mon (gate or entrance).

[3] shi (impulse); aku (evil); mon (gate or entrance). Cf. shi-akushu (four evil worlds).

[4] The Blue Cliff Record (Pi Yen Lu, Hekiganroku), Case 26.

[5] "Sublime Peak": Daioho, Mount Baizhang, Ta Hsiung Mountain, or Hyakujo-san Mountain.

[6] Possibly a Japanese form of Ta Hsuing, or the name of the monk Tokusan Senkan (780-865).

## **6 - Evening Lecture**

Tuesday, November 25, 1969

Evening Lecture  
City Center, San Francisco

[Katagiri-roshi spoke before Suzuki-roshi.]

Suzuki-roshi: I am very happy to be with you. I am rather tired, and pinch hitter[1] hit a home run [laughs, laughter]. So maybe at the end of the ninth inning. So game was [1-2 words unclear], and we won. So [laughs, laughter] I am sorry I have no chance to, you know, to play for this evening.

I think it is almost one year since I caught Hong Kong or Asian flu. Right now, in spite of heavy work, I feel very good. So I think I am almost all right if I have a cup of water when I give you lecture [laughter]. I think I'm quite all right.

But, as I said, we won the game, so [laughs] only thing we should do is go home and go to your bed and have a nice sleep [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much. [Laughter.]

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed by Diana Bartle (10/23/00) and checked by Bill Redican (10/23/00).

[1] Earlier, Katagiri-roshi referred to himself as a "pinch hitter" for Suzuki-roshi until the latter arrived.

## **7 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part I**

Saturday, November 29, 1969

Winter Sesshin Lecture #1  
Way-Seeking Mind, Part I

Tassajara

... mind.[1] Without this way-seeking mind, our practice does not work. We say "just to sit," or shikantaza. Only when we have a strong way-seeking mind, just to sit make sense. Without this mind, just to sit means maybe-will mean just to sit mechanically and formally. The way-seeking mind-when way-seeking mind vitalize the form you have in zazen may be actualized and make sense.

People say "form" or "spirit"-but to-actually, you know, maybe if you do something without intellectual understanding, without knowing why you do it, you know, that is, you know, formal practice. We-usually we understand in this way without knowing what it is, you know-just to imitate, or just to do something as others do, or in the way you are told to do is the formal practice.

And knowing what is the actual reason, maybe, and practice something is more spiritual way. But actually, you know, Zen is not something which you can understand it. Intellectual understanding cannot reach the true understanding of Zen. So only way is by actual practice to find out the meaning of it is our way because intellectual understanding does not make much sense. If you have no way-seeking mind, your, you know-even though the only way to-only approach to the enlightenment is practice, but practice without way-seeking mind is dead practice.

That is why we put emphasis on way-seeking mind, because intellectual understanding does not work. If, you know, intellectual understanding is proper approach to the enlightenment, then there will not be-no need to put emphasis on way-seeking mind. But intellectual understanding-we do not, you know, take intellectual approach, but actual-by actual practice, we find the true approach to the enlightenment. But without way-seeking mind, you know, the practice cannot be actual practice because of the lack of the spirit.

When I was-when I was studying at Komazawa [University], I was-at that time I was studying, you know, [with] Takada. Professor Takada taught us education-what is formal education and what is real education. And his, you know, understanding of formal education is opposite, you know, to-for an instance, to read scripture without anything-without knowing what it is, like you recite Prajñāparamita Sutra. That is real, you know, approach-real education. And to, you know, to explain what is the meaning of the sutra and let them understand what it is-is according to him, that is formal-or that formal education he says. [Laughs].

At that time, you know, we had to, you know-we have to note whatever he says [laughs]. When I was, you know, taking note, I thought it is funny. Maybe my, you know, misunderstanding that it looks like opposite [laughs], I thought. But anyway, I came home and checked up my note again, but in my note and my friend's note was same: "Formal education is to explain, you know, what it is-what it means. And more actual education is to, you know, to let them read whatever it is [laughs] without explaining it." "That is," he said, "that is more actual, you know, education." [Laughs.] I couldn't understand, but because I couldn't understand I remember it still [laughs]. What I could understand [laughs] I forgot, but only what I couldn't understand I remember. And now I think after I started zazen, I could understand what he meant [laughs].

But if you have no, you know, way-seeking mind, the only way, maybe-first of all you should understand it by here, you know [probably pointing to his head]. And if it is-if you think it is good, you will start your practice. Actually, in that way, you can-I don't say you cannot, but it takes long, long time because you-your study will go round and round and round same area, you know, until you are-you get tired of [laughs] trying to understand what it is.

The best way-it looks like foolish-it looks like silly to-to do as what-only-only because what is-because-only because you are told [laughs] to do so by Shakyamuni Buddha. Looks very silly, but even though it looks like silly, best way is to do it actually without thinking what it means so much. This is very important point. The purpose of our practice is, of course, to get rid of small idea of-idea of small self.

When you say, "If it is good," you know, "I will do it." [Laughs.] That-that is-that is, you know, big small self [laughs]-very big small self-maybe this much. [Laughs.] "If I," you know-"if you convince me," you know, "to do so, I will do it. I will do it. If I could agree with you, I will do it." [Laughs.] Big self, you know.

So your practice is based on big small self [laughs]. That doesn't work [laughs, laughter]. When you forget, you know, small self or big self and just do it and feel it, that is the actual approach to the reality. That is a direct experience, we say. And thinking mind will be a barrier of direct experience

Whatever it is, for an instance, if you eat it, you know, you will have actual taste of it. And you will-you can eat it, but, you know, if it is-if you think nibble a little bit and [see?] whether it is good or bad [laughs]. Most food, you know, will not be so good for you. "Ah, this is too sweet. This is too fishy [laughs]. This smell is funny smell; I don't know what it is [laughs]." You can never appreciate its taste properly as it is. If you-anyway-I think only way to taste-to taste a real taste of the food is to eat it [laughs] and chew it without thinking, and without thinking what it is. Then it may be you can eat it and you can appreciate

the food even though afterwards you are told that what you eat was head of the snake [laughs] or smashed [laughs] head of the snake with shoyu sauce [laughs, laughter]. "But it was very good!" you may say.

That is, you know, how to taste the real taste of the thing. You know, if you think what it-if you ask me-ask [laughs]-if you-if you ask what it is, and if you are told this is smashed snake with shoyu sauce [laughs, laughter], you will never eat it. But it is-I think it is foolish, you know, not to eat it when it is so good. You know, whatever it is, it doesn't matter. It is not poisonous, and it-so best way is to practice in our way, and to have direct experience of it.

You may think-you may understand if I say in this way, how much difficulties we have just because of thinking mind-just because of, you know, your understand- [partial word]-intellectual understanding. Zazen practice is to be- [partial word]-to be ready for eating everything, experiencing everything, and to have true understanding-actual, real understanding of things.

The way-seeking mind arise when we understand how silly we are, you know, even though you, you know-we look like very wise-even though you look like very sophisticated-but how silly we are [laughs]. Then you will have real way-seeking mind. We should not be so silly. That is way-seeking mind.

I promised with my jisha[2] not to talk so long time [laughs]. So I don't know what time it is. Maybe better not to appeal to my thinking mind. My lecture is finished.

Thank you very much. [Laughs, laughter.]

---

—

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields (7/18/00) and Bill Redican (7/20/00).

[1] First words missing on tape.

[2] Traditionally, a monk who attends the head monk.

## **8 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part II**

Sunday, November 30, 1969

Winter Sesshin Lecture #2  
Way-Seeking Mind, Part II

Tassajara

I think nowadays way-seeking mind is understood like something to do good in its-with a pure motivation-not for sake of success or not for sake of fame, but to purify our mind and to be a good Buddhist. That is way-seeking mind.

So, accordingly, to do something good is, in its wide sense, the way-seeking mind: for an instance, to do something which people do not like to do: the cleaning restrooms, or pick up garbages, or to save small animals, or to help sick people. Those are things which a man of way-seeking mind will do. And with this spirit, we practice zazen. Zazen practice is just for ourselves-just for oneself. And when we do it completely, for himself-for ourselves, the practice will be, at the same time, the practice of saving others in its true sense.

To "establish ourselves on ourselves" is to encourage people to establish themselves on themselves without asking some other's help. That is something what a man of way-seeking mind will do. So when you have way-seeking mind in your practice, you can practice your way in its true sense.

Even though you do something which people may say [is] good, if you do not do it with pure spirit, you don't feel so good, you know. You-you will create something disagreeable for yourselves. Only when you do it with pure mind, you will be satis- [partial word]-you will fi- [partial word]-you will have joy of practice, and you will appreciate the great mind, and you will be-your practice will be the practice of kindness, too.

So when you have pure way-seeking mind, you have buddha-mind. According to Dogen-zenji, buddha-mind could be interpreted in three ways: the big mind or joyful mind, and kind mind, and magnanimous mind. The buddha-mind or way-seeking mind is not something which you will gain by your practice. It is the mind you originally have. So if your practice involved in wrong practice, you [laughs] will not feel so good, you know, because you have originally way-seeking mind or buddha-mind.

So when you, you know, when you do something good you feel good. And when you feel good, when you find yourself kind enough and magnanimous enough and when you have joy of doing something-pure joy of doing something, there, there is the way-seeking mind. So it is not something which you will attain by practice, but from which our practice originated. The source of pure practice is the way-seeking mind. With-if I say so, you may think there is some way-seeking mind, you know [laughs], but as I explained already before, the mind you think you have is out-the mind out of itself, you know. It is, you know, the mind you reflect on.

"I have-I had-at that time, I had this kind of mind," you may say, but that mind is not actual mind you have. The actual mind is always on

your side, and doing something, practicing something, and observing something. That is, you know, mind. True mind you have in this moment, the mind you have, you know, you-you had before. The mind you will have in the future is not the true mind. It is picture of mind [laughs], you know. "My mind in the future will be like this," you know, "and in past-in past my mind was like this." But that is picture of mind, the mind outside of yourself. Do you understand?

So mind is right here [S.R. tapping repeatedly as he says previous sentence]. When you do something, that activity is mind itself. When you see something, that-to see is the mind itself. So when you do something, when your big-I shouldn't say "big" or "small" so m- [partial word]-too much-when you do something, you will-if you do it, you know, just for sake of something, then you will have joy of doing. You will enjoy your doing something, and at that time you have great mind, magnanimous mind. And you will be very kind to your machine [?] or to things you work on. At that time, actual mind realize itself. The realization of true mind is there. That is so-called-it "way-seeking mind."

So when you practice zazen with the utmost care, limiting your food and having good sleep, and taking appropriate food. By taking great care of yourself and practice zazen with great care, there, there is real practice of way-seeking mind. It is operation of, you know, way-seeking mind.

So way-seeking mind-when you practice just-only when you practice way-seeking mind there is actual way-seeking mind. The way-seeking mind is not something you have like a stone, you know [laughs], within yourself. Just when you do it, the realization of way-seeking mind will be there. So moment after moment, whatever you do, that is the realization of the true way-seeking mind.

Why we cannot practice good zazen, you know, is because we are almost all the time caught by upside-down [laughs] mind, topsy-turvy idea. You know, we think whatever we see, you know, we will be easily caught by-we will be enslaved by it. And if-when we practice zazen or when we think about way-seeking mind or buddha-mind, you think as if there is something like buddha-mind in term[s] of good or bad. But buddha-mind is not such a mind which you can compare with some other mind. Actually, especially for beginners, after having practiced zazen one or two days, and your mind become very calm, and you feel as if you are sink into the bottom of the ocean where you cannot see anything, you feel as if you are sinking into the bottomless-bottom of the sea of the death [laughs]. You feel in that way. Why you feel in that way is just because your experience in-of complete calmness is something you haven't dreamed of it, you know. Even in your imagination you didn't have that kind of experience. That is why you become afraid of it.

But, you know, which is more real [laughs]-to be dead or to be alive? Which is more real? Most people think to be alive is more real [laughs]



than to be dead. Which is real? Dogen-zenji says, "People like which is not real and does not like which is real." [Laughs.] Which is more real? Think. Which is more real?

Our life will be a matter of one hundred years [laughs], you know. You cannot live more than one hundred years. And it might be very difficult to have human life or animate life rather than to have inanimate life like stone and water. So, especially human being is most [laughs]-most unreal being. Stone and water is more real.

And if you die [laughing], that is the most real thing. Without exception, we will die, you know. There is nothing more clear than that. That all of us will die is very, you know, clear. There is no doubt in it. But people do not like death [laughing] and like to be alive, and we-so the doctor will come, you will take various medicine, and Oriental medicine, and Western medicine [laughs]. You will try everything, but, you know, those help is something which will be given up: "Oh, no. I cannot help anymore. He will die in two or three years-two hours-I am sorry." [Laughs.] Doctor will go, and if you have a lot of medicine, it doesn't help. If you take care of me so well-even though you take care of me so well, but if the time come, you know, you must give up [laughing]: "Oh, anyway, he will die." That is our destiny. Very real, you know, but you don't like something real, and you like something unreal [laughs].

I always say if newspaper reporter write up something in most realistic way, true report will not be appreciated by people. People will not be interested in it. If there is some fiction in it, they will read it, you know [laughs, laughter]. So magazine you read, the newspaper you read is not real at all. But it is interesting for you. That is why you read it. But even though you are interested in it, it is not real.

So, you know, our tendency is very, very funny. I don't understand [laughs]. Perhaps you may not understand. So, maybe it-it may be better not to think about it so much. If you think it out, you will find out something very uninteresting [interesting?]. That is our nature. Knowing this, you know-when you know that, your effort of-your orientation of effort will change. We say, "accept things as it is." To accept things as it is means-"things as it is" means underlying thought is dao-dao, or true way, or truth.

So to accept truth means, you know, to give up topsy-turvy idea, upside-down thinking. That is why in zazen you do not think. It means that you give up this kind of topsy-turvy idea, this kind of-to change our effort to opposite direction.

So when you want to accept things as it is, you must have king-size mind [laughing, laughter]. This is not big enough. Not big enough. Great king-size mind. That is, you know, how you practice zazen. It is so big that you cannot have it wholly in your m- [partial word]-body. So may be better to give up every mind and sit. That is "big mind" in its true

sense.

Don't compare. Don't say: "This is small mind, this is comparatively big mind. Today's practice was," you know, "by this much big mind, but tomorrow my practice will be practice with this [probably gestures] size mind." This kind of practice doesn't work at all.

So, you know, we say-what will be the right words for it-word for it?-we say to enter into-to enter into tathagata's mind in one jump [laughs]-whht! Not like this, you know. Not like that. But like this! [Probably gestures or imitates a jump.] [Laughs.] That is, you know, how you practice zazen. Not matter of two day, or three day, or four day, or one week. One week or one day doesn't count, you know, when you jump into the ocean of the buddha-mind. Whht!

That is how you do it. There you have true spirit of practice. Doesn't matter whatever happen to you, you just practice zazen without thinking anything. This is the way-seeking mind.

It is just one hour [laughs].

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/26/00).

## **1969 december (6)**

### **1 - Way-Seeking Mind, Part III**

Wednesday, December 31, 1969

Winter Sesshin #3

Way-Seeking Mind, Part III

Tassajara

Our way-seeking mind is buddha-mind. And our practice is-makes sense when you practice with buddha-mind, or way-seeking mind. But usually, when we say the way-seeking mind or doshin-doshin-do is dao, and shin is mind-it also means bodhi- [partial word]-bodhisattva-mind-bodhisattva-mind: to-not only to help ourselves but also to save or to help others. Strong nuance of this kind is always there when we say doshin.

Right now we recited: "This perfect and penetrating dharma is rarely met with even [in a] hundred thousand kalpas of time." The moment we

have right now doesn't come back again. I don't know how old are you, but if this day pass, you will not have the same day. So not only dharma you listen [to], but also your life you have right now doesn't come back. Even [in a] hundred thousand kalpas of time, you cannot repeat your life again. And it is so. So it is foolish to stick to something and ignore our life which does not come again. We should not be regretful after many years.

[Whispering off-mike.] No. You cannot hear? Excuse me.

That is why we make our effort, day by day, moment after moment.

This is the third day of sesshin. One-week sesshin is not so long. If you pass three days, the rest of days will be easier. But at the same time, you will miss the day of the difficulties you have had. I think that is the actual feeling you have now when you pass already three days.

When I am sitting with you like this, I feel as if I were only maybe 30 or 35 years old, but [laughs] I am already 55 [laughs, laughter]. It's-it is amazing. But I think I feel, you know, as you feel right now. If you feel you are quite young, that will be the mistake [laughs, laughter]. You know, 30 years or 60 years doesn't make any difference. So I think you should feel as I feel, and I should feel as you feel. And we should practice zazen. This is, you know, bodhisattva-mind: to help others and to help themselves.

Especially-you do not make much progress after 30 or 35, so while you are young, you must make best effort and try to have various experience as much as possible. And after 40 years-after the age of 40, you will develop your work on the foundation you built up before you were 30. In this way, if it is so, your time is very valuable. You should make best effort so that you will not be regret the days you passed without making enough effort.

This kind of spirit is a spirit which you do not have. Not much people-not much American people understand this kind of spirit. You seek for something good always, and you choose easy way, and you depend on some teaching, and you are asking always which way you should take. But that is, you know, I think that is mistake. In that way, if you, you know-to choose something easy means you follow the preconceived idea. You follow-you choose something you can understand-something-you follow the experience [of] something you have had, without seeking for something new to you. If you, you know, always choose easy way, your way will be, you know-the-your life will be the life you will be regret. If you make every effort on each moment in various way as much as possible, you will not regret when you become old-when you become old.

So bodhisattva spirit is the spirit to seek for difficulties and-and to confront with difficulties. With firm conviction you should venture your

life. When you-you have this kind of spirit, you will be quite different person. Your eyes will change. Your behavior will change. And there are many bodhisattvas-not only [in] Buddha time but also in China and in Japanese-in Japan too-many and many bodhisattvas who practiced bodhisattva's way.

Those who went to India, and seek for the scriptures, and translated it into China [from the Chinese], and those who [sailed] across the China Sea and studied Buddhism in China, or Chinese priest who came to Japan without being afraid of the stormy weather of Japan-China Sea. The most famous one will be Ganjin-Chinese priest Ganjin.[1] He tried seven-seven times to cross the ocean. And he lost his sight with his difficulties. And at last he came-he could come to visit Japan and built a temple. That is, you know, a bodhisattva-mind. With this kind of effort, our way was supported by many people because of the spirit, because of the feat of those great teachers.

Buddhist, you know, respect tradition, you may say, but there is some reason why we respect tradition. The ancient bodhisattva's way was always beyond our reach-almost, you know,beyond our reach. And they are always encouraging us, not only because they have done great things, but also they did not afraid of anything. They did not afraid of poverty, they did not afraid of death, or they did not afraid of failure. They found a joy in failure, in poverty, and [in] doing some small things with, you know-famous words in Lotus Sutra is "to shine the one corner of the world." Just, you know, it is enough if you shine the one corner of the world-one corner of the room. That is enough [laughs].

That kind of spirit may be, you know, difficult to understand. But to, you know, if you sweep, you know, square room, you know, maybe you may sweep the, you know [laughs]-only, you know-you will not sweep the corner of the room [laughs]. If you wipe the floor or scrub the floor, you-you always leave the corners [laughs, laughter]. It is easy, and it may be fast. You may think it is better to scrub the corner of the room-it-you may think it is better to clean two rooms trying to, you know, clean the-each corner of the rooms and clean just one room.[2] But [laughs] we rather, you know, try to, you know, clean the one room completely with great difficulty [laughs]-with great effort. It looks like foolish, but someone must be foolish enough [laughing] to spend all life in cleaning each corner of the rooms. That is bodhisattva-mind. Do you understand, you know?

My teacher, Kishizawa-roshi, always after clean-after we clean the room, he come and [Suzuki-roshi gestures as if looking for dust[3]-hmm![4]-laughter]. You know, the shoji screen has many, you know, frame, you know, and it is rather difficult to clean up each of the-each of the frame. So sometime we miss it. So he come [laughs]. He doesn't say anything [laughs]. Ichigu wo terasu,[5] you know: "to shine the one corner of the room." In Lotus Sutra also, there is a famous bodhisattva who used to bow to everyone he met- [laughs] everyone. He bowed to everyone.

You may think that is very foolish [laughs], but that is bodhisattva-mind.

In Japan, there are some rascal. He-he-he himself was not so bad, but his wife was very bad person. She asked her husband always to do something bad. He married with her when she was the wife of-his master's wife, you know [laughs]. But he, for some reason, you know, he married with her. And after he got married with her, he felt so bad. And he went to a temple and asked that monk what to do. And he said it-it-it may be easier to commit hara-kiri, you know [laughs]. It is easier, actually, but if you die you cannot, you know, repay your sinful karma. You cannot change your karma, so it is better to live long enough to pay the bad karma.

So they started on trip. And wherever they go, his wife always asking [him] to do something bad. And at last, again, he killed someone to rob a traveler's money. And he made up his mind to give up, you know, to dismiss her. And he started to work on cave. Do you know the story?

In Kyushu Island[6] there is famous cave or tunnel for people. Each year some people was killed that pass because the road was so bad, and cliff was so steep. So he made up his mind to make a tunnel. But no one helped him, you know [laughs], because it looks like so silly, you know. It looks like almost impossible to make a tunnel for that mountain. But he made up his mind and completed the tunnel. That is the famous tunnel which was built by that monk.[7] That is also, you know, bodhisattva-mind. Very foolish [laughs]-very crazy idea, you may say, but that is bodhisattva-mind.

They followed the good example of Shakyamuni Buddha: the many examples of bodhisattva way told by Buddha,[8] sacrificing himself as a food of hungry tiger and just to know the one verse of the truth. This kind of spirit is bodhisattva-mind.

I think if you want to accomplish something in this land, you must have unusual mind to go beyond the usual way of life. And there you will have, you know, great mind, joyful mind, and true kind mind which is buddha-mind. So if you don't do anything, you don't have any mind. When you do it, then there you will have joy, and strength, and kindness.

So that is why it is necessary for us to have vow-bodhisattva's vow. And I think you must, you know, each one of you must have his own-your own vow-vow for only for yourself. My vow is, you know-[laughs] do you th- [partial word]-what do you think [laughs] my vow is? My vow is to scrape off the, you know, maybe [laughs]-the smoky pan [laughs]. You know, in the kitchen there are many black smoky pan. When I was young [laughs], there were-we did not use gas. We, you know, boiled things by wood. So bottom-pan is always-the bottom of the pan is always black and full of, you know, smuts. So it was very h- [partial

word]-it is very difficult to boil something by it. So unless you take off those black smuts, you cannot boil anything.

So Buddhism has a lot of smuts outside [laughs] of the pan, so it is difficult to boil anything. So first of all is necessary to, you know, take off those black smuts. That is my vow: to take off, you know, black smuts of the pan so that you can boil something by it. If you take turn, you know, and cook, you know, some lazy person will left the pan, you know, with smuts. And next morning [laughs], someone-someone must clean it, you know, or else the pan will have more smuts until [laughs] someone clean it up. Someone must do it. I think, you know, when they feel very bad-when someone feel very bad with boiling by-receiving the black pan for-for someone who-who was in turn yesterday. But I think-I feel some joy of cleaning it, and I-I have some joy of, you know, boiling it by cleaned up pan.

So each one of you must have some vow. Then you will find joyful mind, and big mind, and kind mind. You will be every kind to, you know-if you-only when you vow-when you clean it because of your vow, you will find you will be kind to everyone, instead of, you know, [being] angry at people. That is bodhisattva-mind.

Thank you very much.

Ao-no-domon

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (3/19/01).

[1] Ganjin: Japanese name for Chien-Chen (688-733), a Chinese Vinaya master who came to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese emperor. He founded the Ritsu school.

[2] Possibly: "You may think it is better to clean two rooms than to clean just one room and its corners."

[3] Note from original transcript.

[4] As in "Aha!" [Kishizawa-roshi exclaiming when he found evidence of dust.]

[5] Ichigu wo terasu: "Light up (your) corner (of the world)." The fourth day of each month is observed by the Tendai school as Ichigu wo terasu day, during which cleaning, copying sutras, giving alms, and other altruistic efforts are practiced.

[6] One of the five principal islands of Japan.

[7] The tunnel is called Ao-no-domon (Cave-gate of Ao, or Blue Cave Mouth), hewn with a hammer and chisel by the Zen monk Ryokai (d. 1774) and others from 1735 to 1750. The tunnel was popularized in Japan by the novel written by Kikuchi Kan, Onshu no kanata ni (The Serene Realm beyond Love and Hate). It was first published in 1921, so Suzuki-roshi was probably familiar with it. It was republished in English as Beyond the Pale of Vengeance (Mt. Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1998).

[8] Probably referring to the Jataka tales.

## **2 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #4**

Tuesday, December 02, 1969

Winter Sesshin Lecture #4

Practice Should Not Be Perfect So Descendants Have Something to Do

To accomplish something is difficult. And, you know, the difficulty you have moment after moment, which you have to work on, will continue forever [laughs, laughter]. I thought if I say so, if I say so, I thought you know, you may laugh [laughter]. And you are, you know, entrapped [laughs].

We say-we have saying: to-to attain enlightenment may not be so difficult, but to continue our practice is difficult. So after all, you know, why we practice zazen is to continue our practice. Or else, I think, our practice doesn't make much sense. We say we have to live on each moment, and we have to make our best in each moment. And moment after moment, if, you know, our practice continue with pain, with difficulties, it doesn't make much sense. Even though you have wonderful practice moment after moment [laughs], what will become of it? What is the purpose of life, then?

The purpose of life is not, actually, to accomplish something, but to continue our buddha way. So to continue our buddha way forever is to accomplish our way. "To accomplish" does not mean to reach some stage where we don't need to work anymore. So the most important point and most difficult thing is to continue our way and to have good successor for us who may, you know, succeed our way. That is the meaning of the transmission.

Transmission-we say "transmission," but there is nothing to transmit. But if we say there is something, that is the spirit of practice, to find

someone who may, you know, continue our way. You know, my teacher, [1] when he mend the one of the building, he didn't mend the main building, but he just mend kitchen and zendo. [2] And he-at that time he said: "If I try I can do it, but I must leave something for my disciples to do" [laughs].

I couldn't understand what he meant exactly. You know, to-it-the purpose of mending building or building something is not just to have some facility for us. The most important thing is to continue that kind of practice and to have successor who may take our responsibility, who may share our responsibility.

The point is, you know [laughs], somewhere, you know, which you don't expect. If you understand this point, you know, you will understand what kind of life you should have and what kind of rules you have to observe. To have rules is not just for yourself, it-but, you know, for your friends and for your disciples who may succeed our spirit. You know, as a bodhisattva it is a pleasure to have something to work on, to have-we bodhisattvas should welcome difficulties, and if there is-so if you are very kind to your followers-successors, you should leave something for themselves [laughs]-some difficulties [laughs] for your descendant. Then, as a bodhisattva, he may be very glad to have something to work on. So not only, you know, your lifetime, but also forever for our descendant we should welcome the difficulties.

Do you know a bodhisattva's four vow? I explain many times, I think: If desires are inexhaustible, you know-inexhaustible-why we should, you know [laughs]-it doesn't make sense to have a vow to get rid of-it doesn't make sense, you know. But for a bodhisattva, you know, bodhisattva may like [laughs] endless, you know, desires which you should work on [laughs, laughter]. We understand in that way.

You had, you know, you have dead angle on this point. You don't notice this point, so you don't, you know, have much sense in your practice [laughs]. Why you are-you are discouraged, you know, with your practice is-the point is wrong. You are just working for yourselves [laughs]. You are very, you know, short-sighted-near-sighted. You don't see anything. And [you] practice zazen, so you are-you will be easily discouraged when you sit everyday with pain, with many difficulties.

The human life is interesting because there is good thing and bad things, half and half-well, you know, very well mixed up [laughs], you know. So if there is only good things, the-our life will not be so interesting [laughs, laughter], because we have something, you know, some difficulties, sometime some joy. So joy makes sense, difficulties make sense.

And the world we live is called Nan-enbudai,[3] and there is the world called Hokkuro-shu[4] in Buddhist, you know, parable, where there is only joy. So Dogen-zenji says we should be very glad to be born in this



world [Nan-enbudai], where there is many difficulties. If we were to be born in Hokkuro-shu, we will not have Buddhist teaching.[5] We cannot listen to Buddha because there is no need [laughs] for Buddha to exist because they have no trouble there. But I don't think we are very happy if we-if human being were to be born in Hokkuro-shu.

I don't want to talk about this point so much. It is too valuable to talk about, unless you pay million dollars. I-I [laughs, laughter] don't want to talk about it. I feel in that way. But, you know, because tonight I have nothing to talk about [laughs, laughter], so, you know [laughs], I have to say something [laughs, laughter]. So I am giving you, you know, my secret treasure. But, you know, I hope you will not understand it [laughs, laughter]. You should understand it after ten, fifteen years, you know, not-not now, because you may understand it just by hear, you know. "Oh," you may say, "that makes sense." That's all. Maybe, you know, this kind of thing is something you should find out.

My master [So-on] just said, you know, "This is-this main building[6] is for you to mend it-for your disciples to mend it." That is what he said. I didn't take it so seriously. "What does he mean?" [Laughs.] Because of it I couldn't come to America, you know, until my age of 54. When I made up my mind to go to America, it was the year I accomplished-I made up my mind to come to America in October, and I finished my work of main building April.

So when I-when I made up my mind to go to America, I said to my members-one of my members, if I could go to America ten years, you know, before-ten years ago, I had-I could have many things. I had-I think I can many things-I think I could [have done] many things, but maybe it is too late. I cannot-I forgot almost all the English. Even though I have some spirit, it will not work properly [laughs]. I-I regret.

But on the other hand, I thought, if I-if I had gone to America ten years before, I wouldn't have, you know, this much understanding of Buddhism. So maybe it was good thing for me to stay in Japan, doing something which was told by-by my master.

So point of practice is something beyond accomplishment or success. Successful or unsuccessful is not the point. What kind of accomplish you have-accomplishment you have in not point. It doesn't matter. But the point is if your practice is-the quality of practice is good or bad, good or not-so-good. That is why Buddhism, you know, lasted for so long time. As Buddha pointed out, in maybe 1000 and-1500 years Buddhism will die out-not die out but almost, you know, dead teaching.

It is true, you know. If Buddhist seek for the accomplishment, when we, you know, continue our practice if you are not, you know-if you continue your practice, if you-if you are not so good, your disciple may be good, you know. In three or four generation after you, there must be some

good disciple if your practice is pure enough and your practice is good quality. Some of your descendant will do something, even though you cannot do it. That is very important point for us.

Our practice is not just for ourselves. It is for everyone. And so, you know, it doesn't matter whether you are successful or not. It doesn't matter. If you-if you have, you know, good disciples and if you have good practice, that is the most important point.

And everyone can have good practice, you know. This kind of spirit is the spirit everyone has. This kind of spirit is not just for selected people. It is every-for everyone. The important thing is to continue it, you know, to continue the good practice. Then someone will do it. Do you understand [laughs] this point?

So that is why we say our practice should not be selfish practice. Even though you accomplish something great, if it is selfish practice, we will despise it. [Laughs.] Do you understand? If you don't do anything-if you are not able to do anything, if your practice is with people and for your friend and for your descendant, even though he-he cannot do anything, he may be a good Buddhist. Okay? Don't say okay [laughs] too-too soon. Think about it, you know.

Dogen-zenji said, you know-when he wrote Shobogenzo, he said, you know, "Although they may not understand me," you know, "it is all right. Anyway I will write it down [laughs]. Someday someone will understand it. So for my descendant I am writing this Shobogenzo, giving up various chance to accomplish something [that] seems to be great." His point was there. That is why, you know, there is Soto school. Even though we understand Shobogenzo, you know, one character-even though I-we understand Shobogenzo intellectually, if we lose this point, it doesn't make any sense.

Even though all American people converted to [laughs] Buddhism, it doesn't make sense. If we-if there is ten or twenty good students, that is enough. Our way is for everyone-not for some e- [partial word]-some particular person, for everyone who may participate [in] our way. Don't say, you know, there is nothing to do for me as a Buddhists. There are many things to do for you. And this is the foundation of, I think, foundation of Buddhism and foundation of practice.

As this practice is for everyone, or-how it works, this teaching works as everyone's teaching is because it is enough if each one of us do something which he can: great or small, doesn't matter. We say if it is some equipment in the kitchen, you know, there is pan and cups and bowls and many things, spoons and everything. We need everything. Whether it is big or small doesn't matter. Small thing is necessary as well as big ones. But we must, you know-small things should work when small thing is necessary. Big one should work when big one is necessary. If small pan want to be a big one [laughs], it will be big

trouble. And something which you should put higher place, you know, should be put-should be higher-high place, and something which should be low place, should be low place. That is, you know, famous Dogen's words: Kojo kohe. Teijo tehei.

That is rules, you know. Rule is not something which was made by some particular person. The moment we are here, there is rules already. And each one have its own place, and each one has its own place-and each one of us has its own position. According to the position we should work. That is how we practice our way in everyday life. In this way, if we work together, that is, you know, our monastery. That is monastic life. And which will last forever. And its gate should be open to everyone. And everyone must have some position, something to do there, with the same spirit. And our life-our monastic life should be continued forever, and that is, you know, how our monastery works. And that is, you know, why we practice zazen with painful [laughs] legs.

Mm-mm-mm. Excuse me [laughs, laughter]. Oh my! I thought it was too short, but it was too long [laughs, laughter]. Okay, excuse me.

Let's work hard with joy, you know, and participate [in] the big practice, you know. This is our joy, actually, you know. Don't say, "What am I doing here?" [Laughs.] You know, don't say so anymore if you understand this. And how valuable thing it is to have something to work on, to kee- [partial word]-to have something to keep you busy [laughs, laughter]. I am not fooling you at all [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Meg Levie and Bill Redican (11/14/00).

[1] Gyokujun So-on.

[2] Of the Rinso-in temple in Japan.

[3] Nan-enbudai (or Nan-enbushu) (Jap.) (Skt. Jambudvipa): The southern of the four continents surrounding Mount Sumeru (or Meru) that comprise one world or planet in traditional Buddhist cosmology. It is the human world.

[4] Hokkuru-shu (Jap.) (Skt. Uttarakuru): The northern of the four continents surrounding Mount Sumeru (or Meru) that comprise one world or planet in traditional Buddhist cosmology.

[5] The inhabitants of Hokkuru-shu are so happy that they feel no need for Buddhist practice.

[6] Of the temple Rinso-in in Japan.

### **3 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #5**

Wednesday, December 03, 1969

Winter Sesshin Lecture #5  
Tassajara

I explained briefly about bodhisattva mind. And we have also bodhisattva practice-bodhisattva practice-we count six and sometime four [bodhisattva practices].

Of course, [1] most important one is zazen practice. That is the most important one, maybe. And [2] to keep precepts and [3] to practice almsgiving-almsgiving, to offer something or to Buddha or to people to help, and to keep precepts, and [4] to vigorously practice all those practice, and [5] endeavorance to be patient, and [6] wisdom-to have wisdom. Those are six practice of bodhisattva.

And Dogen-zenji might [?] count four practices: [1] and one is dana-prajñāparamita, which is to give something; and [2] to give kind words; and [3] to benefit others; and [4] last one is to be friendly with others. Those are four bodhisattva's practice. I want to explain it according to Shobogenzo.

The "to give something" does not mean just to give something-some words or some dharma. Those are, you know-so, it may be divided, classified into: one is material, the other is spiritual giving. But when we practice this, we must not have any idea of selfish-self. So it means that something-according to the nature of something, you know, if rice or food is something to eat, you know, let them eat the food. Let the food go to something hungry-someone who is hungry [laughs]. That is-according to him, that is almsgiving.

So, you know, without any idea of "me" or "you," you know, to give-let the things goes where the things want to go [laughs]. That is almsgiving. That is bodhisattva spirit. In this way, we treat things, we practice bodhisattva way.

So where a bridge is needed, to cross the bridge is also dana-prajñāparamita. Or to provide a ferry where we should-where people need, you know, is also dana-prajñāparamita. Or to cultivate the farm or garden is also dana-prajñāparamita. So even one word, if you know something about it, as soon as you hear something good, you should, you know, talk-tell people about it. When you-when you think, "that is wonderful," then you-immediately you should tell people about it.

So-and even [if] you have nothing to give or nothing to know [laughs], you know, you don't know anything and you don't have anything, you can practice dana-prajñāparamita. How you do it is to enjoy someone giving something to someone else [laughs, laughter]: "Oh! You did very good thing." [Laughter.] Then, you know, his practice will be as good as someone who give something to others. So, you know, it is not matter of you know something or you don't-you have something. Even though you have nothing, you can practicedana-prajñāparamita, he says. I think this is very true.

But usually, if you see someone [laughs] doing something good [laughs], someone may not feel so good [laughs, laughter]: "Oh, he has a lot of money, so it is all right" [laughs, laughter]. "He knows many things, so that's-that is why he is-he talks about many things, but we don't know so much [laughs]. That's just words-nothing to do with me." That is usual, quite usual. But if we have bodhisattva mind we can practice bodhisattva way. That is dana-prajñāparamita.

The next one [is] to give kind words is like a mother, you know, speak to her baby, you know. We should give-always give kind words to people. And this kind-kind words, he says-if you give kind words in front of people, directly, he will be very grateful, of course. And if you give kind word indirectly, you know, not to direct to someone but to-to talk about someones kindly with someone, you know, and he eventually he may hear it. That kind of kind words will, you know, penetrate into his heart, right to his heart. And that kind word sometime will, you know, he says, will turn over the heaven [laughs]. Kind words-one kind words will turn over all the heaven and earth [laughs, gestures], like this. That is kind words. And, in Japanese, he describe very beautifully, so almost everyone knows that words. I cannot, you know, ex- [partial word]-translate it so well, but-

And third one is to do something good, or to benefit people. That is the third one. And he says foolish people may say, "If you work for others," you know, "you will not have no time to work [for?] yourself." If you always helping others, you will not be helped. You have no time to help yourself. But actually it is not so. To-to help others is to help yourself, because there is no-if you think [it] over-there is no difference between you and others. Others is you and you are others. And you are part of all society.

So to-even [if] you think you help yourself, it means that you are helping others [laughs]. Do you understand? It is others, not you. Where is you? [Laughs.] There is-there is no "you," actually. But foolishly we think, "This is me and that is you" [laughs]. But no one knows who is you, you know, as I explained the other day. Eyes cannot see themselves, you know. You-you think this is eyes [probably pointing to his eyes], but eyes doesn't know themselves. So when you say "eyes," eyes is not you any more. That is some object about what you

are thinking. And you say, "This is me and this is-that is him," but that is not right.

So [laughing] anyway, we are helping others. So you shouldn't say: "Now I am helping myself, and someday I will," you know, "after I help myself, I will help others." That is very poor understanding.

And the last one is rather difficult: to be friendly with others. To be friendly [laughs] with others, you know. If I-if I, you know, say "There is no me or no you," that's all [laughs]. But he explained more carefully about it. To be friendly with others means to-to accomplish oneness of everything: in bodhisattva practice, oneness of all things. That is to be friendly with others. And how, you know, this practice could be done is when you say "I," you know-"I" include everything. When I say "you," at that time, "you" include everything. Actually we are practicing always this way. We say, "I am here and bowing to Buddha." We say so.

But when you say "Buddha," there is no you; when you say "I," there is no Buddha. You know, I am-when-when we put our hand together and bow to Buddha [bows] carefully, you know, that is you or that is me, not Buddha. Buddha is me. When you open your eyes and see the Buddha, there is no you [laughs]. You are forgotten at that time, if that is real practice. When you feel, "I am here and I am practicing-I am-I am bowing to Buddha," that is very superficial bow. There is no sincerity in it. So it is all right when you bow to Buddha with utmost care to bow to Buddha [bows], then Buddha is here, right here. And when we bow to Buddha and when you lift your hand, and when you feel Buddha, you know, then Buddha is right here and there is no me. We-we cannot, you know, say, "This is me or this is Buddha," because in-in one second, in each moment, "Buddha/me. Buddha/me." And we don't know which is which [laughs]. It is foolish to say, "This is me, or "This is Buddha."

When you see Buddha in your eyes, there is no you. When you feel Buddha, there is no you. So mostly, when you bow to Buddha, the world is world of Buddha only. When you bow to Buddha with utmost care, that is you, you know. Buddha is not here-there. So when you practice bow you are Buddha, and, at the same time, you are practicing bodhisattva way in the realm of Buddha, the world of Buddha only. This is, you know, complete oneness: when you don't know which is which.

After you bow, you know, "Oh, I bowed to Buddha this morning nine times." You may say so, but when [laughs] you are doing [so], we don't know which is which. That is complete oneness. When we talk with each other, you know, we don't know which is which. When we have complete communication, you know [laughs], there is no differ- [partial word]-we cannot say which is which. As long as you feel, "I am here, and he is there," that is not complete communication. And this is the experience you actually have always, but you ignore this actual experience and say, "This is me, and that is others."

That is, you know, silt of your practice [laughs]. After some hours, you know, even in the stream you will have silt, and when the silt is mixed with water, that is real water. But, you know, when silt is divided from the water, that is already something which will happen later. So we shouldn't, you know-actually water has something in it, you know. That is actual water. We-you call [it] "mineral water"? What do you call it-the water you buy from the store in the bottle? Hmm?

Student: Distilled water?

Still water?

Students: Spring water?

Spring water? [Laughs.] No, that is not spring water [laughs]. But-do you call it spring water? [Laughter.] The-you mix, you know-wine, you know, and-

Student: Soda water?

No, no! [Laughs, laughter.] You know, when you drink some-not sake, but wine-

Student: Coca Cola?

[Laughs.] No, no, not Coca Cola. [Laughs, laughter.] I think you call it "mineral water"-

Students: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

-to-to make the wine weaker.

Student: Why do that? [Laughs, loud laughter.]

That will be the pure water, maybe, but I don't think that kind of water doesn't exist, you know, in the stream. I think we have to, you know, more organic [laughs]. You say you like the word "organic" [laughs, laughter]-organic water [laughs, laughter]. In other word, muddy water. You are very much discouraged when you see the muddy water for several days. But actually, water is not so pure.

If water stays for a long, long time, you will have silt, and it will-may be divided in two. But something else will appear from it [laughs]: bugs and flies [laughs], because it is dead water. If it is running, you know, there must be something in it. That is actual, you know, world.

So we should live always in actual world. We should not live in something-some imagination. When we live in actual world, there is no problem. When you-we become very sophisticated and very wise, something will happen, you know. We should be able to see things as it

is. Then there is true friendship.

We say-so Dogen-zenji said-we say Buddha and sentient-people. But when Buddha is Buddha, people are also Buddha. When we bow to Buddha, everyone who bow to Buddha is Buddha. That is very true. When we really bow to Buddha, we are Buddha because we forget ourselves when you really bow to Buddha. When you don't forget yourself and bow to Buddha, that is formal practice [laughs], very formal one, you know. Even though you know, you know, who is Buddha, who is Dharmakaya Buddha, and Sambhogakaya Buddha [laughs], and Nirmanakaya Buddha, you know. And "I am bowing now, may be Nirmanakaya Buddha." [Bows. Laughs, laughter.] This is very formal practice [laughs].

So, anyway, you know, as children bow to Buddha [bows]. That is, you know, informal practice. But people say that is very formal practice [laughs], and to bow to Buddha knowing which Buddha we are bowing-"Is this Avalokiteshvara [laughs, laughter] or Shakyamuni Buddha?" Or "This Buddha is-how old this Buddha is?" [Laughs.]

This kind of, you know, practice is not our practice at all. Our practice is more natural and maybe primitive-not so civilized practice [laughs]. This is how to be friendly with each others. So this kind of interpretation is-what he is talking about is, you know, based on actual practice, not based on thinking or canon of Buddhism or understanding of Buddhism-but based on actual practice we do, and there there is, you know, real Buddha.

So this kind of understanding will be something which you should understand. Someth- [partial word]-it is not something which you can understand but something you will be familiar with, you know. When something-you can feel something which you will be, you know, more intimate by your practice. This is bodhisattva practice.

Excuse me. Tomorrow we will have, you know, practice of [for] shosan ceremony for the seventh days of sesshin. And the day after tomorrow we will have Buddha's Enlightenment Day ceremony. So-hai.

Student: Tomorrow is Thursday-

Hmm?

Student: Is that Thursday?

No. Not-so-[tomorrow is] preparation. And the day after tomorrow we will have shosan.

Student: And the day after that?

The day after that we will have-did I made some mistake? Okay? Excuse



me. The eighth day, you know-seventh day we will have [laughs, laughter]-huh?

Student: Seven days [2-3 words unclear].

Yes. Confusing. The eighth day-

Student: When we're going to have it, Roshi, we will tell you.

Okay. [Loud laughter.] [2 words unclear.] Okay. So. He-he will tell you. Maybe. [Laughs.] Okay. [Laughter.] You know, it will be, you know, something-it may be something [laughs, laughter]. So, you know, practice hard [laughs] tomorrow. Okay?

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Judith Randall and Bill Redican (2/12/01).

#### **4 - Winter Sesshin Lecture #6**

Thursday, December 04, 1969

Winter Sesshin Lecture #6

Tassajara

Our sesshin is already nearing to the end. As I said before, this sesshin will not come back again. So we must make best effort in our practice. And when you want to [make] best effort in our practice, of course we have to practice zazen seriously.

But at the same time, tomorrow we will have shosan<sup>[1]</sup> ceremony. And the day after tomorrow morning we will have jodo-e.<sup>[2]</sup> Those ceremonies should be observed as if you practice zazen. And when you [are] in zendo, when you do something, there is some-there is rules. Rules we have in zendo is called "pure rules." Pure means oneness-oneness of the rules and who observe rules. And the students and rules should be always one. That one student-where one student is, there should be rules. And rules should be taken care of by all of us as if you take care of your zazen. That is why we call it pure precepts-pure rules. So rules we have in zendo is not some rules which is set up by someone for some purpose.

So the difference between the usual rules and our rules is [that] our rules has freedom in it. The rules which has no freedom in it is not pure rules. The restricted side and freedom side in our pure rules is one. And how we take care of rules is how we take care of our practice-zazen

practice.

Buddha said it is-those who take care of our mind, which means zazen practice, should be [like?] a man who take care of reservoir for irrigation. The bank-we should take care of bank. Bank is rules. As if, you know, a farmer take care of the reservoir, we should take care of our everyday life and organize our everyday life so that we can practice zazen. So where we have good practice, naturally good rules or pure rules is observed, or else we cannot continue our zazen practice. So whatever you do, it should be well taken care of.

Sometime most people, maybe, thinks zazen practice is something special practice, and everyday life is something quite different from our practice, and attitude of everyday-attitude in everyday life and way we observe zazen changes. That is not the monastic life. Especially during sesshin, whatever you do, that is the extended practice of zazen practice. And I want you to observe shosan ceremony and jodo-e for Buddha's enlightenment day-would be observed like we practice zazen.

I think you made a great progress in your practice. I am rather amazed at your progress. So I think we must make our bank of reservoir higher, higher, and higher so that wisdom water does not leak. So-so we must take care of leakage of the high bank. The-if the bank is high, you know, small leakage will become a big one. So it is necessary for us to make our bank higher, and at the same time we must pay a great care for the leakage.

Small leakage cannot be ignored now. Some mistake for beginner may be all right anyway. The wisdom water is not so deep, so damage will not be [laughs] so big anyway. But when we have big amount of wisdom water, I think we must have-will have pretty very hard time to take care of the reservoir we have, like we have upstream.

Especially I am very grateful for the-for your old students who is taking care of the leakage of the bank. Our practice, bodhisattva practice, is not-through and through-is not just personal practice. And the-all the people who flow into the reservoir will be a one big wisdom lake, and there we must have good practice.

If-but if you come in the deep water, you will be drowned because it is pretty deep, you know. You know, something good for foolish one is-will give him a big damage. For a plant it is necessary to have rain. But for weak, you know, small-small shoot of or seed of, for an instance daikon [3] [laughs]-do you know daikon? It is very small seed. If it rain hard, the seed will be, you know, lost. Even though rain is good for plants, but it is not always good. So each one of us should take care of ourselves so that we should-we wouldn't be lost in high water.

And we should not [track] dirt in zendo, you know, with dirty shoes. Zendo is always cleaned up and taken care of by us. But someone

carelessly will [track] dirt in zendo with dirty shoes. That kind of things always happen. So Dogen-zenji, in his rules of monastery, [says] if you come-if you dirt in-if you come to monastery by mistake-by mistake-you should go out. This is very important. In zendo we don't sit so much. Although we have various unwritten wo- [partial word]-rules, we do not talk about it so much, and it looks like a big freedom in zendo. So someone, you know, may feel very good to play with dirty shoes in zendo. But, you know, we should be-he should be ashamed of it if he found out what kind of place zendo is.

The-some poem says, "Don't you see the red flower? It is autumn,"[4] you know. In autumn we have-in Japan, we have, you know, hyakujiko, [5] you know. It means red flower which last one hundred days-hyakujiko-and its skin is very slippery and smooth. And the-not much bulk on it, and the bark is brown. And small leaves and-and red-pink-thick pink color. "Don't you see the flower of hyakujiko or saru-suberi?"[6] We say saru-suberi-saru-suberi-monkey slips. Monkey-it-the bark is so slippery, so even the monkey will slip [laughs]. "Don't you see the flower of hyakujiko?" Those are nothing but the blood of former teachers.

So we, you know, just-when we see the hyakujiko, we just say, "Oh, beautiful flower!" [Laughs.] Maybe that's all, you know. If you have no experience of real freedom of life, what kind of freedom is really-real freedom? You know, "Oh, beautiful flower!" Maybe that's all. But that is nothing but the blood of-blood of ancient teachers. You say "just Tassajara zendo" [laughs]. You may say, "Oh, wonderful place!" You may say it has hot springs and a calm nice place, you may say. But it is the result of the effort of ancient teachers.

The ceremony we have-we had-we-today looks like, you know, simple but those ceremony is observed-originated, maybe, in China-Hyakujo [7]-and observed in China and introduced to Japan by Dogen and many Zen masters, and has been observed for maybe one thousand years. To you it is something unfamiliar ceremony. But those are the blood of our ancient teachers.

It is rather difficult for me to observe those ceremony with the same spirit I observe it in old zendo. It is rather difficult. And so I'm sorry, you know, I lose the spirit of observing or taking it. But I hope by your help, by your respect to the ancient teachers, those ceremonies will be observed with some respect and with some spirit. Even one word, when it is said with true spirit, it will give you a great, deep feeling.

Perhaps I may be too friendly with you, you know. Maybe I was Americanized quite a lot [laughs, laughter]. I think that is maybe good, and sometime it is not so good. And as you want me to be more strict and to be more like Zen master, you know [laughs, laughter], I'm happy to be strict. But, you know, I cannot be strict when you don't understand, you know. It is rather difficult.

I feel as if I am playing game with you [laughs]. Maybe I am playing game with you. But it should not be like this. We should not waste this valuable time, especially when we have-with a great effort when we have build up some spirit so far.

I am very grateful for your effort. And with mutual trust I think we will have good concluding ceremony for this training period.

Thank you very much.

Saru-suberi tree (*Lagerstroemia indica* L.)

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed by Diana Bartle (10/20/00) and checked by Bill Redican (3/26/01).

[1] The head monk (shuso) answers questions in a formal ceremony.

[2] jodo-e: Ceremony performed on the anniversary of Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment. In Japan it is observed on December 8.

[3] daikon: Large white winter radish.

[4] A seven-day period around the autumn equinox (September 23 or 24), when many red flowers are in bloom, is traditionally observed in Japan. The Buddhist term for this period is higan. The poem or line cited by Suzuki-roshi may be from Manyoushu, an anthology of 4500 poems from 5th-century Japan.

[5] From hyaku, "hundred," + jiko, "----."

[6] saru-suberi (Jap.): *Lagerstroemia indica* L., the crêpe (crape) myrtle tree (Eng.) or monkey-slip tree (Jap.); from Jap. saru, "monkey," + suberi, "slip."

[7] Baizhang Huaihai (Jap. Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. Disciple of Baso Doitsu.

## **5 - True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End**

Sunday, December 21, 1969 [vergelijk dec. 1968]

### True Happiness and Renewal of Practice at Year's End

Everyone seeks for true happiness, but happiness cannot be true happiness if the happiness is not followed by perfect composure. The- usually happiness does not stay long. Happiness is mostly just very short time and it will be lost in ext moment when you have it. So, sometimes we will think rather not to have it because after happiness usually followed by sorrow and this is, I think, everyone experiences it in our everyday life. Buddha, when he escaped-can you hear me?-when he escaped from his castle, he felt this kind of-he had this kind of happiness in his luxurious life in the castle, he at last forsake all of those, this kind of life, so we say he started his religious trip because of evanescence, because he felt evanescence of life. That is why he started study of Buddhism. I think we have to think about this point more. I think everyone seeks for happiness, that is alright, but the point is what kind of-how to seek for happiness is the point. But whether our way, whether the happiness we seek for is something which we can...it is something which is possible to have it...Surely there is-we have to seek his teaching more carefully. He taught us the Four Noble Truths and first of all he taught us this world is world of suffering. When we seek for suffering-happiness-to say this world is world of suffering is very, you know...you may be very much disappointed with your teacher. World of suffering. This world anyway is world of suffering, he says. And he continues. Why we suffer is this world is world of fantasy, everything changes. When everything changes we seek for some permanent thing, we want everything to be permanent. Especially when we have something good or when we see something beautiful or we want it to be always in that way. But actually everything changes. So that is why we suffer. So if we seek for happiness even though we seek for happiness it is not possible to have it because we are expecting something to be always constant when everything changes. So naturally we must have suffering. So far, according to this teaching, we are-there is no other way for us to live in the world of suffering-that is the only way to exist in this world.

Then it is not possible to obtain eternal happiness, or eternal composure of life. Though we have some way to have eternal composure of life or happiness of life, but first of all if we want to composure of life, we have to change our view, our way of observing things. To observe things as it is, we say, but to observe things as it is for usual sense and to observe things as it is in our way is not the same. This point is not truly realized by even Buddhists. Things as it is, way as it is. What is way as it is. Usually things as it is means to observe things as if something exists in that way, constantly, forever. We say-here in incense bowl. But this is already mistake. There is no such thing exists. This is always changing. This is bronze, but even so this is changing, and you sense in it always changing. In ten minutes there will be no more incense, but if it is very

good incense you will think as if something exists, not forever, you may not think in that way, but at least you think this incense exists and fire exists in that way, but the fire is not exactly the same fire as you observe this fire. This is actually, you know, instead of combustion, it is not red-red fire as you, as you see it. It is constant repetition of combustion-like this-there is electricity, but that light is always-current back and forth, this way, and doesn't exist in that way, but we see there constantly electric light, like so. But that is not true. So we Buddhists call this kind of naive way of looking-observing things is aspect of being because we think everything exists in this way. Aspect of being. And when you understand everything changes and everything is changing, like electric light or fire, we call this kind of view, is view of non-being. No such thing exists, so non-being. And for Buddhists, for you maybe if you seek for happiness, if someone who has view of seeking for happiness, it means that he is seeking for something which is impossible and if you have the view of non-being you will not care for anything. If you accept things in that way, you will be very, your way of life is very empty. And you will not find out any meaning of life at all. And our way of observing things is based on view of being and non-being, both. And we know that view of being is too naive, and view of non-being is too...logical. Or too critical. Or view of-true view of life should be both. View of being and view of non-being. This is our way.

But view of being and view of non-being is not...is not possible to accept. We can accept one of the tow, but we cannot accept two of those viewpoints. And here there is another problem for us. But when you face-when you face this second problem, you will be said to be Buddhist. And you will give up to rely on your intellectual understanding of teaching and you will start our practice. To accept this kind of paradox.

Recently I ask you and I want you to reflect on why you seek for-why you study Buddhism. Because I think this point is-if this point is not fully understood, it may be difficult...to put whole physical and spiritual power in our practice. Usually maybe in your practice without thinking about our life more deeply and you try to if you have problem you will try to solve it by means of practice or teaching, but if you really think about whether your view of life is right or wrong, whether you are trying to obtain something which is possible to obtain or you are doing-you are trying to accomplish something which is not possible to accomplish. Then you will not be sincere enough to practice our way because you are always fascinated by some teaching or chanting. We don't know-what we study in intellectual way is very shallow, but what we actually experience is very deep. When-after-when I came to America, I found very, you know...I found...special, some special food for me and I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it very much-that was potato. Potato was delicious to me, but I don't know if it is so for you or not. I don't know what kind of nourishment potato has, I haven't studied anything about potato, but I like it very much. The reason why I like it is-I don't know why-when I was in Japan of course I liked it, but I didn't think I liked potatoes so

much! But after I came to America, having very-various foods and I haven't not much chance to eat potatoes, maybe once a month or so when I was invited for Thanksgiving, I had mashed potatoes-that was delicious. But usually I haven't mashed potatoes, or even baked potato. At Tassajara I told Ed I like potato (laughs). Sometimes, as we have various food, various kinds of food, so Ed cannot give me always potato. So only once in a while I had potato. As soon as I come back from Tassajara I go to the grocery store and buy three or four potatoes and as it takes pretty long time to cook it, I cut it and fry it. My boy doesn't like it, but I like it. My wife doesn't like it much. So I cook it just for myself. Do you know why? Potato was-when I was young I-my hometown produced a lot of potatoes, so I was eating potatoes always when I was a boy. So that is why I like it. When I was eating I didn't like it so much because I had it almost not everyday, but four times or more a week. This kind of experience characterized our character. I think you may not like zazen so much, but you think this is good, so you may practice it. But you may not realize how much progress you made in your zazen practice. So may do, but most of you don't, I am afraid. But that is alright. This kind of experience which is not just reading or listening to lecture and something which you experience, both physically and spiritually, without thinking about it. Without trying to find out the meaning of it, beyond our intellectual understanding, to practice our way without any gaining idea. To practice our way is valuable and you will have real power of digesting things.

In Lotus Sutra, as you know, Chapter Three, Buddha told Shariputra, you may not know what you have done before you will not remember what you did in your former life or even in this life, you may not remember all of it, but he said, you have been practicing our way for so long time that is why now you have been practicing our way for so long time that is why now you have attained enlightenment. I know that, but you may not know it-why you have attained enlightenment. I ask you why you came here so many times. I thin you don't know why you came here, but there is some reason why you came here. You didn't come here just by curiosity. Why you came here is, I don't think possible to figure out. But there must be some reason. This kind of reason-you practice your way is so-called it, there is no other way to say so we say-your Buddha nature seeks for Buddha. Buddha seek for Buddha. This is very mystic way of putting it, but there is no other way to say it so we say Buddha nature seeks Buddha nature.

We have various Buddhist philosophy and we have a lot of teaching to study, but Buddhism is not actually philosophy or teaching. Buddhism is always within ourselves and always helping us. But we do not-when we are not-when we don't realize it, then that is so called it suffering. Or when we live in the realm of good or bad, right or wrong, we lose our meaning of life. Only when we do something we practice, with right understanding, whatever you do that is our practice. Because we are so intellectual being, it is necessary to-to be free from our reasoning or our intellect. That is necessary. And instead of being caught by intellectual

mind, we should seek for something more or we have to rely on way things goes and the way we live without-without every reason...why we are practicing...Indian way or Chinese way or Japanese way-you may feel in that way but actually there is no special way, our way is not just for Japanese, or Chinese or Indian people. This is for everyone. We sit in cross-legged position, but if you think just cross-legged position is juts Zen, that is a big mistake. If you want to practice our way, we should free our mind from intellectual or conscious activity in term of right or wrong, or good or bad. Whatever it is we should try it and we should have taste of it through direct experience. Not just feeling or thinking, but direct experience. That is zazen practice.

So many people here practicing our way. I feel a great responsibility as a teacher. If I am not here maybe you will not come here. If I am here you come here and spend all day in our practice. But if you misunderstand-if you have misunderstanding in our practice it will not work at all. It is quite natural for us to think some result or effect as long as you do something, but our practice is something different from that kind of activity. Just-we practice our way juts to have...(tape turned)...

...Next Tuesday we will have no lecture, so this may be-will be the last one for this...at the end of the year we clean up our house and we...throw old things which we do not use anymore, and we renew our equipment, even things in the...furniture we renew it. And after cleaning our room we...we put new, new \_\_\_\_\_and which is distributed from temple-like this. We take off old mats and put new ones, like this. This is- when in temple we have prayer for the-to control fire, this is what you call it \_\_\_\_\_taking care of fire it says in Japanese. And this is-in temple at end of the year we have ceremony to read Prajna Paramita Sutra-600 volumes of Prajna Paramita Sutra, but actually we cannot read 600 pages of sutra, so the priest conducting the ceremony read one, one volume of the 600 sutras. The we have one volume, one of 600...(tape inaudible)...just to turn it instead of reading and so the most important volume will be recited by the priest who is conducting...and we...and you receive this kind of prayer card from the temple. That is what we do...and end of the year is the most busy days. We have to clean up our rooms and if you have some debts you should pay. For someone to collect the money...he lent and for the most people it is time to pay the debt and then we-after cleaning up everything, spiritual and physical, we decorate New Year's decoration so old times (?) those should be done before twelve o'clock and after twelve o'clock there is no need for you to pay, payback the money you owned, so the man who, who wants to collect his money\_\_\_\_\_even after twelve o'clock, if he had chosen (inaudible)...So usually it is pretty exciting week. This kind of custom still in Japan and each one of us, rather we enjoy this kind of activity. We understand each other-we fool ourselves in some way and enjoy the last day of the year. This idea is based on Buddhist way of understanding life. Moment after moment we should renew our life, we should not stick old idea of life, or way of life, we



should renew it, our life day by day, especially at the end of the year. Especially at the end of the year we should completely renew our feeling and completely renew our car. If we stick to old ideas always, or if you have no chance to renew it, it is rather difficult to renew your way of life. Some encouragement is necessary if you always repeating same thing over and over again, then even though you have no feeling of sticking to old way of life, actually you are confined in old way of life. Some excitement or some occasion is necessary. For instance, we use this kind of stick. This is to renew your practice, if you become drowsy, if you don't receive a stick you will have chance to renew your \_\_\_\_\_and in this way, you can live moment after moment. Actually...faithful-you will be faithful to your own life.

So, as it is we say, but actually when most people say 'way as it is' is not at all way as it is. Without clearing up your mind and body, physically, you will not have chance to live on each moment. So the (end) for us is laziness. If you are always lazy and drowsy, spiritually and physically lazy, you actually have no chance to live truthfully to yourself. That is why we practice various practices. But if you-if we stick to old way of practice it is not so good also. So it is necessary maybe to change our way of practice sometimes. For instance, at some monastery they start to bathe in cold water from January, December 1 until December 15. All the monks getting up about 4 o'clock and going to the lake and bathe\_\_\_\_\_. This is not\_\_\_\_\_ -just to get out of drowsy mind. And you will not catch cold. recently flu is all over, but if you make up your mind to bathe every morning and evening in cold water, your mind do not accept\_\_\_\_\_because you are so physically and mentally very active. So we monks rather\_\_\_\_\_ourselves when we catch cold. Lazy monk! \_\_\_\_\_Especially-it is rather difficult to take cold water-bath, and more difficult-after working so hard and to take cold bath in evening very difficult. Maybe I don't know why but anyway when you get up you need some situation, natural, but in evening usually we are not prepared for that kind of situation. That is- it is so difficult to take cold bath in evening. This kind of practice is not orthodox practice, but according to the situation of the monastery we apply various ways of life and to keep chance to renew our mind and body. Especially people who live in San Francisco where climate is always same, it may be necessary to, to have some pool for Zen monks to take cold baths. Maybe exciting practice for us, and it will give pretty good stimulation for San Francisco people. I am busy now, everyday activity, but if you want I think you can do it, and you are young enough to do it. It doesn't mean to be involved in ascetic practice, it is the purpose of those practices \_\_\_\_\_physically and spiritually. We say Zen-if we, if we are caught by even the idea of Zen we call-sticking the\_\_\_\_\_he is not fresh enough-old stinky Zen student! But if we do not have some chance to renew our practice we will soon, soon we will be stinky student. As if you wear same underwear one week or two weeks. What will happen to us\_\_\_\_\_...and so my teacher or my master always told us-"you stinky boys, wash your underwear!" Not

just underwear and so my teacher. my master, his way of training his students was-disciples was pretty different from usual master. He did not allow me to stay at Eiheiji so long time. "two years is enough! You will become stinky Eiheiji student!" "That's enough, you should go to Sojiji." And when I stayed at Sojiji more than one year, one day he appeared and after talking with me ten minutes-"maybe it is time for you to leave Sojiji." And he always put emphasis on Dogen Zenji's beginner's mind. You should always be alright-it means you should not stick to old style of practice, or any kind of practice and you should be always new student. When you go to Rinzaï temple, you should be new Rinzaï student. And if you go to Japan, you should be new student. You should forget all about what you have studied in America. You will know...the fundamental practice is the same, but we should practice the essential practice with renewed feeling. This is important. To practice always with new fresh-freshness of the feeling is rather difficult. Necessary for us to change some part of our practice.

My master didn't give me-didn't give us any idea of what we will do next day or next week. He didn't talk about tomorrow and it was-he was very unpredictable type of monk and monks and priests were very much afraid of him. They couldn't get what he had in his mind. Maybe he didn't have any idea, but he was always concentrated on what he was doing. That is, I think, too much, but it is necessary for us to practice our way moment after moment, with our best effort and \_\_\_\_\_mind. As we are pretty new students, so it is rather difficult to practice our way without much rules, but each one of you should make your best effort to study without, without instruction in detail, detailed instruction. You should feel as if you are study...with few people, you shouldn't think that we have so many students. You study our way as if you are studying with your teacher only. I think that help you to ignore other's practice. But we should not be involved in group study only. This is not school-not school system. I want you...to understand this point more, whether you are you have only one teacher. We have each one of you are only disciple, disciple for teacher, for a teacher. With this spirit we should practice our way. If this point is missing, we cannot practice Zen\_\_\_\_\_.Originally Zen master do not have so many students. When Dogen left China, receiving transmission from Tendo Nyoho. Tendo Nyoho Zenji said to him: "After you go back to Japan, you should practice your way in remote country with few students and keep always our practice fresh and new, and take good care of your students." That is what he said when Dogen leave China\_\_\_\_\_and he secluded himself in remote country, norther part of country and built his small temple in\_\_\_\_\_Prefecture where there is Eiheiji now. Tassajara may be...at Tassajara they may have small, but Eiheiji they...at this time of year the...all the buildings is dark because of the snow. We have to cover all building by \_\_\_\_\_to protect building from heavy snow. Such a remote country he practiced his way, with candle light, when winter come-that was his way.

That kind of practice is very important. Even though we are many people now, we should not forget this spirit.

Thank you very much.

## **6 - To Adjust Ourselves to Our Surroundings**

Sunday, December 21, 1969

Fundamental Buddhist Point: To Adjust Ourselves to Our Surroundings  
San Francisco

Since I moved in this building, [1] people ask me how do you feel [laughs]. But I haven't find myself in this building. I don't know what I am doing here [laughs, laughter]. Everything is so unusual to me. So actually I haven't [laughs]-not much feeling. But I am thinking about now how to adjust myself to this building. And first of all, what I felt seeing people, you know-seeing our students bowing in this way or cleaning our building, I found special meaning of putting-our putting hands together like this.

Wherever we are, this, you know, putting hands together is very suitable posture. [2] You know, this is pretty universal way of expressing our sincerity, I think. So wherever we are, if our behavior is based on this putting hand together, we will be beautiful wherever we are. And our-we will suit to the surrounding.

As a Buddhist, I think fundamental Buddhist way is, I think, how to, you know, adjust myself-ourselves to the surrounding rather than changing our surrounding. So when, I think, Buddhists moved in, you know-when Buddhist which was developed in Eastern culture moved in Western culture, if possible-as much as possible, without changing the furniture or building-how to adjust ourselves to the building or the culture will be the most important work for us, you know. I think in that way now.

This is, maybe, basic difference between Western culture and Eastern culture. For an instance, you use, you know, very convenient chair, like this, you know. But we sitting on floor [laughs] without using convenient things. Maybe this is more convenient, but if-we can live in our idea maybe, you know-I realize this point. When we-instead of making surrounding convenient for us, we make effort to find some way to live in the surround-on the floor or on the earth-by effort to live on the earth. So it is rather difficult.

Maybe it is rather difficult to stand up from the floor. This is rather difficult. And it may be easier to eat with table rather than take everything up to, you know, to your mouth, maybe. But this is-but even though it is difficult, we Eastern people trying to find our way without changing our surrounding, without using some special tools.

When I was sitting here reciting sutra, seeing those chairs in front of me, I thought, "Oh [laughs, laughter], very convenient thing, to us here." But, you know, if we can live without, you know, chair, our life will be more simple. And even though we use our physical power-physical strength in standing up, but we will have eventually more and more physical strength and physical power to suit our surrounding.

But-we must-but when-if we use something, we must limit things in smallest amount. That will be the next thing to think. And if we have several tools or equipment we must know how to use it. And we must know how to-best use of them. Dogen-zenji said, "Some thing which you put higher place, you should put higher place. Some thing you should put lower place, you should put lower place or on the floor." So some thing should be on the shelf and some thing should be on the floor. This is, maybe, next thing we should think and we should take care of.

We should put things in most-in the most natural way. And next thing will be to clean, you know, our surrounding. This is very important effort to fit ourselves to our surrounding. At Eihei-ji they say zazen-they do not say zazen first-they say "cleaning first and then zazen." Clean our surrounding, making, you know, suitable surrounding for us. Then we should sit. So cleaning first and zazen next.

I think it makes sense. You know, I didn't know the meaning so well, but, for an instance, it is rather difficult to sit before you clean your floor and altar. It is not so easy because you will have various dust, you know, in your mind too. So in Zen students, most important thing is to arrange things in proper way or in the most natural way, so that we can make best of our effort and best of-best use of them, and to clean it-to clean them so that we can have good practice. Then, I think, without changing, you know, our way of life so much, we will have quite Buddhistic feeling in our life, I think.

So fundamental point will be to make effort to suit ourselves to the surrounding-to adjust ourselves to the surrounding, instead of adjusting surrounding to our convenience. This kind of effort is, right now, very important, I think. And if we start to making effort on this point, we will have here wonderful, you know, life, and this building will be-without changing so much-I think we will have quite good Buddhistic feeling.

I want, you know, [to make] best effort to adjust myself [laughs] to your culture, instead of, you know, changing my way of bowing, you know-instead of bow to shake hand or something like [laughs] that-instead of doing that kind. But by some fundamental, you know, way, you know, will have something wonderful, I think.

I haven't-I di- [partial word]-I haven't study, you know, Dogen's work on this point yet in its true sense. Of course, what we are doing at Eihei-ji is based on Dogen's instruction about our life. But if we study it in

America, I think we will have something new meaning to it, as he was very careful about our life and view of life and way of life. I will ask someone to study it from-with some new viewpoint.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Katharine Shields (7/23/00) and Bill Redican (7/26/00).

[1] 300 Page Street.

[2] S.R. probably puts his hands together in gassho.

## **1970 (65)**

### **1970 januari (5)**

#### **1 - What is Our Practice?**

Sunday, January 04, 1970

What is Our Practice?  
San Francisco

In our zazen practice, we stop our thinking and we must be free from our emotional activity too. We don't say there is no emotional activity, but we should be free from it. We don't say we have no thinking mind, but we should not be-our activity, our life activity should not be limited by our thinking mind. In short, I think we can say [we trust ourselves completely, without thinking,][1] without feeling anything, we-without discriminating good and bad, without saying right or wrong, we should trust our life activity. Because we respect ourselves, because we trust completely, put faith in our life, we do not think, we do not discriminate, and we sit. That is, you know, our practice.

Tentatively, this morning, my version of our practice is like this because I want to extend this kind of understanding to our everyday life. Between -human relationship, for an instance, should be based on this kind of understanding. If our love between us is not based on this kind of understanding, respect, and complete trust, we will not have completely peaceful life.

And relationship between ourselves and nature should be like this. We should respect everything, especially something which we are related directly. This morning when we were bowing, you know, in zendo, we

heard big noise here, you know, because everyone fling chair [makes noise by moving a chair along the floor] like this, you know [laughs]. I thought this isn't-may not be the way how we should treat chairs [laughs]-not only because it may cause disturbance to the people who are bowing in the zendo, but also fundamentally this will not be the way to-how we should treat things.

This has a wheel [castors?] here [moves chair again], you know. Wheels, you know, it has. This is very convenient. So I, you know-sometime I don't like something too convenient, you know. It gives us some-some lazy, you know, feeling which does not accord with our spirit of practice. And this kind of laziness, you know-I think our culture is started this kind of lazy idea. And, you know, eventually we-because of this, we should eventually fight with each other. And we have our cultural background, East or West, nowadays, is something, you know. This kind of lazy idea. Instead of respecting things, we want to use it for ourselves. And if it is difficult to use it, we have idea of conquering something. I think this is not-this kind of idea does not accord with our spirit of practice.

We are thinking about rituals and how to decorate our buddha hall-having some beautiful buddha and offering some beautiful flowers, you know. But Zen Buddhists says with a leaf of-with a blade of leaf we should create buddha-joroku-konjin-golden body of buddha which is sixteen inches-feet high. With, you know, blade of leaf, we should create big buddha. That is our spirit.

But here, you know, to create sixteen-feet-high buddha with a blade of, you know, leaf need a great effort [laughs]. I don't mean to accumulate many leaves, and [laughs] grain [?] it, and make a clay and big buddha. I don't mean that. But anyway, to see-until we see the big buddha in a small leaf, we need a great amount of-I don't say how-how much effort we need. I don't know. For someone it maybe quite easy, but for someone like me it [laughs]-it needs a great effort.

It is much easier to just to see a great golden buddha. It is much easier. But when you see a great buddha in a small leaf, that joy may be something special, I think. But we need a great effort.

My teacher, Kishizawa Ian,[2] you know, did not allow us to shut amado-to draw amado more than one [at a time]. We should, you know, draw it one by one. Do you know? Perhaps you don't know amado, the door outside of shoji screen. There is-outside of shoji screen there is wooden wood [shutter] to protect shoji from storm or rainstorm. It is, you know-the end of the building there is a big box for the amado, and one by one we put it in the box, you know. It is sliding doors, so one by one we, you know, put it in that box.

So one priest is there, and another priest is there, and if you pull-if you push [laughs] five or six doors, you know, like this [probably gesturing]-

another one can be wait there and put it in the box. But he didn't like it. He told us to do it one by one [laughs], so if you-so one by one-so one person can do it, you know, and push it-put it in, and next one. That is how he told us to do it. And it is more-I think, anyway, it may be in that way we will not make much noise, of course, but the feeling is quite different when you do like this, you know [probably gesturing]. The feeling we receive from it is something, you know-lack of respect. But when you do it one by one carefully, without making much noise, then we will have there the feeling of practice there.

So there we have feeling of zazen practice. So even you carry, you know, even you arrange your chair-[drags chair back and forth]-if you do like this, you know, there is no feeling of practice. If you do it one by one [moves chair in one motion], then you have complete feeling in dining room. I don't feel good to practice zazen in the first floor where we eat-no, under-under the dining room.

When we practice zazen we are Buddha himself. And Monjushiri[3] is there. When we recite, maybe, sutra, you know, we are reciting sutra underneath kitchen. I don't feel so good [laughs], but if we have this kind of feeling in each corner of the building, I think that is much better because we-our practice is beyond the idea of the first floor or the second floor. But that is pretty difficult.

But we should know that, you know, even though we have this kind of beautiful building, there is difficulties in our practice. If it is easy when we have complete building with nice buddha hall and zendo we can practice zazen, that may be mistake, I think. But, at the same time, I know how [laughs] difficult it is to practice with this spirit in this kind of building because building is so good that there is-on the other hand, there is difficulties.

Because I know, you know-I know that anyway to practice our way is not [laughs] easy. It is anyway-it is difficult. And what kind of difficulty we will have is-I know what kind of difficulty we will have-which way we may take. As this is, as you know, city zendo-city zendo where everyone come and practice our way, not only old student but also those who don't know anything about Zen, there is double difficulties, you know, for new student and for old student too. I think old students have double duty, you know, and new students will have difficulties which they do not ever dream of-dreamed of.

So we must-old students must make their practice easier, you know. How to make them easier is, without telling them this way or that way, you should do this or you shouldn't do that, you should lead them so that they can practice our way easier. There may be various way, but I think our traditional way-we say "traditional way"-is set up with this idea: how to help people to practice right practice.

We say in our practice is "ornament of buddha-land." Our practice itself

is ornament of buddha-land-bukkokudo[4] shogon.[5] You know, even though they don't know what is Buddhism, if they come to some beautiful, you know, buddha hall then they will-naturally they will have some feeling. That is, you know, the ornament of buddha-land. But essentially for Zen Buddhist, ornament of buddha hall is the people who are practicing there.

Each one of us is-should be beautiful flowers, and each one of us should be Buddha himself who lead people in our practice. So whatever we do, there must be some way of doing it. And we should always think-consider about this point. Of course there is no special rules for, you know, to treat things, to be friendly with others-there is no special rules. But how we find out the way we should do at that time is to think about what will be the way to help people to practice religious way. If you think-if you don't forget this point, you will find out how to treat people, how to treat things, how to behave yourself. And that is, at the same time, so-called-it "bodhisattva way." You know, our practice is to help people. And how to help people is how to practice our way on each moment, and how to live in this world, and how to practice zazen.

To stop thinking, to be free from emotional activity when we sit is not just to have concentration in our mind. It is not just for concentration, but there we have complete reliance for-to ourselves, to find absolute, you know, refuge in our practice. That is why we do not have emotional activity or thinking activity in our practice. We are just like a baby who is on the lap of mother, you know. That is zazen practice, and that is how we should extend our practice to our everyday life.

I think we have very good spirit here in this zendo and Tassajara. I was rather amazed at the spirit you have. But how you should extend this spirit to our everyday life is-will be the next, you know, question. And how you do it is to respect things, to respect with each other. When we respect things, we will find the true life in it. When we, you know, respect plants, we find-there we find the real life of, you know, life power of flower and real beauty of flower. So love is important, but more important element will be respect. And sincerity and big mind. With big mind and with pure sincerity and respect, the love could be real love. Just love separated from those factors will not work.

Let's try hard how to take big buddha [laughs] with, you know, with our effort.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican  
8/3/00.



[1] Text within brackets is from the original transcript. The original tape was apparently erased during that passage.

[2] Kishizawa Ian-roshi (1865-1955): a leading interpreter of Dogen's Shobogenzo. He received dharma transmission from Nishiari Bokusan. Suzuki-roshi attended him at Eihei-ji monastery when Kishizawa was seido (distinguished visiting priest in residence). Suzuki-roshi continued to study with Kishizawa-roshi from 1932 until Kishizawa's death in 1955.

[3] Japanese name for Mañjushri Bodhisattva.

[4] bukkokudo (also bokkoku): by extension, a realm of countless worlds influenced by a buddha's teaching (see Kazuaki Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, New York: North Point Press, 1985, pp. 266, 344).

[5] shogon: decoration. Close to soshoku: ornament.

## **2 - Ordination Ceremony: Bill Kwong and Silas Hoadley**

Sunday, January 11, 1970

Ordination Ceremony: Bill Kwong and Silas Hoadley  
San Francisco

We have ordination ceremony for Bill Kwong and Silas Hoadley after this lecture-immediately after this lecture. I wanted to talk about ordination ceremony, but I think it is pretty difficult to explain it, you know, because even-because you have no idea of, you know, Buddhist priesthood. And what you have in your mind is priest in America, you know, so [laughs] I have no word to communicate.

[Hum on tape for several minutes. Then Suzuki-roshi resumes.]

... inanimate and animate beings. So everything has its own position in Buddha's-in Budd- [partial word]-as a Buddhist. That is fundamental teaching of Buddhism, and that is the structure of the teaching.

So we cannot say "priest is highest." Or "animal is lowest." Tentatively, as we are, you know, human being, or as we are teacher or disciples, but we are all friends of-of Buddhist. We are all Buddhist. Tentatively, we take some responsibility to express Buddha's teaching. But each one of us-because each one of us has one's own position and responsibility. So the value of each one is the same. That is fundamental, you know, structure of sangha.

With this understanding, we observe ordination ceremony. Some of them will become priest, and some of them will remain, you know, laymen. And we will fulfill our responsibility to realize-for the realization of the teaching-for the practice of our teaching. This is, you know, why

we have ordination ceremony, because we need, you know, priest. But it does not mean priest is highest, or something like that.

But when we, you know, have some ceremony, or when we have some activity, according to the situation, someone will take more responsibility and that is quite natural thing which will happen to us. And with this spirit, I want you to join our ordination ceremony, as someday you will be a priest or a nun. And no one knows [laughs], you know, what will happen to us.

But whatever happen to us, if you want to join our order and express Buddha's spirit, I want you to join our ceremony, and I shall be very grateful for you if you appreciate our effort.

Thank you very much.

-----  
Source: City Center tape transcribed by Bill Redican, March 31, 2000.

### **3 - Rules**

Sunday, January 18, 1970

Rules

San Francisco

In Japan now it is a season of typhoon. And recently, on the 16th, a typhoon arrived at San Francisco from Japan [laughs, laughter]. And now typhoon has left San Francisco to Tassajara [laughs, laughter]. Now it is the time when we have clear, blue sky again. Typhoon was so strong that I stayed in bed for two, three days [laughs, laughter]. I think you are also stayed in bed [laughs, laughter].

Each time some-at first, I came to America alone. And two years after, my wife came. And I had to share some difficulty we had-I had when I arrived San Francisco and culturally where I experienced cultural shock, you know [laughs]. And I had to share the same experience with my wife again, two years after. Whenever someone come from Japan, I have to share, you know, the excitement and difficulties they have, you know. That is not so easy [laughs]-always to have same experience and renew the difficulties and excitement again.

When Dogen-zenji went to China as a Japanese priest-when you read Hokyō-ki,[1] I think you will have some different understanding [that] I have now-which we have now-I have now. When he went Tendo monastery, which was a famous big monastery, he was given a seat in monastery. Maybe, as he was a Japanese, he-his seat was last seat of the zendo. And he immediately, you know, express the complaint [laughs] to the monastery, you know: "I am a quite old Zen Buddhist."

And in Japan and in China and everywhere, the rule is to decide the seat by the age-by the age as a Buddhist-as he joined our order. "So I cannot be the last one. I am a quite old Buddhist. I was ordained when I was thirteen year old. So I cannot be the last one."

And he also, you know, wrote a letter to the emperor [laughs, laughter]: "I understand Tendo monastery, you know, is the-one of the largest monastery in your country. So I understand the rules, you know, in that monastery should be universal or should be international. And I understand our-one of our rules to decide our seat in zendo by the seniority as a Buddhist, not by age or difference of the countries. But in Tendo monastery, when I arrived at this monastery, I was put the last seat. I cannot understand why." [Laughs.] "If you have some suggestion about it, please give me some suggestion or give the monastery," you know [laughs, laughter]. He was quite stubborn, I think. So they changed his seat to the proper one.

And in our-I am studying now a little bit about the rules of monasteries, which I didn't in- [partial word]-I was not interested in so much. But there must be some rules if we want to study our way or so that we can eliminate egoistic, you know, practice. Without rules, our practice tend to be egoistic, you know. The rules-by "rules" I don't mean some, you know, rules to give some advantage to the people who are responsible for the-in the position to manage zendo, but to give advantage to the student who practice in that zendo. And actually, even though you want to find out some rules in-some rules of monasteries in the written-up rules, you know, of Eihei-ji or Soji-ji or many Japanese and Chinese temple, it is difficult to find out the rules-some particular rules. But we will-we find out that the activity they do-the way they put-the way they decorate or set up altar or seat. There is underlying, unstated rules, which is not written up. That kind of rules is something which we must understand or else it is difficult to understand why we have-why we observe our rituals, why we set up our altar in some certain way. It is very difficult. And underlying rules-and there must be some underlying rules.

I want to explain little by little this kind of, you know, un- [partial word]-rules-not rules but idea or feeling Buddhists have in our practice: like what do we mean right legs or left legs, left hand/right hand, or left side and right side. Usually, you know, left side-left hand or left side is more important than, you know, right side. That is obviously Chinese and Japanese, you know, way of thinking or understanding.

Left-for an instance, here is Shakyamuni Buddha. And the left side there is Monjushiri.[2] And right side there is Fugen-bosatsu.[3] And Monju-bosatsu symbolize wisdom, and Fugen-bosatsu symbolize activity-action. So action-so wisdom is more important. Without, you know-maybe wisdom is eyes to see things. Without eyes, we cannot do anything, you know, even Fugen-bosatsu cannot do anything without eyes of Monjushiri. So left side is, you know-the rules is, you know, the

way they decorate-put Monjushiri and Fugen-bosatsu is to-we just know Monju-bosatsu should be left-hand side of Buddha, you know. So Monjushiri should be this side. Fugen-bosatsu should be on this side.

When you cross your legs, it is same. This legs supposed to be-left side supposed to be wisdom, and right side should be-supposed to be practice and, you know, activity. So when we cross our legs, as I always says, there is, you know-we cannot-we don't know which is which, you know, because left one is already on the right side and [laughs] right side is already on the left side. So you don't know. "Oh. Which is left and which is right?" That is our zazen practice, you know. When we practice zazen there is no, you know-we should not have any idea of-particular idea of wisdom or practice, because beyond our practice is beyond our wisdom or need of practice-because when you practice zazen, there there is wisdom and practice. In this way, our zazen posture is a kind of symbolism, you know, like Tantric Buddhism put emphasis on it.

And in zendo, you know, left-hand side of-of Monjushiri is, you know-jokan-we say jokan is upper side,[4] and right-hand side is lower seat. So if there is altar, right-hand side of Buddha is-right hand side of the Buddha [is] someone who is-who has deep responsibility will sit. And on the left-hand side of the Buddha trainee or, you know, [someone] who is practicing zazen will sit-mostly students and trainees or head of the training who is shuso will sit or will stand [on the] right-hand side of Monjushiri in zendo.

So this side is for the shuso and students, and the other side is the seat for the someone one who has responsibility of actual, you know, some-not business, but-what do you call?-everyday-who are taking care of finance or kitchen or building or farming will sit [on] the left-hand side of Buddha.

But-so-for an instance, we put candle on the left-hand side of the Buddha, and flower on the right-hand side of Buddha when we have just a flower and candle. And the candle, you know, is more important offering to the Buddha than flowers. So candle should be left-hand side of the Buddha. Not left-hand side of you [laughs], but left-hand side of Buddha. This is rather confusing, but I'm talking about when I said "left-hand side," it mean left-hand side of Buddha. Don't mix up.

That is how we put-offer the candle and flowers in China and in Japan. I don't know Indian way, but so far as Chinese and Japanese, you know, rules goes, it is always so.

And this is, I think, very important for self-for the practice of selflessness. If you don't, you know-you may think you ha- [partial word]-you are quite free from idea of self, you know. But if there is no rules, for an instance, the way you hit mokugyo, you know, will be different according to the people [laughs]-to the person. It-it goes in

that way. Someone will hit very slowly. Someone will hit very fast, you know. Those who hit mokugyo fast always hit fast. Someone, you know, who hit slowly always hit slowly. It goes in that way, and it means that without, you know, knowing or being aware of it, you know, his practice is involved in, you know, some-some idea of self already. And that, you know, a feeling will give big influence to the student who recite, you know. This is actual [laughs] fact, you know.

If there is some rules, and if every one of us, you know, practice our way-very well-set-up rules, very considerate setting of the rules-then we have no chance to be involved in selfish practice. All of us will, you know-can practice our way being quite free from the idea of self.

I think that Dogen, you know, express his complaint is not just, you know, for-for himself. If there is some rules, you know, which should be observed by Japanese, you know, and Chinese, something universal rules, you know, there is no confusion. And everyone will be treated in the same way. And when you practice our way, you will have good feeling. But if our monastery is involved in some, you know, selfish practice, then you will not feel so good.

I am not-I don't want to put emphasis on our rules, but our rules should be the rules which will help the unselfish practice. Because of the practice-because of the rules, we should get rid of our selfish idea. So fundamental idea of practice is to do things with people. The ru- [partial word]-when they get up, we should get up, you know. Or when they go to sleep, we should go to sleep. That is, you know, our fundamental idea of rules. In that way, we will get rid of-we will be free from selfish practice. So if you want to actualize the idea of non-self, you know, the way to be free from it is to do things with people. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

There must be, you know, many questions about this point, so I want to discuss this point with you some other time, not right now. Especially why I talk about this point this morning is, you know, because Japanese typhoon came [laughs], and I felt something, you know.

If we have some rules, you know, in this zendo how to treat people, you know, regardless he is Japanese or American, you know, it might be a great help. I was quite busy, you know. In my room I had Japanese guests [laughing]. And here we have, you know, zendo students. I didn't know what to do [laughs]. You know, this is very silly to be involved in this kind of confusion. Mmm-no-so I thought it is necessary anyway to have some, you know, rules, you know, which-how we treat people, you know.

Of course, where there is rules there must be some exception, but we must work hard on this point so that we will have more international, you know, practice here in this zendo.

Thank you very much.

-----  
Source: City Center tape transcribed by Sara Hunsaker (2/07/00).  
Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (2/12/01).

[1] The journal kept by Eihei Dogen during his stay in Sung China. A collection of instructions by his Chan master Tiantong Rujing (T'ien-t'ung Ju-ching, Tendo Nyojo, 1163-1228). It was recopied by Dogen's student Ejo in 1253.

[2] Japanese for the bodhisattva Mañjushri.

[3] Japanese for Samantabhadra, a Mahayana bodhisattva.

[4] Of a meditation hall.

#### **4 - Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism**

Sunday, January 25, 1970

Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism  
San Francisco

The difference between so-called-it Theravada Buddhism and Sarvastivadian or Hinayana and Mahayana is very important and directly, you know, concerned with our present problem. We are supposed [laughing] to be Mahayana Buddhist, but I think most of us are Hinayana, actually. There is not much Mahayana students. Almost all of us may be Hinayana or sectarian Buddhists because we study Buddhism as something which is already given to us, like Hinayana Buddhist thought Buddha already gave us-have given us-the wonderful teaching. So what we should do is to preserve his teaching as you like-as you put food in refrigerator [laughs]. That is Hinayana way. And to study, you know, Buddhism is to take out food from refrigerator. So wherever you want it, it is already there. That is Hinayana way of understanding.

But Mahayana students rather interested in how to produce food from the field-from the garden. So naturally Mahayana Buddhist, you know, put the emphasis on ground or garden which has nothing in it, you know, which you don't see anything in it. You know, if you see the garden, you don't see anything. But if you take care of seed, it will come out.

So we-Mahayana Buddhist make our effort to, you know, to see something come out from ground. And joy of the Mahayana Buddhist is joy of take care of the garden. That is Mahayana Buddhist. So we-Mahayana Buddhist-that is why Mahayana Buddhist, you know, put

emphasis on emptiness. Emptiness is-is a garden where you cannot see anything. But it is, actually, mother of everything from which, you know, everything will come out.

Teaching eventually will be almost same, but our attitude towards teaching is different. So actually, Mahayana teaching and Hinayana teaching does not differ so much. And so we say, "We should practice Hinayana teaching with Mahayana spirit, with the gratitude of raising things or taking care of teaching or to appreciate teaching. How to appreciate teaching from nothing is, actually, our practice.

All of us has buddha-nature, so the teaching which will grow from the buddha-nature will be the same. But attitude is different. When you, you know-when you think teaching is already given to you, then your effort-naturally, you know, how to apply the teaching in this common, you know, world-ordinary world so that, you know, they make a great effort to apply the teaching to the-our mundane world. So that is a difficulty they had.

And the more and more the teaching is flavor or real sense. I think you-Yoshimura-sensei told you about something-a teaching of 20-12 links, you know. Did you or-? I think most of them listened to his lecture. And their-Hinayana understanding of the 12 links and Mahayana understanding of it is quite different. One is, you know-Hinayana Buddhist apply that teaching of 12 links, you know, for our actual life, you know, how we born and how we die.

But the original purpose of the teaching-when Buddha told us the teaching, he used it to explain the interdependency of the-of various being. So there is a big difference between the interpretation of the same teaching.

The more and more Buddha's teaching became very common and meaningless. Buddhas, you know, Buddhas-why Buddha told us, you know-how Buddha-and how Buddha tried to save us is to destroy our common sense.

You know, we are not usually, you know, as a human being, we are not interested in nothingness, you know, nothingness of the ground [laughs]. If you-you have something on-in the garden, you will be interested in something which is on the-in the garden. That is our tendency. But we are not so much interested in-usual person, at least, is not interested in the bare, you know, soil. But if you, actually, if you want to have good harvest, the most important thing, of course, is to make rich soil and to cultivate the soil and to weed the soil. That is the most important thing.

The Buddha-Buddha's teaching is about not what is there, but how it grows and how to take care of things. So he is not interested in, you know, various idea of deity, you know. But he rather interested in the

deity, you know, which will grow [laughs] from the ground. So for him everything may be some holy being-not special, you know, given deity. So he looks like atheist, you know. He doesn't-he was not interested in some special deity, which we find out as something which is already there. He is not interested in them. But he was interested in the ground from which various gods will appear.

And this difference, you know, or lack of understanding of Buddhism result many non-Buddhist practice. For an instance, you know, in this zendo, in our group, we have, you know, officers, you know [laughs]. But, you know, officers are, you know, someone who appeared from the group, you know. So sometime, you know, officers are not someone who is, you know, the most respectable-which our-we must know from where he appeared [laughs]. You know, from our group he appeared, tentatively, to take care of our group. That is officer. But when we understand officers or respect officers as someone who is-who is selected people from your group, and who is the most respectable people because he is officer, that-that is very non- [partial word]-un-Buddhistic understanding. As we are living as a Buddhist in this Zen center, there must be someone who should take care of-someone should take care of our group. That is officer.

As a officer he is not, you know-he should be grateful [1 word] as a officer, as a-to take-he should be interested in to take care of our group rather that someone who is respectable, who is capable, you know. There is big difference, you know, in understanding themselves and in understanding officers, you know, his-their own understanding as a officer and people's understanding of officer.

When-I am not blaming [laughs], you know, anyone who is in the position of officer, but I am a, you know-as an example, I'm talking about this matter, but don't misunderstand me. When you become officer, you know, when you become officer you think you are some special person. [Laughs.] That is also very un-Buddhist-Buddhistic idea. We-each one of us comes out of the ground of Zen Center, you know. The ground [laughs] is the most important thing from which everyone of us comes out. So it is the ground, you know, which should be taken care of-not the plant, you know. If the ground is good, naturally good officers will appear. So we should respect all of the members of the group. Take care of Zen Center and you yourself, as a member of Zen Center.

When you think officer is some special person, that is, you know, that understanding is to understand things, you know, as some-to unders- [partial word]-to have more understanding of substantiality, a concrete idea, as a officer-officer as some special, you know, being, that is already concrete idea. Officers is something appeared from the members, you know, not special person. Cannot be any special person, because any one of you can be a officer. If members are very good, any one of you cannot-can be a officer. But because the soil is not so good [laughs], you know, so only capable one should be officer. The fault is



each one of you-the reason why you should choose a special person. And special person should feel so bad, you know, to be appointed always same position [laughs]. "Oh, it's awful! [Laughs.] I wish someone can take my place," you know. If they-we are all good spirit, you know, anyone can be a officer. But that I should be always be officer is very regretful thing. The officer should understand themselves in that way. Then that is very Buddhistic, you know, understanding of their position.

So Buddha says: "If people are good, good buddha will appear." Because if people in some country, at some-in some time are not good, they will not have good buddha. That is very interesting, you know, remark. Buddha did not think himself to be some special person. He tried to be the most common people wearing ragged robe, you know, making trip with a, you know, begging bowl, without having any special novel teaching. He just tried to be a good friend of people. That was, you know, why Buddha appear in this world, and that was what he did at his time in India.

You know, because he had that kind of spirit or understanding of world, he could be a buddha. And he thought that I am-I have many students is because students are very good-not Buddha himself. That is most-the most Buddhistic understanding of teaching. But after Buddha, you know, the people respect his teaching or respect Buddha because of his-his teaching and his character. Maybe his teaching was very good, but why his teaching was very good is his understanding of life was good. His understanding of emptiness or his understanding of people was good. And because his understanding of people was good, he loved people, and he-he enjoy helping people. And that was why Buddha was great. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... enjoy himself as a-as-because he is some special person or special sage, you know [laughs]. He enjoy himself as a friend of people. And he amazed at, you know, people's buddha-na- [partial word]-buddha-nature, which is in each person. So it-when he attained enlightenment, he said, "It is wonderful to see the buddha-nature in everyone of us." That was what he said when he attained enlightenment.

And buddha-nature is not some special nature which only human being has. In Buddhism, when we say "sentient beings," it include, you know, plants and stones and mountains and stars and the sun and everything. That is sentient being. So, in short, it is emptiness, you know. The ground from which everything comes out: stars and moon and everything comes out-that is, you know, emptiness. That is why we call-we put emphasis on emptiness. So emptiness could be sometime, tentatively Zen Center or America or Japan or this world or this cosmos, from which everything comes out. So purpose of our practice is how to take care of Zen Center, how to take care of America, how to take care of this world or this cosmos, and enjoy things from which appears.

I said we are mostly Hinayana Buddhists [laughs], you know, although we call ourselves-we think ourselves Mahayana Buddhist, maybe because we don't mind [laughs] so much about precepts, or we eat feed-meat and fish. That is why we, you may think-because we don't mind as a Mahayana Buddhist to eat meat and to eat fish, Mahayana Buddhist is not so lazy, you know.

So we are Mahayana Buddhist. But that is not [laughing] real Mahayana Buddhist, you know. Of course, you know, Mahayana Buddhist doesn't mind so much about any special given teaching.

But we should be, you know, we should not be caught by the idea of substantiality. To be caught by idea of substantiality means, you know, to become dualistic. When we put emphasis on emptiness, you know, in emptiness there is no dualistic idea. If you, you know, start to have dualistic idea of emptiness that is not emptiness. A dualistic understanding, you know, appears when you have some idea of substantiality. When you have id- [partial word]-some idea of duality-priest and officer, you know-officers-officers and students-that kind of idea is already very substantial-substantial.

Because there is students, there is officer who take care of students. Without students [laughs] there is no officer. But you may think, "I was once a officer of Zen Center." [Laughing.] He thinks, you know, he is always officer [laughs]. Very substantial, you know, idea. That kind of idea is not our idea.

In Soto school, you know, there is ridiculous things, you know, in giving some title to a person, you know [laughs]. I think only when I was in Zen Center, I am a teacher of Zen Center. I am a teacher, you know. If I go back to Japan, I don't think I can be a teacher any more because I am already too Americanized [laughs, laughter]. I don't know, you know, what is going on in America. So I cannot be a teacher, you know, if I go back to Japan. That is right, you know. I should be like that, you know.

If I think I am always teacher wherever I go, even though I join monkey teachers [laughing]-ridiculous idea, you know. I cannot be a teacher of a monkey or monkey group or teacher of fish. That is not possible, you know. So I should not have any special title, you know. But here, today, I shall be a teacher of you, you know. I think that is real teacher.

But people, you know, very Hinayanistic people think, "I'm always teacher. I am entitled as a teacher by Soto headquarters" [laughs, laughter]. That is very, I think, Hinayanistic teach- [partial word]-idea. And that is, I think-that is why I don't like sectarianism. But most people, you know, involved in this kind of misunderstanding. That is why it is-there is some difficulty in managing-in the management of the group. If we-we really become interested in Mahayana Buddhism, there is no problem of this kind.

Even though we are teacher and disciple, teacher and student, we are, you know, eternally friend of Buddhism. That is very important statement, I think. We are eternally, you know, friends. Tentatively, even though we have position, but we are eternally friends. This point should not be forgotten.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center tape transcribed by Sara Hunsaker (2/27/00).  
Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (5/22/00).

## **5 - Effort**

Saturday, January 31, 1970

Effort  
San Francisco

Our-our effort in our practice is quite different effort you make in our usual life. This point should be very clear for you, or else, you know, you-your practice doesn't work.

And spiritual effort is, at the same time, is very poisonous for us. Spiritual attainment is very, you know-sometime like a-like-will result ecstasy or sometime will result arrogance. And in this kind of, you know, spiritual arrogance or ecstasy is worse than materialistic arrogance, you know. You can easily [be] fooled by people by talking about something spiritual-so-called-it "spiritual," you know. If you-"This is very spiritual thing." If you say so, that is already very powerful, you know. And there is no need for you to give any evidence to it, you know. "This is spiritual thing." If you practice zazen you will understand it, or else you cannot understand it. I practiced zazen for many years, so I understand it. But you may not understand it. "But this is true!" [Laughs, laughter.]

You know, this kind of, you know, danger is always with us. So in Buddhism-Buddhist is very strict with this point. That is why-maybe why we practice something difficult.

The usual materialistic world in our usual life-materialistic world, we have enough difficulties [laughs]. So sp- [partial word]-in spiritual world, there should be, you know, more difficulties because we have to-not only we have to make effort to make progress in our practice, but also we have to keep ourself from various pitfall [laughs]-various desire-danger. So we have maybe much more difficulties in our spiritual effort.

But if you, you know, do it step by step, step little by little, then there is not much danger, you know. The effort is-effort we make in spiritual

life, if you do it step by step, little by little as if you save, you know, money: 5 cent, 10 cent [laughs]-as if you walk from here to downtown step by step, then there is not much danger. When you want to achieve something all at once, you have various danger. We-we say "spiritual effort" or "materialistic effort," but it is not different thing. Especially in Buddhism, we deny, you know, materialistic world. We deny it. Why we deny it is to find out new meaning in materialistic world.

So Buddhism started by Buddha. He started his practice when he saw our human world which is very restless, which is very evanescent, where you cannot rely on anything. So he, you know, he deny it. It looks like very good, but actually it is not so good. This world is not so good. I think most of us, most of our students here realize this point and came to Zen Center and started our practice. The main interest comes-for you is because you cannot-because-the main reason for you to come is because you, you know, gave up or you resigned, you know, to make effort in this world. It doesn't make much sense, you felt. So you wanted to, you know, find out some meaningful-some meaning in our life. That is why you came here. And this is, you know-you-you came here denying this world-usual world.

But to deny this world does not mean, you know, to escape from this world. That is not, you know, possible for you, you know. As-as long as you are human being, as long as you are physical body, that is not possible. Even though you do to, you know, make a space trip, that [laughs] is not possible. You cannot escape from this world.

But still you deny it, you know. You don't satisfied with it. This kind of dissatisfaction bring you to find out new-new meaning of life. So materialistic understanding of life-when you, you know, took-we say you "resigned," but actually it is not possible to resign from materialistic world. And to-to find out some world means to find out another new meaning to materialistic world. So actually what you will do is the same, but meaning of it different. To find new meaning in our life, we practice zazen. And that is the Buddhist thought.

Every-teaching of "everything changes," you know, means because everything changes, and you cannot rely on it. And realizing that, we still make same effort and still live in the same world. But difference is before you attach to materialistic world and why you strive for in materialistic world was, you know, just to acquire or just to attain materialistic success in life. Before, that was your effort.

But after you realize-after realizing, you know, everything-the teaching everything changes, and you cannot rely on materialistic result, what you will do will be the same because you have to eat [laughs], you have to sleep. So, nearly the same. But difference is you don't any more attach to the success in materialistic world. And reali- [partial word]-enjoying materialistic world, you know, moment after moment when it was given to you, you know, to enjoy your life will be your purpose,

your effort. Effort-point of effort will change. Before you sacrificed this, you know, moment of life for the next, for the future result-materialistic result, because you, you know, rely on it. But after you-after you deny that kind of result-after you don't attach to it, you will never sacrifice your present life for a future result. That is more Buddhistic way of life.

So Buddhists say "eternal present," you know, "eternal present." Moment after moment, our life is, you know, continuity of present-eternal present-present, present, present-without sacrificing anything. And that is more Buddhistic effort: how to enjoy our present life without, you know, sacrificing present is why we practice zazen. Aah. It is rather-[laughs]. Do you understand? Does it make sense?

Here we are practicing, you know, zazen. But why we practice zazen is, of course, you may say, to attain enlightenment [laughs]. What is enlightenment? Usually you may say enlightenment-you practice zazen to attain enlightenment. So even though it is painful, you know, "I must sit because someday [laughs, laughter] I will attain enlightenment. So I must, you know, sit with painful legs." If that is, you know, your practice, I don't think that is Buddhist practice. I think you are fooled by [laughs] future success of your practice. It is like if I become a millionaire, you know: "I will buy you," you know, "whatever you want [laughs] when you-after, you know-after I become a millionaire." [Laughs.] "When you-you become a millionaire?" If someone ask, "I don't know when." That kind of practice is not our practice.

Here, I must continue something not so interesting story [laughs] to make clear our practice. Why we, you know, do not real practice, you know-why we cannot practice real practice is because we are so deeply, you know, deluded by our materialistic way of effort. Whatever we do, you know, even though you make spiritual effort, the effort you make actually is materialistic way. This is our very unfortunate destiny, maybe. Even when we practice Zen, you know, we are practicing our way with-by wrong ide- [partial word]-wrong idea.

Before I explain this point clearly I want you, you know-I want to make-I want you to make your confidence sure, you know. That is maybe the more appropriate. I tell you, you know, most of you will not have enlightenment experience. You may have, you know, but I don't know-one out of ten or out of hundred will attain enlightenment-enlight-[partial word]-will have so-called-it enlightenment experience. But if you continue our practice, even though you don't know, you make a big progress in your practice, and your character will change. That is, you know, one thing I can assure you.

So anyway, I want you to continue zazen practice. Don't give up zazen practice. You know, zazen practice is not-cannot be materialistic practice, you know. So when you, you know, want to give up, you know, your practice, it means that your practice became already very materialistic [laughs], you know. You are involved in materialistic idea of

practice. So because you cannot see any progress by your five senses, because you ca- [partial word]-are not conscious of your progress, you know, you think it's better to give up. It means that your p- [partial word]-danger is there.

So when you-that is a big warning for you. So when you think: "Oh, maybe better to give up," then, you know, you should know that "I-my practice is-is involved in very materialistic practice," which you denied and started a spiritual practice.

And another thing is try to, you know, do everything in this zendo without waiting for someone's instruction. You should find out, you know, what you should do here. That is our way of practice. We do not give you instruction so much. And by yourself you should find out what you should do. This is very, you know, maybe difficult for you to understand, but there is reason why you should not depend on some one's-other's instruction. You should know, or you should find out your way by yourself, or else you will be involved in wrong practice. Maybe, without knowing what to do, to come to Zen Center [laughs] five months, six months looks like waste of time, you may say. But actually it is not so. And try hard what-how you should practice zazen.

My master, [1] you know, for an instance, had-didn't have so many students. But he did not give me any suggestion [laughs], and he didn't give us any, you know, lecture. What he did was-when he become impatient he scolded us, that's all [laughs, laughter]-only when he become impatient. So we, you know, we liked his scolding voice very much because we-we, you know, we know immediately what I should-we should do.

It is very embarrassing, you know, to-to be with him without [laughs] knowing what to do, especially when we visit someone's home, you know. For an instance, when we have-when we visit to observe memorial service for someone, you know, and when many visitors are there following him without knowing what to do [laughing]: where to sit, how to recite sutra, or how to hit bell, you know. Anyway in front of us there-there is-there were bell or mokugyo, you know, although we don't know what to do with it [laughs, laughter]. And, you know, if we don't know, you know, how to start, how to say, "Maka-hannya-haramita-shin-gyo," [2] he himself will start it [laughs]: "Maka-hannya-haramita-shin-gyo," he says, you know, he started, and look at us [laughs, laughter]. "What are you doing?!" We don't know how to, you know, manage bell or mokugyo. And if I don't he [probably gestures] [laughs, laughter]-very impulsive, you know. If no one watching us, it-it is-if it is only, you know, my teacher-our teacher and us, it is all right. Between us, that is usual routine, so it was all right. But if many people are watching us, you know, it is very embarrassing. But he didn't mind at all [laughs, laughter]. If I can-if we cannot do it: "Give me bell and mokugyo!" He hit by [probably gesturing [laughing]-just sitting behind him.

And we n- [partial word]-we didn't know what kind of sutra, you know, he may recite. So immediately after-before-when we start, you know, he-he said: "Take this sutra." So at that time we know, "Oh. This is the sutra we will recite today," you know. But we don't. [Laughs, laughter.] So he, you know, recalls, you know, almost by himself. We, you know, first one or two page we followed-we could follow and-and three, four page, we don't know what to say. So, you know, as much as possible we followed, you know, without voice. [Laughs, laughter.] But that is not possible at all, you know, so we [laughs]-eventually we will give up. We would give up [laughs, laughter].

But when we, you know, go home they may give us, you know, envelope. It is very, you know, bashful to receive envelope without [laughing] reciting sutra, you know, without doing anything. They may say dozo [laughs] very formal, you know, but [laughs] it was very difficult to receive it. But we have to receive it, so we did. That's all. That kind of thing was-were what I did when I was, you know, small-not so small, but when I was a novice.

I think this kind of experience, you know, was very valuable and helped me a lot. So it may not be so good habit, but I don't prepare so much, you know, for something I will do, you know, for-to-in-tomorrow or next year, you know. And I-I can find out what to do. I have some confidence, you know, to find out what I should do there when the day come.

For an instance, when I come to America, you know, I didn't collect any information about Soko-ji or America or San Francisco. I just came to San Francisco without any-knowing anything. And I was-I didn't afraid of anything [laughs]. I was-I felt very good making airplane trip, you know, and seeing San Francisco [laughs].

And when I arrived at San Fran- [partial word]-airport, many people were there, you know, to see me. And I went to Soko-ji Temple. Because I didn't expect anything, you know, because I did not have any picture of Soko-ji in my mind, so what-I felt very good anyway. "Oh, this is Soko-ji. Oh, this is Japanese restaurant" [laughs], you know. The first floor is parking place, and, you know, stepping up the high stair, we went to restaurant. "Oh, this is American restaurant." [Laughs.] Usually, in Japan, first floor is, you know, dining room. But here, you know, the first floor is parking [laughs, laughter] place. And an old, old lady appeared, you know, and said-half English and half Japanese-said something to me: "Oh, this is Japanese people in America." Everything was interesting [laughs]. And I could easily find out, you know, how to become friendly with-with those people. So because I have not much, you know, preconceived idea of America, so I didn't care Japanese people or, you know, Caucasian, you know-I didn't mind at all because I didn't have any idea of what we will do here.

This kind of, you know, attitude is very important. That is how you, you know, live in each moment, you know, to accept things as it is. So naturally, in your practice some day-sometime your practice will be very good [laughs]. Sometimes very drowsy, and sometimes very, you know, stiff, you know. But that is zazen, you know. There is no other zazen for you [laughs, laughter].

If you say enlight- [partial word]-"Someone had enlightenment experience. That is his zazen, not mine [laughs]. My zazen is," you know, "painful zazen," you know. "That is my own zazen. It is," you know, "rather foolish to compare my own zazen to someone's zazen."

When you, you know, detached-when you free from the ordinal [ordinary?] materialistic way of life, you will find out your own way of life, which will be materialistic pretty-maybe so. But that is-when that is your own practice, you know, that is not any more materialistic or spiritual practice. It is both spiritual and materialistic. Only when you say, you know-when-only when you analyze your practice it maybe materialistic or spiritualistic, or when you analyze-criticize someone's practice, you may say, "His practice is materialistic or very spiritual." That is only when you talk about someone's practice, you know, doesn't-which doesn't make much sense to you. We do not emphasize nothingness or emptiness. To-we do not deny, you know, or-yeah, deny someone's practice, you know, because we have some-some good practice instead. We deny someone's practice or our own practice. We are not-we cannot be satisfied with our practice, you know, or someone's practice, and we will be critical with our practice. But that is not because we want to-we have some good practice instead.

It is easy to criticize someone-someone-someone's practice, and most people do it. But, you know, if he ask you, "Then what is your practice?" you have nothing. What you have is painful practice, or drowsy practice [laughs], or stiff, you know, practice.

So we-sometime we-we should deny our practice to make some progress. That is all right to make some progress. But just to, you know, be critical with our practice and to give up, you know, our practice-to become very critical with our practice is very foolish [laughs]. Don't you think so? To criticize someone's practice when you have no power of advi- [partial word]-giving advice, or when you are ready to help him, when you are n- ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over]

... in everything, you know, new meaning in everything.

So anyway, the most important point is to live on each moment in the area-in some given area-in the area you live in. You should live with things you have right now and to find new meaning in it. That is our actual practice. The good example is our two-day sesshin [laughs]. In that way, you know, we continue our everyday life. Buddhist, you know, when we started-when Buddha started our practice, to not concerned



things which we cannot see, you know. We are doing everything within the-within our reach, you know. That is world for us. There is no other world for us. You may say, you know, "this world or the other world-future world or this world," but there is no such world. Because you say, you know, "this world or that world," Mahayana Buddhist started to talk about that is the result of, you know, delusive substantial idea.

You-you think as if there are something else-where something else which you cannot see, you know. But we do not talk about-we do not put any consideration [in] something like that. When we say "whole world," whole world may be, you know, this room or zendo. That is whole world-sometime, maybe, this country or this earth or this universe. So according to the situation, "whole world" will be different, but when we say "whole world," the world we live is the whole world.

We are not philosopher, you know; Buddhist is not a philosopher. We are, you know, just, our practice, our life, is concentrated on this world which we see or which we hear. And within our reach we do everything.

So when you practice zazen, black cushion is your world, and no more world or nowhere to go [laughs]. With that, you know, understanding we should practice zazen. Then your practice will work. That is, you know, to say "to live in each moment or eternal present." This kind of world will continue eternally. Big world, small world, painful world, you know, happy world-one after another our world continues. And there is no connection between this world and the other world. Because there is no connection, we should [shouldn't?], you know, sacrifice our life for future life, and we should make our best effort in each world. That is our, you know, way of life.

So there is no me or no you, you know. Right now, black cushion is very colorful [laughs]. But when you go back to zendo, you know, your cushion is black [laughs]. And that is-this is one whole cushion in which you are sitting. For you, you know, this is cushion. For me, this is cushion. But you may say this is, you know-this cushion is, you know, common property [laughs]. But it is not so, you know. This is-this, you know, cushion-big cushion is for each-only for you, each one of you-not, you know, common property. That is each one of you, if you really understand what we are doing here. That is how you extend zazen in everyday life.

What time do you start next zazen?

Student: 3:40.

3:40.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Checked against tape by Dana Velden (3/8/00) and Bill Redican  
(3/22/00).

[1] Gyokujun So-on.

[2] "Great Wisdom beyond Wisdom Heart Sutra."

## **1970 februari (7)**

### **1 - Morning Sesshin Lecture**

Sunday, February 01, 1970

Morning Sesshin Lecture  
City Center

How do you-how do you like zazen? [Laughs, laughter.] And maybe-  
maybe better to ask you how do you like brown rice? [Laughs,  
laughter.] I think this is better question, you know. Zazen is too much.  
[Laughs, laughter.] Brown rice, I think, just right. [Laughter.] But  
actually not much difference. [Laughter.] Zazen has strong f- [partial  
word]-zazen is strong food like brown rice. And I was very much  
interested in the way you eat brown rice. [Laughs.] I'm-I'm very much  
impressed, you know, the way you eat brown rice.

Can you hear me?

I think you, you know, naturally, when you eat brown rice, you have to  
chew it. Unless you chew it, it is difficult to swallow, so you chew it very  
well. Your mouth, you know, looks like a part of a kitchen [laughs]. You  
are cooking, you know [laughter, laughing], brown rice in your mouth  
and to be a very good food-tasty food. While you are, you know,  
chewing, actually brown rice become more and more tasty. So I think  
brown-your mouth-when you eat brown rice your mouth is kitchen. But  
usually, you know, I realize that usually our mouth is not kitchen when  
we eat. You know, we-no-when, for an instance, when we eat white rice,  
you know, we don't chew so much. We just, you know, put-put it in our  
mouth and without chewing so much. And feeling is so good, so it  
naturally goes to our throat. So we don't chew it.

I think Japanese people, you know-at first I understand our ancestors  
who are eating brown rice. But because white rice is easier to eat or  
taste good, so they become more interested in white rice instead of  
brown rice. But actually when you, you know, accustomed to brown rice,  
the white rice is not, you know, so tasty. We, you know-when you put it  
in your mouth, we think it is good, but that's all. No more, you know,  
variety or no more depth of taste. But brown rice-at first it is not so  
good, and it is difficult to eat-swallow. So while you are chewing, it

become more tasty. And when it become tasty, you know, you-you hesitate to s- [partial word]-even to swallow because it is so good [laughs, laughter]. Brown rice has that much, I think, taste in it.

That kind of, you know-I think the brown rice is more-much more natural to our body-or digest-stomach, because our mouth originally is a, you know, a kind of, you know, not just-not just a part of organ to digest or to eat s- [partial word]-to chew something or to taste something, but also it is a part of organ to digest things. This kind of, you know, process of digestion should start from here, from our mouths, and naturally should be carried on, you know, to our tummy. And you know, we must think more about this. When we, you know, digest completely the food, what will become of it? It will [be] carried over, changing its chemical quality. It will, you know, circulate all of our body. And what will become of our body [laughs], is, you know, sooner or later we will die. [Laughs, laughter.] And from, you know, to eat brown rice is, you know, best, you know-you know, the most natural to our-to us who is, you know, changing one thing to the-to another.

Now when you eat white rice, you know, that kind of natural process will be disturbed by-by your mouth, you know, because your mouth stop chewing it, and stop cooking it, and stop changing it to-into something. Without changing it, your mouth will, you know, push the rice in your tummy. So there is some gap [laughs] in our organic process of activity.

This organic process is called-in one word, we call it emptiness, you know. It is, you know, we call it-our activity is-rice is-or brown rice empty because it will eventually die [laughs] with our body. But it, you know, it changes. And while it-it is changing, it carried on-it carries on our life energy. And this maybe called also emptiness.

Why we call it emptiness is-it has no, you know, form-no special form. It has some form, but that form is never-is never permanent. And there is no end in-in changing of its form [?]. So, you know, there is no other word than to call emptiness, you know.

We know we are empty, and we started to know now this earth is empty [laughs]. It is not permanent. We started feeling that way, you know, already. And then you may wonder, "What is this universe?" But this universe has no limit. If there is a limit to this earth, there should be something outside of it, you know.

So in one word, there is no other word, you know, emptiness-than emptiness. So emptiness is ultimate, you know, reality. And emptiness, you know, is not something which could be understand when you, you know, make a space trip, you know. Emptiness could be understood when you are chewing rice, you know, and when you are perfectly involved in chewing brown rice. And your world is, you know, with-with brown rice. That is, you know, actual emptiness.

But you may say that is not empty, you know. We are doing something. When you say so, we say that is illusive. You think in that way because of your illusive tendency. We have that kind of illusion. That brown rice has no form is, you know, right understanding [laughs], you know. And brown rice is always changing with us is right understanding. And, "Here is brown rice, and here is I who is chewing it," is elusive-illusion, which was caused by our illusive tendency of thinking.

But we-we have to completely-but or because, I don't know [laughs] which to say [laughs]-we must be, you know, completely involved in, you know, chewing rice when we chew rice. When you are chewing, you know, rice, if you think of white rice, you know, which you ate at some restaurant [laughs], that is-that is wrong practice caused by illusion-illusive tendency of making everything substantial being. White rice doesn't exist, you know [laughs]. What-that which exist for you right now is brown rice and you yourself. Nothing else exist. You may say, "This floor exist," you know. "This zazen room exist." But that is also actually illusion.

So we have to get rid of-we have to get rid of this kind of illusive practice, or else we cannot practice right practice. And at the same time, we should accept this illusive practice too [laughs], you know. We should accept it, knowing that it is illusion, you know. To know that is illusive practice-when you know that is illusive practice, that is not illusive practice. That is true practice. For the right practice it is illusive practice, but right practice exist because of your illusive practice. So our, you know, imperfect bad zazen is very important-very, very important.

If you seek for-if you try to perfect practice-if you try to practice perfect zazen only, ignoring your illusive practice, that practice is not true practice because even though you say "pure right practice," but that is illusion for you because that which you have is illusive [laughs]: brown rice, which doesn't taste so good. So even though-even brown rice, if you think-if you chew it so that we can get some delicious, you know, taste of it, that is for us also illusive practice.

So when you put brown rice in your mouth, [the fact] that you don't feel so good is, you know, there, you know, there is right practice. When you feel pain in your leg, that is the practice you have now. That is a practice you should strive for without, you know, thinking about some, you know, wonderful feeling of practice. That is illusion. So if you [are] caught by it [laughs], you know, you will lose your practice and you will hate your practice. So you lose-you-your practice will be completely [laughs] lost. Even though you continue that kind of practice for a thousand years, you will [not] gain anything. But even though you do not practice zazen, if you chew brown rice, if you accept brown rice and started to chew, you know, over and over, and you-and you-if you find true meaning of emptiness in each chew, then, you know, that is real practice. That is real zazen.

We say "Accept things as it is." Or we say "eternal present" or "emptiness" or "buddha-nature." The words-meaning of those words is, you know, quite simple. Understanding our life-positive way and negative way-and appreciating our life moment after moment, and completely satisfied with the surrounding, completely. And continue our life in this way is, you know, our practice. And Buddhism-Buddhism is there when we have that kind of practice.

Dogen-zenji says, you know, we like something which is not true, and we don't like something which is true [laughs]. I think that is very true [laughs, laughter]. We don't like something which is true. Something which we like is-mostly is not true because mostly it is just idea created by yourself, you know, and which will create some difficulty for you [laughing]-some trouble for you. And that is something by which you will be sacrificed.

So forever we are, you know-we cannot escape from our suffering, and there is no chance for us to attain enlightenment. But if you like it, that is another matter [laughs]. If you like it, it is okay. But you should know this is not true, you know. And if you know that is not true, you know, it means you accept-you have there reality. When you say, "That is not true," that is reality. Or when you say, "This is true," and "This is complete," you know, then that is not reality any more. There no such thing exist in this world. You-if you say, "This is permanent," that is also not true.

Something which exist is bound to change or bound to be-to vanish, you know. If there is something which does not, you know-which exist forever, that is not a true-true being. That is something-something wrong with it or with you, you know. Maybe mo- ... [Word and sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

To-to make further, you know, effort to understand things, that is to deny, you know, like scientist, you know, you deny the truth you found out-you have now, and, you know, deeper understanding of the truth is true denial. In, you know, Zen-Zen training is famous for its, you know [laughs], for its difficult-for its strictness. We are raised up, you know, under the scolding voice and slap.

But it does not mean you are no-you are, you know, useless or you should, you know, you shouldn't be here-you should go out. It means that, in other word, help-help you, you know, to find yourself more-to study yourself more. So we try to give you chance to find yourself more-to study more. If you go out, you know-if you run away [laughs], that's all, you know.

You are, you know-you know, also-you think if you go somewhere else, you know, you will find some good teacher [laughs]. But, you know, as long as you have that kind of attitude, you know, choosing or

discriminate-discrimination, you will not have a good teacher. It is you which is wrong [laughs], not teacher. If you met with good teacher, you know, because you cannot accept good teacher because of your discrimination, because of your lack of effort to be yourself. Actually you are escaping from yourself, but that is not possible. If that is possible, you may find out some good teacher [laughs, laughter]. But that is not possible.

So the most important point is, you know, to deny yourself and to establish yourself in its true sense without establishing yourself on your delusion. So we say, "Establish yourself on yourself, not on your delusion." And without-but without delusion we cannot live, we cannot practice. So delusion is necessary. But delusion is not something on which you can establish yourself. It is like a, you know, stepladder, you know. You can use it, but you shouldn't stay on stepladder [laughs, laughter]. But without it you cannot, you know, climb up.

So with this, you know, confidence you must study our way. So that is why I said, "Don't run away! Stick to me!" But it does not mean [laughs], you know, stick to me [laughs, laughter]. It means stick [to] yourself, you know, not to delusion. Sometime I may be a delusion [laughs]. You may, you know, you may overestimate [laughs]: "He is a good teacher." That is already delusion-a kind of delusion [laughs, laughter], you know. I am, you know, your friend, you know. I am just practicing with you as your friend who has many stepladders [laughs, laughter].

So anyway, you know, we must-we cannot be-we shouldn't be disappointed with bad teacher [laughing], with bad students. Bad student and bad teacher, you know-if we-bad teacher and bad student strive for, you know, truth will establish something real, you know. That is our zazen, you know. We must continue to practice zazen and continue to chew brown rice. Eventually, we will accomplish something.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Jazmin Hicks (02/21/00) and Bill Redican (03/21/00).

## **2 - Afternoon Sesshin Tea Lecture**

Sunday, February 01, 1970

Afternoon Sesshin Tea Lecture

Sunday, February 1, 1970

Sesshin is almost-sesshin has almost completed. In this sesshin, we

have learned many things. I want to-can you hear me?-I want to, you know, say something about what I noticed.

Here we are-each one of us is a cook. In turn we work in the kitchen, and here, you know, in zendo we take care of this zendo by ourselves mostly. Right now, we carrying our stick in turn, and I want-I explained, you know, how to eat brown rice, you know. The more you chew it, you will have the taste of the brown rice. And in zendo, you are food [laughs]. You are rice and vegetables from various states, and we must cook ourselves [laughs], you know, some way. That is what actually we are doing.

I haven't realized how important the-to carry the stick is. I think that is actually not only carrying the stick, but carrying the stick is, you know, how to, you know, cook ourselves. It is actually to chew ourselves. But effect is more strong-stronger than just to chew. And as a, you know, at the moment you get slap, you know, you, you know, you-you die, you know, in past life and appears in new world.

We say, you know, "form is emptiness and emptiness is form." And Yoshimura-sensei,[1] the other day, explaining about soku ze-form-soku ze ku.[2] Soku ze means, he explain, that is "conversion"-the conversion, you know, without changing anything to convert one to the other.

Another thing is soku ze: when you get slap, at that moment big, you know, conversion take place in your practice. You will be-your experience of practice-your practice will change at that moment. You have-anyway, you that kind of feeling, you know, when-before-when you get stick, when you sleepy [laughs] you will wake up. That is, you know, conversion.

By repeating this kind of, you know, conversion many and many times, we can practice our way. That is to realize, you know, our teaching of "form of emptiness and emptiness is form." Form is emptiness is, you know, when you get slap and awaken in nothing-nothingness, where there is no you or no zendo or no black cushion. Rhha! [Laughs.] That is emptiness.

And from that emptiness, you know, you will have-you will start new practice. Your practice will be renewed by that. Our life should be like this. Whatever happen to us, on that occasion you must turn a new leaf for the quite refreshed life.

Even though, you know, cook is good, firewood cannot be a good dish, you know [laughs]. If you stick to too much idea of yourself, that is firewood-a log or pencil or stone in miso soup [laughs, laughter]. So when you, you know, forget about yourself or when you are ready to be, you know, cooked, then our practice will-real practice will take place.

So the moment you enter zendo, you should forget everything, you know, everything you have, and ready start or ready to start new life. That is, you know, how-this is how various teachers in China or in Japan explain what is "emptiness is form and form is emptiness." You are you, you know, even though you, you know [laughs], wake up. Without changing yourself, to have new meaning of life and to-to be involved in a new life is-new life completely is, you know, how form become emptiness.

And when we become very grateful for the emptiness, you know, we don't know what-what it is, you know. Emptiness is something which happen to us [laughs], not because of someone who carry stick, not because of you sincerity. I don't-we don't know why. But any-anyway, something that kind of great experience, great thing happen to us.

If you say this is because of this or that, that understanding is already dead understanding of vivid real understanding of emptiness. That kind of, you know-in this way, you know, the old teachers explained emptiness. Emptiness is something like-and that-from that emptiness, you know, like a flash everything quite new will appear. The flash of, you know, emptiness is, you know, you or I, or grain, or vegetables from [laughs] various state. That is just a flash of emptiness.

This kind of clear vivid understanding will happen, and as a slap. Shht! [Laughs.] It is, you know, something which, you know, happens to you. Even though you don't expect it, it happens. When you put your hand together, you know, you [laughs] you are like this! [Gestures; laughs, laughter.] And when you get it right, all of a sudden you become refreshed and you become new person [laughs]. Maybe in that way, I think, in turn it-it will be a very good idea if we carry stick in turn and, you know, give ourselves chance to, you know, to make conversion. Conversion-I-by conversion I don't mean from Christian to Buddhism [laughs, laughter]-from Buddhism or Christian-to Christianity, you know.

And that is, you know-especially this period when, you know, I listen to the slap, and I saw you, you know, quite refreshed. "Oh, this is," you know, "form is emptiness," and at the same time, "emptiness is form." And new, you know, form appears and as a slap. So we are doing very good job, you know, job. Kitchen is extended, you know, to zendo [laughs], and we eat brown rice by our own kitchen. And zendo practice is extended to kitchen, and I think our practice, you know, is almost complete. I am so happy to find out this point in our practice. I hope you will continue our practice without-without being caught by some elusive idea of practice.

Thank you very much.

-----



Source: City Center tape transcribed by Dana Velden (3/10/00) and checked by Bill Redican (9/28/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Ryogen Yoshimura-sensei was a Soto priest who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 (see Wind Bell, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30). He died at a young age after returning to Japan.

[2] Shiki suku ze ku. Ku soku ze shiki. "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form"-from the Heart Sutra. shiki (form, matter); soku (immediately); ze (is); ku (emptiness).

### **3 - Relationship**

Sunday, February 08, 1970

#### Relationship

Each time we-we start lecture, we recite "an unsurpassed, penetrating Buddha," and so on. This is the essential-pointing at essential teaching of Buddha. And it is not just opening of the [laughs] lecture. It is-this gyata[1] itself is perfect dharma.

When we start-before we start lecture, or when you-when someone start lecture, and when you listen to it, and when we speak and listener start to study Buddhism, we-we must have this understanding-perfect understanding. Only when we, you know, we give up the idea of "we," you know, and when we have converted in-"we" in its true sense, this dharma, whatever it is, something which take place in this classroom will be the perfect dharma-will be understood as a perfect dharma.

Usually most people, you know, although you may understand the teaching of selflessness [laughs], but actually, you know, all what we do is deeply or firmly based on the idea of self. You may think, "I am listening to-I have to study. I have to understand what he says" [laughs]. That is already-the idea-strong idea of self and strong activity based on idea of self.

When we give up this kind of self and go beyond the idea of "you" or "speaker," and understand you and speaker in only tentative being related with each other. That is, you know, real classroom for us. We are-relationship between I and you is not permanent one. That is just tentative one. Tomorrow, I don't know [laughs]. Maybe if one of you speak, you know, I-I must be a listener, you know, or student. So it is just tentative relationship. And we are also tentative being. So we cannot meet with-we cannot meet in this classroom in-with this relationship even one hundred thousand kalpas of time. Never we can meet, you know, in this relationship together. So we should not miss this moment. That is actually what this sutra means. And this is very important point.

When you discuss something, you know, usually, your discussion is always involved in strong idea of self. Discussion-your discussion to me is, you know, a kind of conflict of idea of self [laughs]. Why that kind of things happens is your understanding of discussion or group is not perfect. That is why we have-discussion does not, you know, is not so successful.

On the blackboard I see many, you know, circles. When we, you know, realize-realize each one of us or observer of the circles is, you know, empty-we are actually empty. I don't exist act- [partial word]-in its-actually, we don't-I don't exist. You may say, "When you see," you know, "I am here," that is something, you know-some idea of you. But actual-is not actual you. Actual you is, you know, you which, you know, says, you know, "I [laughs]-this is me." That is real you [laughs, laughter]. And "me" is object, you know, object of "I." So "I" is not something like that-something you understand "I." Something you understand "I" as "I" is already someone else [laughs, laughter]! So you don't exist, you know [laughs, laughter]. This is not, you know, tricky words. True words, you know. No one can deny this fact.

So there are many circles, you know. And when I don't exist, you know, I understand the circles. I or, you know, "true I," you know, will understand the relationship between those many circles, you know. If we understand-if we discuss something in that way, there is no problem, you know.

That relationship between those circles are same for everyone, you know. You see, you know, the circ- [partial word]-relationship between the circles, and relationship for you, and relationship between circles for us is always-is safe, you know. Why it is so is big self is observing it, you know. When you involved in, you know-but mostly when we start something about this organization or future plan of Tassajara, immediately you have big idea of self, you know. And you insist [on] your own idea without, you know, seeing the actual, you know, problem we have right now as we see those circles. This is so-called-it, in Buddhism, selflessness.

So when we practice something here, first of all what we should forget is idea of self. To forget idea of self is, as Dogen-zenji says, to be proved by everything. Here "everything" means Buddha. Everything. Buddha, which include everything, which unify everything as one. That is Buddha. And that is the one, you know, which see the relationship between those circles, you know, correctly. That is someone who is unify-unifies everyone's understanding of everyone. And everyone's understanding of circle.

So the individual reason doesn't work, you know, before you understand "you" in its true sense: who is-what is individual. And how we understand individual is putting ourselves, you know, understanding

ourselves one of those circles, you know [laughs]. It is true, you know. When we say "I," you know, it is already object of-of observation. Observation of some unified one. So we should be one of those circles. And in this way if we observe ourselves and relationship between our- each one of us to this zendo, then we will have [laughs], you know, perfect discussion. When we discuss something, you discuss something- you are some special person [laughs], without knowing that you are one of the circle, you know. That is the teaching of interdependency.

Interdependency does not mean to observe things with our naked eye, you know, and see the relationship between things. Because you see your own naked eye, you are, you know, excluded. And you are completely- you are already mistaken as a big self- big unified self. You are committing big, you know, mistake. Or you are violating the teaching- fundamental teaching of Buddha, which is selflessness. If we can- but we can understand ourselves. There is no need to ignore ourselves. We can acknowledge ourselves on the blackboard. And we should be, you know- each one of us should be discuss, you know, at the same time, what kind of, you know, difficulty each one of causing, you know, for this group or this community. If we underst- [partial word]-- if we discuss this kind of humble attitude, then there is no problem. And then actual, you know, "I" is discussing the problem. Do you understand?

So first of all, we should recite, you know [laughs]- before lecture we should recite. And we should be unified by the absolute unified one. And put our hand together, and we should, you know, really- we should be really unified with- by the absolute one. Then we have no self, and we can discuss something without any idea of self. And we will realize- we will understand the true meaning of the teaching of Buddha.

So as a Buddhist, the most important thing is to realize the evanescence of life. And things changes, always, incessantly. And we must realize that nothing is permanent. Nothing exist in the form we see or color we see. To understand things like this is called "emptiness." So with emptiness of mind, we should start, you know, realize the tentative form and color of things, and how things are going. Then we will have actual reality.

So first of all, we should understand, maybe, you know, we should destroy our idea of substantiality of us or you, subject or object. And then we should, you know, put our hand together for the one- unified one which is Buddha. And then we should open our eyes, you know, and see things as you see circles in the black- [partial word]- on the blackboard. And if it is necessary we have to discuss about it.

So with this understanding, if we discuss things, you know, you- you may not attach to anyone's particular idea. And all of you easily, you know, agree with some conclusion. But one discussion, one conclusion is not enough. So, if possible, day after day [laughs] we must have

discussion, actually. But if that is-if you feel that is not necessary, once a week or once a month we should discuss things. If we discuss things in this way, I think that is real individualism because we will find out ourselves in its, you know, own position. So there is order in understanding or Buddhist life.

First of all, we should give up small idea of self, and we should be humble enough to put our hand together and, you know, bow to the absolute one. And then we should depend on the true teaching of interdependency, and we should observe-or we should understand ourselves related with each other. That is interdependency.

Sometime, you know, you mixed up this order, and if you, you know, talk about-just talk about the teaching of interdependence without knowing the teaching of interdependency is based on the teaching which everything changes and the teaching of emptiness [laughs], you know, and discuss things, then it means that you are already started to-started to repeat same, you know [laughs], same trouble over and over again. So even though you make a great effort, it doesn't result anything. The more you discuss things, the more you get into confusion, and you will-you have to fight, you know, with each other-with, you know, a self-centered idea.

Naturally, you know, you have to reject many people from Zen Center [laughs]. All of you [?], you know-that is terrible thing-terrible thing will happen. Interdependency means we should not ignore anything. And we should understand the relationship between each one of us, including, you know, you yourself.

So with the most humble attitude we should discuss things. You should not [thumps mike three times] do so. Terrible thing. Big, big self, you know. [Laughs.] You should listen to, you know, everyone's opinion-way of observing things. "Okay." [Laughs, laughter.] Maybe if you don't do this, you know, maybe some time you cannot express yourself, you know, if you are like this. [Laughs.] "That is okay." If you want to say something like this, that is okay. And if you want to say like this "I think this is right" [mockingly using tense, constricted voice], but-but, you know, it should be-this should be also another form of practice of putting hand together [laughs]. If it is so, it is okay whatever you do.

You know, that is-to talk in this way is very easy, you know [laughs, laughter]. Actually it is not so easy. I think we are, you know, doing pretty well, I think. Because-I think that is because you practice zazen. When you practice zazen, even though you don't know what you are doing [laughs, laughter], but actually, you know, you are practicing this practice.

Even a, you know, flash of idea, you know, should be excluded, you know, in your practice. But if it comes, you know, already [laughs] it is too late, you know, to exclude it. So let it stay and, you know, wait until

it goes [laughs], and resume your, you know, true practice. In this way, because you practice zazen, you are, you know-even though you seems, you know, are fighting, you know, actually you are not. And we should trust people first of all. Emptiness does not mean to ignore everything, you know. It doesn't mean vacuity.

So in this way, if you understand our life in this way you will find out how important it is to practice zazen-how important it is to be humble in its real sense.

-----  
Source: City Center tape transcribed by Dana Velden (03/13/00).  
Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (3/22/00).

[1] Possibly Japanese for gatha (Sanskrit): four-line verse.

#### **4 - The Background of Shikantaza**

Sunday, February 22, 1970

The Background of Shikantaza  
San Francisco

I think most of you participate one-week sesshin from tomorrow.[1] So far, we have been practicing counting breathing or following breathing. But maybe tomorrow-from tomorrow, in one-week sesshin, we will, you know, practice shikantaza.

I want to explain, you know, what is shikantaza. Shikantaza is, as you know-excuse me-just to sit, you know. We say "shikantaza." Just to sit. But there is-if you, you know, it is not proper or it is not enough to say "just to sit." For an instance, you know, everything is just there, you know. Things are just where they are. But that is not enough. If we say just things are just where they are, the relationship between things is ignored. When we think about the relationship between things, we will reach the idea of one whole being, you know.

We say "things," but actually things are already some divided materialistic and idealistic being. So before we have-when we have idea of things, you know, we actually have the idea of one whole being. And one whole being exist in the state of divided being. That is actually how things exist.

And things are incessantly, you know, changing. So, you know, time span-things is not just things as they are. It is changing as a one whole being. This point is-should be understood when we practice zazen. So Dogen-zenji says, "If your practice does not include everything, that is not right practice." That is why we, you know, bow to Buddha and why we, you know, call our practice-practice of Buddha's-Buddha's practice,

not your practice.

But usually in counting breathing or following breathing, you feel as if you are doing something, you know-you are following breathing, and you are counting breathing. This is, you know, why counting breathing or following breathing practice is, you know, for us it is some preparation-preparatory practice for shikantaza because for most people it is rather difficult to sit, you know, just to sit. When we haven't good, you know, breathing it is rather difficult to just to sit. Of course, even though you have pain in your legs, that is just to sit [laughs], you know. Pain should be just pain. Not-much extra fancy [laughing] interpretation of pain. "My legs"-if you say "my legs," that is extra. "Legs" is enough [laughs, laughter]. Then pain is just pain, you know. Pain-if you pain, if you say "pain," the pain include everything. And if pain exist-pain exist just like pain as a whole being, that is not pain anymore. If there is nothing but pain, what is it? That is Buddha.

Actually, you know-but it is rather difficult to accept actual pain in that way. And as soon as you have pain you want to, you know, escape from it. Immediately you are involved in idea of self already, so that is not just to sit.

So Dogen-zenji's Fukuan Zazen-gi, you know, it-he says, "Originally we are enlightened. Why is it necessary to sit?" [Laughs.] There is not necessary to sit. Even though we don't sit, we are practicing zazen originally. But he says, "If there is slightest"-and this is not literal interpretation, but translation-but "if there is slightest idea of self," you know, "the true practice," you know, "will change into," you know, "quite different practice." Shikantaza cannot be anymore shikantaza if slightest idea appears in our zazen. Even though your-our practice is not perfect, if we haven't, you know, any idea of self, in other word, if we completely-completely devote ourself-selves to the practice, to the Buddha's practice, then without having any idea of self, that is shikantaza. And that is how we devote ourselves to the-to our practice. And to have this kind of spirit is to have way-seeking mind.

So if we want to practice shikantaza, first of all we should devote ourselves completely to the practice-to the practice of Buddha. So for us it is necessary, by all means, to give up the idea of self and devote ourselves completely to the Buddha's practice. That is why we wear, you know, robes. That is why we bow to Buddha.

The-on the other hand, we know, you know, how much idea of self [laughs] we have. When you do something, immediately we are involved in idea of self. The other day, you know, I think you have-most of you listen to Chou Kung[2]-[on] sadhana dhamma siddhi,[3] you know, in his [2-3 words unclear] of him [laughs]-he was explaining very well about shikantaza. But because he has not much time, so he-or, you know, he belongs to-he doesn't belong to our tradition, so he didn't explain what is-how we complete shikantaza. Instead of how-putting

emphasis on practice, you know, without any-excuse me-giving up the idea of self and devote ourselves completely to the Buddha, he explained stage of, you know, attainment. That is, you know, if we, you know, acknowledge the stages that is still-it means that there is idea of self, you know-this stage, that stage-who attained this stage [laughs], you know, it-you attain, or I attain first stage, second stage, third stage. But when we give up idea of self there is no stage [laughs]. Whatever-there is no complete practice or incomplete practice, because whatever we do if there is no idea of self that is it. And he explained it very carefully about this point. I think you-you could understand what he meant: how idea of self arise in our everyday life and how we should understand our thinking mind which we have in the first stage of-stage of practice, you know.

And Buddha suppose to talk about dharma in his, you know, first stage, where he has still, you know, thinking mind-pure thinking mind. Pure thinking mind is, you know, without idea of self, you know. Mind moves, you know, like a wave-like waves, one after another. But there is no idea of self at that stage. In that stage, you know, we have pure thinking.

Why we say "pure thinking" is because there is no idea of self. That is to say, the images you have in practice, you know, in zazen, various image will, you know, come up from the subconsciousness, you know [laughs, laughter]. That is how, you know, you have images in your mind in zazen. But if images is just images and no idea of self is involved in it. "Oh! I have terrible images [laughing, laughter]. I must get rid of it!" That is already, you know, idea of self.

So we say when some images come, let it come-come up and let it vanish, or let-let it sink down. That is how, you know, we practice shikantaza. When you hear sound, you know, just hear the sound. Don't be bothered by it [laughs]. It may come from this ear and go out from the other ear-shhh [laughs]. That is shikantaza. And you shouldn't try to be so, even. Just sit. That is so important practice. To obtain clear mind and to be free from various difficulties we have, or to live without, you know, creating problems for us. We are always, you know, creating problem. I say "home-made problem" [laughs, laughter]-special, you know, problems. Very tasty problems! It is not just food, you know-very tasty [laughs] problems.

So if possible, you know, we should not create so tasty food. Putting too much sugar [laughs]-something like that. Something too fancy is, you know, same as something ugly [laughs]. We say-in Japanese we say, sugitaru wa oyobazaru ga gotoshi: [4] "too much is same as too little." [Laughs.] Same as not too much-not much. If it is too much that is-maybe that is worse than not enough.

This kind of, you know, practice is called middle way-middle way: not too much or not enough-just right. That is middle way. Or in Tendai [?],

we say "tentative," or-what should we call it-ka-kai-kai means "tentative." Tentativity [laughs]. The thing we don't, you know, acknowledge things, you know, something-some with any substantial idea; it is something tentative, you know, because they are changing. When-even though we observe things objectively, you know, when we observe things-objective world we immediately seek for the relationship between things, you know: how A is related to B or C, and how the things related to ourselves-to ea- [partial word]-to ourselves. At that moment, the self is one of the objective being. You are observing you, you know, objectively. So that is already projected self, and you, you know, relate objective self to, you know, A or B or C and many beings and seek for relationship. That is how pure thinking works, you know. So self is there, not here. And self is always this side, not the other side. And self is not something different from objective world.

So there is no objective world or subjective world. That which exists is one whole being which is moving constantly. That is Dharmakaya Buddha. And if we observe more objectively, that is Sambhogakaya Buddha or Nirmanakaya Buddha, maybe, but those three bodies are one. Not different. So in this way we practice zazen. With this kind of idea, giving up all the idea of self, we practice zazen.

That is background of shikantaza. So intellectually you should clear understanding of things, and subjectively we should try to have best posture with best breathing, you know. When we devote ourselves in this way, that is shikantaza.

Do we have some more time? If you have some question-practical question [laughs, laughter], please ask me. Hai.

Student A: Yeah. I can't attend sesshin all week because I have to work. I was wondering if I was just able to come and sit in the mornings, very early?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I think so. Have you applied?

Student A: For the sesshin?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: No.

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student A: I should sign up?

Suzuki-roshi: As we have, you know, maybe 130-not enough seat, you know, so I don't know what to do.

[Silas Hoadley explains procedure (several sentences) for occasional



sitting.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student B: Sesshin means "to gather one's mind." Can you talk about that for a minute?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. I am-I don't know exactly, you know, sessh- [partial word]-what sesshin is, yeah, "to gather," but that is not so appropriate name. I think, you know, it is something to control mind. But actually, as I told you right now, it is different. The effort we make is not, you know, something to do something or to govern our mind or control our mind. To do it, you know, just do it without any idea of self is, you know, more like, you know-more appropriate interpretation of sitting. Of course, you know, to have goodshikantaza, we have preparatory zazen. You know, from old, old time, you know, we have that wo- [partial word]-that technical term, konpunjo. Konpunjo means "to enter," you know. That is started from Theravada practice, you know. To prepare for the first stage or second stage or third stage, they practice some special practice. Those practice is not the practice of the first stage or second stage or third stage, but to prepare for those stages.

So in-in one-week sesshin, maybe, you know, you may have, you know, some practice to prepare for, you know, good shikantaza. I think that is very good point, you know. We should not mixed up pure zazen and konpunjo, preparatory zazen. Kon is, you know, "kin"-"near," you know. Pun is "divided." So to-it is not the pure practice itself. It is different-it is divided practice from the pure practice, but it is very near to the [laughs, laughter] real practice. So, kon-pun-jo. But if you have complete understanding of zazen, konpunjo can be pure practice [laughs, laughter]. Some other questions?

Student C: I wanted to ask where does effort come in? That is to say, suppose we become part of [3-4 words unclear], but making an effort in that direction is shikantaza possible?

Suzuki-roshi: Good question. The effort, you know-I had-for a long, long time I had that problem. And-but I didn't ask anyone about it, you know. But the effort, you know, to continue, you know, the practice is allowable [laughs]. To make our practice pure is-effort to make our practice pure is allowable. If something comes out, you know, let it come out-come up. Without some effort, you cannot do that [laughs]. If you, you know-this, you know, stuff [probably gesturing] is, you know, standing like this, but if it-if it stand just like this, it is not our practice. When it is supported by, you know, invisible, you know, relationship, then this is completely supported.

So how we keep, you know, those invisible relationship is maybe belief or prayer [laughs]. "Let me have pure practice." [Laughs.] "Even though

we don't know what it is." [Laughs, laughter.] "It is too much to know," you know, "the relationship, but let me be like this." [Laughs.] That kind of effort is necessary. If it doesn't, you know, go this way or that way, you know, it doesn't be like this. It is not-it cannot be like this, and so when your zazen, you know-there must be that kind of feeling. Why-that is why we stretch our neck, you know, as if your head is going upwards [laughs] to the heaven. And your back should be straight, as if your back is deeply rooted to the center of the earth. Shhww. [Laughs.] That kind of feeling should be in ourshikantaza. That kind of feeling is not the feeling, you know, when we intensify our practice, but, you know, some spirit-spiritual feeling.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (2/15/01). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] The sesshin started the next day.

[2] Probably a guest teacher at Tassajara.

[3] sadhana (Sanskrit): In Vajrayana Buddhism, a text describing meditative techniques of visualization and contemplation of shunyata (emptiness). dhamma (Pali) = dharma (Sanskrit). siddhi (Sanskrit): especially in the Vajrayana tradition, perfect mastery over the powers or abilities of the body and of nature.

[4] sugitaru (too much); wa (is); oyobazaru (too short or too little); ga (is); gotoshi (alike).

## **5 - Sesshin Lecture #1**

Monday, February 23, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #1

Selflessness, Being and Non-Being: The Background of Shikantaza

San Francisco

In this sesshin I suggested to practice shikantaza. For-anyway for beginner, you know, it doesn't make much difference [laughs]. I am sorry to say so, but shikantaza or counting breathing-it doesn't make much sense. But anyway, you know, to have strong determination to sit, you know, for seven-six days is enough, you know. If you have that much conviction in your practice I think that is pretty good.

So anyway, those who just started practice zazen, don't give up, and [laughs] stay six days. And it is also good to practice counting breathing, you know, whether you are counting, you know, like you count something, you know-1, 2, 3, 4-that is also good. But I want to give you some fundamental understanding of teaching of Buddhism.

Zazen practice, our zazen practice is based on-can you hear me?-based on the teaching of shunyata or emptiness. If you do not have a thorough understanding of emptiness, even emptiness intellectually, I don't think you can practice our way in its true sense.

Last time, before sesshin-last Sunday[1] I explained about the background of our practice-to have strong belief in relationship between each one of us to various things. I said-if you do not have this kind of understanding, your practice, even [though] it is, you know, very good, may be some casual [laughing] accidental good practice. When your practice is, you know, understood by you completely, and when you appreciate your good practice, you know: "Oh, this is," you know,"shikantaza." If you understand in this way, that practice is-means, you know, something, but even though you have, you know-you experience good experience, if that is, you know, some- [partial word]-something just happen to you by accident [laughs], that is not true practice. Why we, you know-why we have gratitude in our practice is because we feel, you know-this is my-this is Buddha's practice and this-this is-this has been the practice-all our teachers' practice, and I could have same experience, you know. If you feel in that way, you know, the meaning of the attainment is quite different. You may say whatever we do, if we have buddha-nature [laughs]-if we have buddha-nature, you know, all [of] what we do is expression-should be expression of our buddha-nature. But when you say so, you know, your understanding of buddha-nature-your understanding of your experience is not the understanding which Buddha had. So I think I must explain about this point more, and explain why our practice-background of our practice should be the teaching of emptiness.

Before Mahayana Buddhism arise, you know, of course, as a Buddhist no one supposed-no one is supposed to have idea of self, you know, because Buddha's teaching was the teaching of selflessness. So no one could say, you know, anything about teaching of-based on idea of being or self. But before Mahayana practice arise or understood, their practice tend to be the practice of annihilation or practice of attainment. In other word, to-by annihilating our desires-evil desires, and we attain some stage, you know, that is more Theravada-like practice and understanding. But although they did not believe in self-small self, but actually their practice [was] involved in the practice based on the idea of self. Why it is so is-as long as you, you know, recognize evil-good or evil desires, you know, like something which exist actually within yourself, that means, you know, you recognize self with- [partial word]-small self within yourself because you have-you have small self instead of big self,

you know. You acknowledge good nature or bad nature or good desire or bad desire-to say "good" or "bad" is already small self, you know. So even though they do not say selflessness-they do not say-they say selflessness, actually they are accepting small self, and their practice is-was based on small self.

So the more you-you attain some stage-annihilating-not annihilating, but overcoming evil desires and attain some higher stage, you know, your small self [laughing] will become bigger. That kind of practice is not, you know, [in] accord with Buddha's practice of-Buddha's practice which is based on the idea of non-self.

Why we, you know-small self arise is because you, you know, understand things as if things exist, you know. When-why you are disturbed by the sound from outside, you know, that is because you recognize motor car outside. "There is motor car," and some, you know-some hot [-rod?] driver [laughs, laughter] is making that kind of sound, you know. So why you are disturbed by the sound is because you have some substantial idea about things-objective thi- [partial word]-being, which is not actually exist, you know. This is the difference, you know, between so-called-it Hinayana Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. The Mahayana Buddhist do not, you know, accept the idea of being. Being is at the same time non-being. It is being, you know-in a smallest particle of time it is being, but it-as it doesn't exist in that way always, so it is non-being. So common people is not always common people because he may at- [partial word]-he may be a Buddha. Buddha is not always Buddha, you know. Even Buddha, he is a human being [laughs], you know.

We understand things in that way. When we understand things in that way, that understanding can be understanding of non-being and non-self-no self. So how we practice zazen without being disturbed by anything is to know things in its-to understand things even intellectually. Both way-being and non-being, because, you know, sound is-actually you hear, so that is being, but at the same time it is non-being. So there is no reason why we should be disturbed by it. If you-if your practice ready to hear sound as being and non-being, you will not be disturbed by it. If you are disturbed by it, you know, you should know your practice is not, you know, good enough. And-but there is no reason why you should, you know, reject the sound you hear or the confusion you have in your practice.

So you sh- [partial word]-can accept your confused practice disturbing by outward objects. That is, you know, real practice. When you have that kind of understanding which is understood by our ancestors, and patriarchs, and teachers-if you have this kind of experience of detachment you will, you know, say-"Oh, this is it. This is Buddha's practice. This is Buddhist practice." Like a fish, you know, in-in aquarium [laughs]-Golden State Park there is a big fish and they-they looks very clever. If they eat something wrong [Off-mike: "Pardon me

Roshi, you have to hold the microphone that way." [laughing]-not working?-[Off-mike: "It's working if you don't point it at them."]  
[Laughs, laughter.] We are-I am not so wise as fish, you know [laughs, laughter]. A fish-when they do something wrong, you know, they, you know, swim the other direction [laughs, laughter], you know. As long as they are doing something good they go on and on [laughs], and just before he hit his head against window they caught [laughs, laughter]. That is, I think, enlightenment. And they are always, you know, happy, you know, to have that kind of way or practice.

So, you know, if our zazen could be like their practice, that is, I think, good practice. But I think our practice is very, you know, casual and frivolous: sometime good, sometimes it is not so good. And when it is not so good, we will be very much discouraged, you know. So there is no constancy, or there is no relationship between today's practice and tomorrow's practice and their practice. Fish's practice-there is always, you know, continuity [laughs]. They are doing exactly what they should do, and they enjoy very much to, you know, to avoid problem. In avoiding problem, maybe they are doing intuitively. In avoiding problem, they-looks like some joy and continuing some-their own way, they also have joy. That is, you know, the difference between so-called-it freedom and freedom in its-in its true sense, or buddha-nature in its true sense and buddha-nature in some hasty understanding of buddha-nature.

We say whatever we do, that is expression of buddha-nature. It is so, but there must be, you know, a oneness of various practice. Good and bad is one. Successful or unsuccessful practice should be one. Figuring out why today's practice was not so good, you can try, you know, to have good practice. Then there, there is practice in its true sense.

So how you make this kind of effort is to have right understanding of practice, and checking up your practice and to continue good practice. Without knowing, you know, what is right practice and what is not, it is difficult to make your effort. When you have-when you understand-when you have some understanding of practice, you can make effort in its true sense in your practice. I think this point is very important. Then, you know, whether your posture is perfect or imperfect, there is some feeling, you know, in your posture. When your practice is continuous practice of Buddha, then there is some power or feeling in your practice. If you don't have it, you know-even though your posture is right, you know, your practice is dead. There is no feeling in it. It is just like a beautiful artificial flower [laughs]. Even though flower is not so beautiful, if it is natural flower, you know, you have some-you will have some encouragement from when you see the flower.

So before you understand what is non-self or selflessness, it is necessary to understand, maybe, teaching of non-being. Nothing exist, although it exists, but on the other hand, it is not permanent. It is tentative being, including ourselves. We say "self"-if we-when we say

"self," it is already self projected outside of yourself. It is objective self, not true self.

So that kind of objective being is-is not constant, not substantial. It is projected figure of something, or you may say it is just tentative form and color of something great. Or you may say it is like a wave in the ocean. Wave doesn't exist-it exist, you know [laughs], but actually if someone ask you what is wave, it is difficult to answer. So you will give up to seek for what is true self, you know. True self is always [laughs] on your side. It cannot be object of anything. It is always subject. It is always independent, and it is universal to every phenomenal being.

So to seek for self, you know-selflessness, what is selflessness, is vain effort. It is much better not to do it [laughs]. When you start to seek for what is selflessness, you-it means that you are seeking for, you know, small self, and that is big mistake. So in your practice, you know, that is why we say don't be involved in gaining idea, you know. There is-when you try to annihilate small self, you know, it means that you are-you recognize small self which is outside of your self and trying to, you know, make it your own [laughs]. That is vain effort. That is why we say, you know, don't try to attain enlightenment. [Sentence probably finished. Incomplete lecture: The rest of the lecture was not recorded.]

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape by Dana Velden and Bill Redican, August 17, 2000.

[1] SR may have been referring to lecture SR-70-02-22, which was given on the Sunday before the sesshin began.

## **6 - Sesshin Lecture #3**

Wednesday, February 25, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #3  
Non-Dualistic Practice

San Francisco

Yesterday I talked about how to, maybe-two ways of practice: one is zazen practice under the guidance of the right teacher, and the other is how to extend our practice in our everyday life. And the-it-our teaching mostly-especially Mahayana Buddhist teachings-mostly directed how to extend our practice to our everyday practice.

The teaching of emptiness or teaching of interdependency-those teaching are to explain how, you know, from our practice which is non-dualistic-to be extended dualistic everyday life. And that was what I told

you last-yesterday.

So in our practice, you know, our practice is not the practice to attain something, you know, but to start our practice from the beginning, jump-jumping into the non-dualistic pure practice. That is our practice. [Sounds like tape was stopped here and then started again.] Without, you know, realizing there is nothing to depend on and even ourselves-our physical body is transient, so we cannot depend upon ourselves physically and mentally.

And things exist looks like permanent, but it is not so. It looks like existent, but it is nonexistent, and that is true. With this understanding, we devote ourselves completely in our practice. That is our practice. Then your question may be what kind of effort, you know, you should make to practice that kind of practice of non-attainment [laughs]. That will be, you know, your, you know, question.

I told about it a little bit, you know. Our effort is not like some effort to achieve something, or to carry something or to run a race, you know [laughs]. It is not, you know, that kind of effort. The effort-mostly, you know, directed-excuse me-[adjusts microphone]-it [the mike] should be directed this way, you know-our effort [laughs, laughter]-not that way. Usually, you know [loud laughter: mike probably swung around toward students again]. Your effort is directed that way [laughing, laughter]. From inside to outside. But our effort should be directed this way, you know [laughs]-inward-inwardly, you know. To-to direct our effort inwardly means, you know, to have big mind, you know. If you have big mind, which is no outside [laughs] of it, there is no way to direct it this way [sounds like he is aiming mike away from himself]. It is not possible, because there is no outside of it. Whatever happen-things which happens is always happens within ourselves. That is why we say our practice is non-dualistic practice.

If, you know, when you direct your effort, you know, outward it means that your effort is dualistic. How to practice non-dualistic practice is let things happen, you know, within ourselves and without disturbing by it. Because things happen within our big mind, so our big mind couldn't be disturbed. Things which is going on-which are going on is, you know, always inside ourselves. That is so-called-it perfect acceptance. That we don't say good or bad means, you know, things happens within ourselves as a movement of big self. Then whatever the movement is, that is movement of the big self, so we cannot say good or bad. The-fundamentally, with this understanding, we practice zazen.

I already explained the idea of self or idea of being is not perfect understanding. So when we have right understanding of things, you have this kind of perfect understanding of non-duality too. But here is, as you see in Fukan Zazen-gi, [1] if there is slight, you know, mistake or misunderstanding arise, then our practice-the difference between our practice and true practice will be like heaven and earth. Completely

different. We will be involved in-involved in a quite different practice.

This, you know, slightest mistake does not mean-no, when to hear some sound from outside, you know, or to be caught all of a sudden drowsiness, or to have difficulty in painful legs. But, you know, the difference between wrong practice and right practice, when you have, for an instance, painful legs, it is maybe rather hard [laughs]. Let painful legs, you know, be painful [laughs]. That is, you know, how you practice zazen.

In Meiji Period there were famous Zen Master called Nishiari Bokusan. [2] When he was-he was-what was the name?-anyway, epidemic, you know, and he-he was hospitalized, but he was still, you know, hanging some book from the ceiling [laughs]. Lying in his bed, he was reading koan [laughs, laughter], and doctor said you must not read, you know. And he didn't mind, you know. "My mind is reading. Let it read [laughs]. My body is suffering. Let it suffer [laughs]. It's okay," he said.

There is-I think there is some suggestion, you know, how you control or how you practice zazen. Let it completely go as it goes [laughs]. Of course there is some technique, you know, which is very difficult to explain. Some technique, you know.

There is-in his time there was another great Zen master called Morita Goyu,[3] who was very gentle. And the other Zen master was very short-tempered [laughs] Zen master. It was very good contrast. And he was, you know, a kind of person always calm and always practicing his way. Once his, you know-once he was crossing the narrow[s] between Honshu Island and Hokkaido Island, and they met a big typhoon. And, you know, their ship almost wrecked and, you know, by wave. And almost all the people, you know, including crew, you know, get sick [laughing]. But he was practicing zazen. He-he didn't mind at all. He didn't get sick when, you know, all the crew were sick. And the captain came to him [laughing] and [was] amazed, you know, seeing a person who is sitting zazen in, you know, in a ship like a leaf in the, you know, ocean.

To have-to have this kind of practice, it is necessary to switch, you know, to switch your way of life completely to another channel, you know. Shht! [Laughs, laughter.] Because you don't do that, you know, you suffer a lot, and you-you will suffer from sticky mind [laughs, laughter]. You get into confliction. If you put it aside, you know, and see what will happening [laughs], nothing happen! [Laughs, laughter.] Because you do not, you know, switch your channel of life to the other, you have difficulty. That is one. Secondary, you know. After you could, you know, switch over the channel to the other, you should have-you shouldn't go back. That is-to switch one channel from the other is difficult. But more difficult thing is to continue that, you know, practice after switching over to the right practice-to the non-dualistic practice.



Mostly when we talk about difficulties of practice, we talk about the difficulty of continuing the practice-how to continue that practice. That is why we, you know, put emphasis on perseverance or endurance. Especially, you know, most part of our practice is directed to-to continue this kind of practice, but even though it is difficult to switch the channel, you know, but [laughs] if you sit, you know, so long time as six days, you have chance, you know, you have chance if you try hard. So if you realize, if you have-if you find out this is the way, you should find out the way how to continue it-how to extend in our everyday life. And the way to extend non-dualistic practice to dualistic everyday life was-is what I explained previous two lectures.

We-to switch, you know, over the channel is so-called-it, is, according to Dogen-zenji, is jikige shoto[4]-to say "Hai!" [Laughs.] That is the secret. When you are ca- [partial word]-when someone call you by name, "Hai!" [Laughs.] That is how to switch over the channel. If you think when you are called, you know-if you think, if you hesitate to say "Hai," you will lose the chance to switch over, you know. If you do it quickly [laughs], you can do it like you catch fish, you know [laughs]. [Sounds like he makes a quick grabbing gesture.] If you do like this [laughing]-escape, you know. Shht!

So you shouldn't give yourself to escape from, you know, the chance to switch over. Jikige shoto. Even though you are not called by your name, you know, to observe things like a flash, you know, that is non-duality. If you hesitate, you know, more and more you will be caught by sticky ideas, and you cannot move about. And if you lose the chance, the more you will suffer from the sticky things [laughing]. And the more you suffer, the more the things can be sticky. So to do something in a flash of light is the secret. And if that is just casual, you know, success it doesn't make much sense. Knowing that what is dualistic practice and what is non-dualistic practice-and to-to say "this is it," you know, to feel confidence in your experience is necessary.

So even though you have, you know, because of some reason you haven't good practice, you know, if you know that is-if you know the-what is real non-dualistic practice, still your dualistic not-so-good practice is working.

To explain in this way is, you know, maybe not so difficult, you know-if you have little-a little understanding of non-dualistic practice it is not so difficult. But to continue it until you can do it without much effort is difficult, and you should be very patient, and you should continue same way of life for many years. This is also the difference between usual practice and our practice. We put emphasis on the habit we do something, you know. If you can do it without thinking, like a kind of habit, then we say-he is pretty good. When you reach that stage or that-that much training, then even though you say something-something mean, or even though you are very angry, you know, there is some flavor [laughs] of non-dualistic practice.

That is so-called-it "way downward." The way upwards, after attaining-after having some experience of non-dualistic practice, and to continue it until you get accustomed to it and until you can do it without making effort. That is way upward. And way downward-to help others is sometime, you know, you should be angry, you know. But actually that anger is different from usual anger. The meanness you behave is not same as usual meanness.

So, in short, Zen is not knowledge, you know-something to study intellectually by reading or listening lecture, or to have some special experience. But important thing is to be able to continue it without making much effort. More natural ... [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... the way upwards and the way downwards is to go further to the ground. To go back to our dualistic life and live with dualistic-live in the world of duality with some flavor of non-duality. And that is the practice after you get accustomed to our way. So [laughing] actually takes time [laughter].

I am saying-I don't say so to keep you in big building [laughs], you know, but if you are involved in hasty idea of practice-way of practice, you know, or if you discouraged and give up, or if you stop practicing our way when you have some understanding of it, then you will not accomplish our Soto way. I said Soto way, but because this kind of practice is called by people Soto way [laughs]. Actually for Dogen-zenji, there is no Soto school or no Rinzai. He points-point at many Rinzai teachers as a good teacher. Even though he belongs to Soto lineage, if he-his practice is immature he didn't accept [laughs].

There is koan[5]-by-by-Tozan-zenji,[6] you know, Tozan-zenji and-Tozan-zenji is supposed to be founder of Chinese Soto Zen. And he and his brother disciple were taking a walk, and they met-when they were walking a hare, you know, cross the road. And Mishihaku,[7] his brother disciple, they studied their way under the same teacher, Ugan Donjo. [8] He is Sixth Patriarch-[counting patriarchs' names to himself]-Daikan Eno, Seigen Gyoshi, Sekito Kisen, Yakusan Igen, Ugan Donjo-fifth generation from the Sixth Patriarch, so Eleven[th] Patriarch. Ugan. They were good friend, and the were walking. And hare crossed the road, and Mishihaku, his brother, said, "Oh, how swift it is," you know, "swift or alert it is!" And Tozan started, you know, question and answer: "How swift is it?" [Laughs, laughter.] Tozan asked him, you know, how swift is it. And Mishihaku said, "It is as swift as a commoner," you know, "became a minister" [laughs]. Common city people became a minister so swift it may take many, many years, you know, or many more lives [laughs]. But hare, you know, became a minister in a minute. Shht! [Laughs.] So-it is so swift. So alert. He is so alert, he said. It means that, you know, evil desire is good desire; Buddha and, you know, common people not difference-not different.

We are, you know, originally Buddha. There is no difference in between original-originally there is no difference between Buddha and we ordinary people. So without, you know-it doesn't take time, you know, for us to become a buddha because we are originally Buddha [laughs]. That is non-dualistic practice. Swift, you know. There is no need to make effort because we are originally buddha. When we think so, it is so.

And Tozan said, you know, to him: "Oh, you are-you look like a great Zen master, but what you said was very slow [laughs], very dull. I thought you are a greater Zen Master," he said. So his brother asked back, "Then how swift is it, you think?" you know, he said. And Tozan said, "Old, old hairpin," you know, "given by mother"-he didn't say so elaborately-"old hairpin and comb-beautiful old hairpin and comb was broken" [laughs]. "Was broken," he said. Do you understand? [Laughs, laughter.]

According to Tozan-zenji, you know, that was much swifter than a commoner to be a minister in a minute. That is the way downward [laughs]. To be a, you know, beautiful-to be a minister is way upward, and to-to be a, you know-to be a broken treasure which no one pay attention to it is, you know, much swifter way. To, you know-it is for him-if that is possible, you know, to go up and to come down is very slow. So from the beginning, you know, to go directly to the common, you know, world is swifter [laughing]-shortcut, without going up and down. Shht!

Anyway, you know, even though they are beautiful comb and hairpin, anyway it will be broken down by children, by grandchildren. So it may be much better to be broken hairpin from the beginning, so you don't care-you don't care what they treat it. There is no need to say "Be careful!" [Laughs, laughter.] "Keep them out of the children," you know. There is no need to say so. So that is much better [laughs]. Tozan said "old hairpin and comb."

I want you to, you know, understand our way in this way. We have now many new students who is involved in hasty [laughs] way of practice. Many people, you know, I think may ask me "how to practice zazen." [Laughs.] "I have too many ideas. My mind [is] confused. How," you know, "to get out of it in our practice?" But that is not, you know, so easy. It is difficult to tell you how, and-but if you continue your practice, you will have time to know what it is.

There were one-one more things-one more thing which I wanted to tell you, but I forgot. [Laughs, laughter.] Maybe better to forget. [Laughs, laughter.] And this will be-tomorrow perhaps Katagiri-sensei will continue this lecture. [Laughs, laughter.] So he may tell you, you know, what it was. I thought it was something which is very, you know, difficult, you know, to tell you. Or which is something which-it was

something which I don't want to tell you. [Laughs, laughter.]

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (9/28/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Broad Recommendation of Zen, by Eihei Dogen. His earliest exposition on Zen, written in 1233, shortly after his return from China.

[2] Nishiari Bokusan [also Bokuzan] (1821-1910): the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo. He taught Oka Sotan-zenji and Ian Kishizawa-zenji, eventually becoming abbot of Soji-ji and head of the Soto-shu.

[3] Juko Morita Goyu was the 64th abbot of Eihei-ji. He is known as the "Double Founder" because of his work in restoring Eihei-ji.

[4] jikige (Jap.): immediately; shoto: to agree, to admit.

[5] Book of Serenity, Case 56: "Spiritual Uncle Mi and the Rabbit."

[6] Tozan Ryokai (Dongshan Liangjie): 807-869.

[7] Referred to in the Book of Serenity, Case 56, as Ch'an Master Sengmi of Shenshen in Tan Province.

[8] Ungan Donjo (Yunyan Tansheng): 780-841.

## **7 - Last Lecture of Sesshin**

Saturday, February 28, 1970

Last Lecture of Sesshin  
Practice to be Like a Stone

San Francisco

Before we sit, six-day sesshin was too long. But after we completed, it was too short [laughs, laughter]. I think you feel, you know, quite different feeling. For an instance, when you walk, you know, you have quite different feeling. You feel as if you-your legs have become shorter [laughs, laughter], and your legs stick to floor, you know, and you feel very heavy [laughs] in your walking. It should be, you know, great joy for you, you know, when you completed such a long torch,[1] you know. But, you know, it is strange, you know, not to have so much joy, you

know. I think that is because you have more composure in your feeling. And this is, I think, important.

Zen student is not, you know, so expressive, you know. Mostly they keep silent. They do not walk so fast. They don't act so actively, you know. You know, they have some-something, you know-something different, anyway. Especially when you sit for so long time, you yourself feel you changed a lot. You feel, you know, it is difficult even to smile [laughs]-even to say something, you know. That will be the feeling you have. And if you continue your practice, you will be more and more so. And even though you will not change into a strong buddha [laughs, laughter], a great change will happen to you, you know, and you will be someone which you didn't like at all. "I don't want to be like this." [Laughs.] But although this kind of experience is not the experience you wanted to have, but this is the experience anyway you will have through [laughs, laughter] zazen.

But there is-there is no need for you to worry, you know, because this is the way, you know, upwards, and soon you will find out the way downwards, and you will find yourself in the city again as a normal person. So there is nothing to worry, but in zendo it is necessary for us to have this kind of experience through practice.

And I think one or two years we must devote ourselves this kind of practice. If you go to Tassajara, you know, even more so. And Tassajara itself will have a kind of feeling of practice center more and more. When you see this kind of practice, you may say-or people may say, "Zen practice is not for us" [laughs]." You know, you may not like it. But by the time you have a Caucasian, you know, old Zen master, you will have found out exactly what is Zen.

So I want you to be patient enough to continue this kind of practice. And it is important for you to take care of this kind of feeling and gradually extend this kind of unperturbability [imperturbability] of mind to our everyday life. When you start to work on this point, to establish, you know, to extend our practice to everyday life, you will understand-you will understand the teaching-our teaching. Or you will understand what is meant.

Oh-my voice is not-I am relying on this [the microphone] now [laughs]. Can you hear me? Oh. I am sorry [laughs, laughter]. Excuse me. Is it working?

Yvonne Rand: The part of it that makes your voice louder [the amplifier] isn't working.

Mm-hmm.

Yvonne Rand: So you have to do it yourself.

So I want you to keep, you know, this kind of practice for more than two years, at least, you know. Be-practice to be like a stone [laughs]. Actually, you know, in this training period-in this sesshin, I found several student who almost changed into a stone [laughs]-almost, not quite. But I think that is good, you know, attainment-good progress, I think. But we do not practice our way to be a stone. That is what will happen to some students, not all of you. The way we practice zazen is different according to the, you know, personality of the person. But what will-what we will attain is the same.

As a Zen teacher, there is no special, you know, image. We have various kinds of, you know, teachers, but they have some quality as a Zen teacher. The quality-in this point, they are quite-they are almost same, but they have-they do not lose their character. So it is not, you know, possible to understand Zen just by, you know, hasty way of observation. It takes-I think it may take a pretty long time before people in this land understand what is Zen. But Zen has long, long history and we have many and many good teachers which could be our good example. Being encouraged [by] those teachers, we are practicing our way, and we are helping ourselves. As we are practice-as you are practicing hard here, and Tassajara, and some other Zen centers, more and more, you know, good teacher will appear. I'm quite sure about it. I want you, anyway, to practice our way as you do right now-as you are doing right now.

Today we will have another memorial service for Trudy Dixon. I feel, you know-whenver we sit, I feel her present in zendo always, you know. Those who knows Trudy maybe difficult to forget her in zendo. He was sitting, you know, he passed away July 6-I think 6[2]-and he was at Tassajara, you know, forth-fifth-fifth. And he-she left, you know, Tassajara one night before she passed away at Children Hospital. So he-she went back just to die in the hospital. And I think she knew she was in critical condition, judging from what she said and what she did. But she-she was, you know-she didn't mind so much about her life. She was always happy to sit with-with-with us. So it is difficult for us to forget her. So we want to have another memorial-another service for her.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (8/17/00).

[1] Suzuki-roshi may have meant "torture."

[2] July 9, 1969 (from WIND BELL, 1970, IX (1), p. 3).

## 1970 maart (5)

### 1 - Lecture to Professor Lewis R. Lancaster's Visiting Class

Sunday, March 01, 1970

Lecture to Professor Lewis R. Lancaster's Visiting Class

Tassajara

Actually, because of my bad throat, I don't speak for people outside, you know. I o- [partial word]-I hardly manage to keep my lecture in Zen Center. But this time, because of Dr. Lancaster, whom I met at dinner, I was very much encouraged by him. And hearing hard [hardship?] of-name of Senzaki,[1] you know, who is, I think, pioneer of Zen in America [and] who did not have also any temple whatsoever. He did not like to spend his time managing-management or a business-like thing, you know, which will follow by our church or organization activity. So he just had a small room available for maybe ten or twenty people. And he spent his life in that way in Los Angeles. [Gap in tape of 27 seconds.] ... worldly things, but he wanted to make more effort to establishing the foundation of Zen in America. I think that is why he end up as a wandering monk in America. I did-before I come to America, I didn't know anything about him. But after I came to America, I met many students who studied Zen by him, and I read a book written by him,[2] and I was very much impressed by his profound understanding of Zen. Since then, I was very much encouraged to be here and to study with you.

I came this morning without preparing anything to speak. But I wanted to share the feeling we have right here, right now. Sharing the feeling right here, right now is the fundamental or basic thing for Zen practice. Zen is, in one word, to share, you know, our feeling with people or with trees and with mountains wherever we are [laughs]. That is Zen practice.

But usually, you know, our mind is always filled with something, you know: something like ice cream [laughs, laughter] or lemonade [laughs, laughter] or banana or, you know, soap-how much the soap cost in one, you know, store, how much will it cost in other store. And looking out the newspaper [laughs] and seeing ad, you know, where there is some sale, you know. That kind of thing-filled with that kind of thing. So it is almost impossible to share the actual feeling, you know, where they are right now.

That is how our life is going on-on and on and on endlessly, with some rubbishes, you know, which you had-which you used before. If even rubbish, you know, it was not rubbish when you were using it, you know. It was some important things for you. But after you use it, it is not necessary to keep it. It is same thing with our everyday life. It is useless thing-or we have too many useless rubbishes in our mind, so we cannot share the feeling with people, with things, with trees, and with

mountains. Even though we are right in the wood, still we cannot feel- we cannot appreciate the feeling of the wood. That is, I think, why we practice zazen.

And originally Buddha, you know, attained enlightenment after he gave up everything, after he studied under many teachers. And rather tired of, you know, human suffering, studying many things, and being occupied some certain, you know, thought or religion, and making great effort to study-to be-to study it just to be caught by it [laughs], you know. That is most people and religious people are doing. He tired of that kind of, you know, effort. So he, you know, gave up everything. He lost interest-his interest in such things.

So finally he went to the bodhi tree where he attained enlightenment and-we say "he attained enlightenment," but it may be better to say "he forgot completely [laughs] everything!" He had nothing in his mind at that moment. And then he saw a morning star, you know, rising up from the east. That is, I think, his enlightenment. But when he saw, you know, morning star, I think that was the first thing he saw coming out of his empty mind. That-that was-that is why he was so, you know-he had such a joyful-joy in the sight of the morning star. I think that is, you know-in other word, he shared, you know, the feeling-some feeling [laughs]-Buddha's feeling or morning star's feeling. We don't know, you know. It is difficult to analyze [laughs] that is Buddha's feeling or morning star's feeling.

That is not possible. Anyway, you know, he shared the feeling with the morning star.

I think that was the first experience-pure experience which a human being had, you know. That is why I think he is called Buddha. So to be a buddha means to be he himself, to be with everyone, with everything. But to be Buddha it is necessary to give up various rubbishes in our mind.

So all the teaching-mmm [laughs]-I-I shouldn't say so [such] big words [laughs], but not all-I cannot say all teaching. But Buddha's-Buddhist-Buddhist teaching is the teaching which is arise-which should-should arise or which should come out from emptiness, from emptiness of mind. In other word, from pure mind, you may say. Or you may say a "holy mind." If your word comes from pure emptiness, that is, whatever it is, that is, I think, Buddha's word. And if you do things with purity of your mind, that is Buddha's activity, I think. And it-it is possible for us to do that. Why we meditate, or why we recite Buddha's name, [or] why we read scriptures is in one way to empty our mind, and on the other hand to appreciate Buddha's words by empty mind.

So when you read scripture, you know, you can empty your mind by reading it. And when you-your mind become clearer and clearer, then your reading will become more and more deeper. In this way, back and



forth, while you are reciting sutra, you-you will, you know, extend your life in its true sense. So it is necessary for you to read scripture back and forth. Or, you know, to-if scripture is too long or too difficult-to read scripture is too difficult, you can rec- [partial word]-you know, repeat the name of Buddha even. Maybe that is the way for most of the people.

Or we-you can sit, you know, in zazen posture to empty-with empty mind. Try to be empty. But there is some, you know, some technique or some explanation needed on this point. So I hope I have some more time to explain this point more. But purpose of our practice is to open up our mind from-from-maybe you must open like you open a tin [can], you know. You must cut [laughs] hard, you know, tin, and open the tin so that you can eat it. That is, you know, our pract- [partial word]-purpose of practice.

And it is-another point is just to open is not, you know, enough. To, you know, to repeat it, or to do it back and forth, or to continue our practice is also necessary. If you haven't-if you do not have this kind of spirit, or if your everyday life is not based on this kind of spirit, to repeat it forever, you cannot, you know, cope with the problem you will have day after day, you know. As long as you live, you must eat, you know, something. As soon as you eat, you will have a, you know, big [rubbish] pile of can and papers.

So constantly, we should work on it. We should clear our table every day. Even though you clear up-you have feeling of clearing up of everything from your table, if that, you know, activity is not based on the spirit of continuing to do it, you know, forever, that feeling is just some feeling, you know, [like] when you have, you know-after you taking LSD [laughs], or after you take some alcohol [laughs].

No-maybe there is difference, but [laughs] not much difference, you know. The big difference between, you know, psychedelic experience and [laughs] enlightenment experience-we should not compare both, but the-the difference, you know, is-one is, you know, based on so-to say the Bodhisattva's vow. The other is just casual, you know, experience which happened to you sometime by aid of something. That is the difference. And one is, you know, the experience which you can have always, one after another, continuously. The other is, you know, the experience which you will have when you have something, some aid. That is the difference. I'm not comparing, you know, our experience with some other experience, but to make, you know, clear what is our practice, I said something like this, you know. I easily become critical [laughs] with things. After that I don't feel so good [laughs, laughter] after criticizing things. So I shouldn't go too far [laughs, laughter].

But anyway, we should, you know, clear up our table every day. And even though, you know, it is clear, you know, we should try to clear it. That is another, you know, important point. Because, you know, if-if you clear-if you are clearing up, you know, your table because it is dirty, you

know, that mind is still dirty [laughs] because that mind, you know, acknowledged something dirty [laughs, laughter]. That you think something is dirty means your mind is dirty. So, you know, we should forget, you know, about this kind of mind-discriminating mind: "dirty or clean" or "right or wrong." Anyway, you know, to forget all about things is the point, not because it is dirty, but because this is something we should do as long as we are alive. That's all, you know.

So there is no reason why we should practice zazen, you know. When I came here, you know, I was very much interested in why, you know, so many people want to practice zazen [laughs]: crossing, you know, their legs and rigid-rigid-rigidly. And keeping their back straight. I couldn't understand why. And I used to ask them, "Why did you come? Why did you come?" And they said, "Oh! I don't know." [Laughs, laughter.] Most people say, "I don't know." Some people, you know, feel he should give me some reason, so he-he would speak some-some-he may give me some reason, but it doesn't make much sense, you know, so I wondered-just wondered why. But "I don't know" is right, I think. And even though you don't know what it is or why, but if you understand this point and if you start to practice religious activity, not only Zen but also various activity, then that is Buddhist practice, I think. This is the fundamental, you know, attitude of Buddhist practice.

So I want to compare our practice to the practice which is going on now-which will continue to go on in the future, or the practice we have had practice before. Then you will understand more clearly what is our practice. So this is another effort to keep our practice clear and to keep our practice go on. On this point, I think we must make our effort not to get lost in, you know, in-in-how should I say-maybe worldly practice [laughs].

It is not different thing to keep, you know-in keeping this practice pure. It is not difficult thing if you understand actually what it is. So, in this sense, it is necessary for you to have some understanding-to have understanding of Buddhist practice: what it is.

And I think we should be very grateful for Buddha and for many people who transmitted this kind of practice for many thousand years. And also I think we should be very grateful for the people who is making the effort to satisfy their mind even though-even though they did not know what was the real pure practice, because eventually they will find out what is real practice-like Buddha, you know, after making a great effort to establish himself on himself, who wanted to be independent from everything, and who wanted to save all being, having some respons-[partial word]-feeling some responsibility as a future king of his own country. So sooner or later this kind of feeling is a feeling which-which everyone will have. So we must be grateful for the people who are striving for the final goal we arrive at.

What is the time now? [Brief exchange off-mike.]

Now I think I-I want someone would give them some instruction how you sit. Let's sit, you know, for a while, because we have many cushions.

[Zazen instruction starts. Tape stopped and restarted, presumably after zazen.]

If you have a question, please ask me. I think this is best way. Please ask some questions. Whatever question it may be, it's quite all right. Please ask question. Uh-huh.

Student: I understand from some students they meditate a long time-long time. And nothing happens. What-what do you think [SR laughs; 5-6 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Nothing happens, yeah. [Laughs, laughter.] Nothing happens [laughs, laughter]. That is okay. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student: Is it better to meditate outside?

Suzuki-roshi: Outside?

Student: Yes.

Silas Hoadly: Can-can you ask your questions loud-loudly enough so that everybody could hear your questions?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm?

Student: Is it better to meditate outside?

Suzuki-roshi: Outside. Yeah. Inside is better, you know.

Student: Inside is better? Why?

Suzuki-roshi: Why? For beginner it is-especially it is so, because outside maybe wind will come and-here in California, I think it is-it is very good to sit outside, but still you there-you will have some, you know, disturbance. Light may be too strong. The, you know, the light we have here is just right. But if it is too strong, you know, it is difficult to keep your eyes open, so you have to shut your eyes. And if wind come, you know, it bothers your eyes always. And, you know, you have to always [laughs] to be like this [probably gestures]. So I think inside is better.

And it is necessary to have right temperature too. If it is too hot, it is difficult. And if it is cold-yeah, cold weather is better, but hot one is very difficult, you know, to sit. So I think outside-actually, you know, when you go outside you may feel you want to sit there. But if you start to sit [laughs], you will find out various things which will dis- [partial word]-

which disturb you. So I think it is better to sit inside. If you try, you will find out, you know [laughs.] Ah. Hai.

Student: Do you always count to keep track of the mind? Or do you stop at some point?

Suzuki-roshi: You know, it-because it is difficult to just to sit, you know. Just to sit is best, you know, but that is not so easy [laughs]. So we count our breathing. But it is not just to count our breathing, you know, like you count sheeps, you know [laughing], crossing fence. One, two, three. This is rather busy, you know. When you want to sleep, it maybe-it will work, but for zazen it doesn't work so well.

So "to count" means to do something with your body and mind. To devote yourself on practice with your mind and body. So-but it is easy-easier to say, "count your breathing," you know, rather than "to practice it with your body and mind." [Laughs.] You may wonder what it is, you know. So we just say, "count your breathing."

And how you count is, you know, not just counting. Even though you lose your counting sometime, it is all right. But how you count is to-to count with, you know, with every part of your body: with your mudra, with your breathing, with your mind and everything is-not concentrated but-concentration, you know, means to, you know, to-to be like this [gesturing?]. But actually we do not try to concentrate on anything, you know. We just try to be like this and-or organize our body and mind.

So it is-maybe it better to have, you know, some feeling of counting or following breathing. At that time, your mind is everywhere, you know: here, here, and every part of your body. That is how you count your breathing.

Student: How can you still thoughts that come up in meditation?

Suzuki-roshi: Still?

Student: Still thoughts. You know, you have-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. I see. The best way, may be, you know, if you-if you haven't not much, you know, mind in your head, you know, you start to think because your mind is, you know, resting. Your mind is not participating [in] the practice. So your mind start to wandering about. "What shall I do?" he may say [laughs, laughter]. So your mind should alw- [partial word]-also join our practice. How to do it is, you know, physically you sh- [partial word]-pull your chin and stretch your neck. It's-our chin and neck should be always so, but, you know, if you sit ten, fifteen minutes you will be like this [probably gestures].

So mind ask, you know, "What shall I do?" [laughs] and there-he will start to taking a walk [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, why you

think. So, if you are always like this, it is difficult to think, you know, all your mind. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. I'm sorry. [Sounds like he is asking a student to repeat a question]

Student: Is it better to leave the eyes half-open, or do you ever close the eyes?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, half open. You know, some teachers say-oh-Fujimoto-roshi said in Way of Zen, [3] watch, you know, some point-your eye level, and turn the focus five-four-five feet ahead. Change the focus from, you know, there to here. Then you will have half-opened eyes. Not-but focus. You shouldn't gaze at some point on the wall, you know. Some mark on the wall [laughs, laughter] or some point on the floor, you know. Just, you know-focus is around there. So your eyes is not gazing at anything. This kind of eyes, you know [probably gestures]. So if you have this kind of eyes, you know, you can catch everything, you know, in your, you know, eyesight angle. Focus is maybe around here. I don't feel any focus. That is how you do it. But if it is difficult as you-like as you count your breathing, you can gaze at something, you know, in front of you.

Some, you know, old student, when she started practice, she always prepare for something [laughing] here. Put it in front of her. She was gazing at it. I think that is not-maybe not proper way. No Zen master, you know, told us to do so [laughs], so may not be proper way, but for her, you know, it was very good. It worked very well, I think. Soon he-she didn't need that kind of material or that kind of thing in front of her. Some q- [partial word: questions]-?

Student: For what reason do you keep the eye open rather than close it?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Because you-if you keep-if you-if your eyes are open, you know, naturally-wide open, you know, you will see many things. And if you close your eyes, you know, you will think more, and you will have various images on-on your eyelid ["eyelid" said tentatively]. Yeah. Many things will appear here [laughs, laughter]. So better to be like this, you know.

Student: Do you get anywhere farther if you just keep sitting every day for twenty minutes-do your counting? Will there be progress? Or can you just get stuck sitting? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah. Yesterday I said, you know, because so-pretty many people changed into a stone-into stones, you know [laughs, laughter], after sitting six days. I think that was good, I think. But why we practice zazen is-is not to change into a stone [laughs, laughter]. That is something which will happen in our practice, you know. I don't say that is bad, you know. That may be good. But

that is not why we practice zazen, you know.

You will have various experience in your zazen, and then more and more you will have less, you know, experience in-in some sense of duality, good or bad, you know: good experience or bad experience. Or you may not have here or there, you know, and you will feel always a sort of composure or a sort of-I-you know, same feeling, you know, wherever you go. But with that same foundation of same feeling, you know-composure, you will see things, you know, as it is.

So that same feeling will be called it like "emptiness" or "buddha-eyes," or "buddha-mind," or we call it by various name, but a kind of-not feeling, but fundamental, you know, openness of your mind. So you will not be-you will not, you know, feel you are here or you are there. "Here" or "there" is just dualistic, you know, mental understanding of things. Before we have that kind of dualistic understanding of things, we have more pure-we have more pure, you know, experience of things. Just, you know-just like that. So if you are more-if you are able to stay in-more in such state of mind, or in state of yourself, then you will not be, you know, bothered by idea of "here" or "there." You don't seek for anything, because you have-you have contented feeling.

Student: And it happens by simply sitting there and doing that for a long time-over a period of time?

Suzuki-roshi: It-you know, first of all what you should do is to-to get accustomed to, you know, right posture and right-good breathing, natural good breathing. Then you will have this kind of feeling-I should say "feeling"? Yeah. So, you know, for-for us it takes time-quite a long time to-to have this kind of feeling. So anyway, you know, at home or with group, it is good to sit because it will help your, you know, posture and breathing. Breathing is important thing. If your mind is disturbed, breathing will be disturbed too. And this is-breathing is both mental and physical activity. So to-to take care of breathing is how you take care of yourself. Hai.

Student: If you can only sit for five minutes, is it better to sit or is it better not to sit at all?

Suzuki-roshi: Five minutes?

Student: Or ten minutes.

Suzuki-roshi: Ten minutes. Yeah. Ten minutes. If you-even though you sit ten minutes, your mind will not be calm enough, usually, you know. For an instance, you know, if you walk-kinhin-kinhin is, you know, walking meditation. After, you know, standing up from meditation we, you know, walk slowly and practice zazen. Not zazen [laughs]. Zazen is, you know-za is "sitting," zen is "Zen." Sitting zazen is zazen [laughs]-sitting Zen is zazen. Kinhin is not zazen, but kinhin is walking, you

know, straight is kinhin: walking on straight line.

When you walk slowly, first, you know, six feet or so is-or three feet will be-you will notice your breathing is not deep enough-good enough. And after, you know, after that, your breathing will be very deep, and you will have good feeling-feeling of zazen. And it takes, maybe, I don't know how long, but may-may take at least more than five minutes. So to sit ten minutes, you know, [is] to quit zazen when [laughs] you just entered meditation. So may be better to sit twenty minutes, I think. Twenty minutes. Some more question? Oh. You has. Yeah.

Student: I was wondering at what point in meditation does one reach satori, and how can it be recognized?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] You know, Buddha said, "Oh, it's wonderful to see buddha-nature in all being," you know. He found out buddha, you know, in all being: buddha-nature in all being, you know. But when he said so, it was too late, I think [laughs]. You know, when he said so, that was not enlightenment, you know. That was-that was the first step to the ordinal [ordinary] world [laughs], you know. I think so.

People may say, you know, when or after he saw the morning star he attained enlightenment. By seeing it, he attained enlightenment, you know. And as if a morning star helped him to attain enlightenment [laughs, laughter]: if there were not morning star, you know, he wouldn't have [laughs] attained enlightenment. But that is not so. So that is why we say, you know-we, you know, do not say so much about enlightenment. But enlightenment-because enlightenment is something which is before something happens to us.

So what is enlightened mind, you know, you may ask. But when we say "enlightened mind," that is already, you know, object of enlightened mind [laughs]. "Here there is enlightened mind. I will explain about it," you know. "This is enlighten-enlightened mind." But that is something which is outside of enlightened mind. You see?

So that is-it does not mean much, you know, to say about something which is just an object of enlightened mind. It makes some sense, of course, you know [laughs], and it is projected mind of enlightened mind. So it make sense, but if you think, "This is enlightened mind. I attained enlightenment!" [Said in mocking voice.] [Laughs, laughter] That is, you know-I feel very funny. [Laughs, laughter.] Do you understand?

So try not to say anything about enlightenment. Just practice zazen. You know, before you say something there is real enlightenment within yourself-on the side of yourself, not there.

Student: It seems from what you were saying that Buddhism-the

dharmas and the sutras and all the temples that don't have any necessary relationship to zazen-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student: Can you explain why a-why Buddhism and not only zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. It is, you know-first of all, you know, in-in China-in India, I don't know, you know. I haven't studied Indian philosophy so much. But scholar says in India they would sit mostly outside of the building in, you know, on the stone or under the tree. At that time they must have had a very good place to sit, and for Indian people that kind of place was best place for sitting, maybe.

But in China, they started to sit in-some other sit in building. And "then" we say, but at that time, maybe most Buddhists were in some sense Zen student because they sit. And after more people interested in Zen pract- [partial word]-this kind of practice, to sit, they started to have some-own their own building, you know, where they sit. And more and more, they had Buddha hall, lecture hall, you know, as they had more people to sit-who sit. In this way, you know, Zen-present Zen, you know, school was developed. There was some necessity, you know, so they-we had various, you know, buildings and meditation room.

But it does not mean without Buddha hall we cannot sit, you know. [Sentence finished. Gap in tape of 23 sec.] ... like having big zendo, Buddha hall, beautiful gate, you know. But I think that is not always necessary, and always necessary be in that way, you know. So I think we must think [about] this point more. Is that okay? [Laughs.] Did I-

Student: Specifically about the philosophy and the sutras and the chanting-the religion of Buddhism. Wondering-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, chanting-

Student: -why that seemed to be necessary. What was the-the whole-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Chanting is, you know-I explain it, you know, this way, I think. Chanting will make your practice deeper, you know. And the feeling [of] chanting or scripture makes your practice purer. In this way, you know, back and forth, we will have a deeper practice. So in this sense, chanting is necessary. So in China, they would chant, you know-some great Zen master would write some beautiful poem, you know, about their state of mind or understanding of teaching. And they would chant it, you know, while they're working. So we-we have a style, you know, chanting sutra in walking [?]. In Japan, still we do it, you know, in Buddha hall with scripture in our hand we, you know, chant sutra, in walking [?]. That is, I think, very helpful too.

Student: Are there any differences between the way you practice Zen in



the United States and the way you practice in Japan?

Suzuki-roshi: Zazen practice is same, you know. I don't feel, you know, not much difference, you know. Wherever I go, I feel as if I am in Japan [laughs, laughter]. Yeah. So it rather difficult to answer your question. You know, "American people, Japanese people," we say. But if we start to practice zazen, nearly the same. We have same problem [laughs, laughter].

Student: Is satori the same thing as attaining nirvana?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Some scholar, you know, wrote pretty big essay about it. But, you know, satori is more-nirvana-satori is more positive way of, you know, expressing nirvana. Nirvana is more negative way of expressing satori. Actually same thing, you know [laughs, laughter].

Student: Are there-are there numerous satoris that you can have on the way to having what I guess would be the final one?

Suzuki-roshi: Nirvana? Excuse me. I have to say, you know, nirvana or satori is not something which we, you know, strive for or attain. It is something which will come to you, or you may say which you have [hits chest five times], you know, within yourself-I cannot say "within" or "without," but which is originally there. You feel as if you found out something because before you-your mind was not able to see it or experience it because of the rubbishes we have in our mind.

So when you-your mind is clear, and when your mind is-when we say "clear," it means that to get rid of many things or, you know, anger or ignorance. Ignorance is some disturbance, you know, for the mind to see things as it is. Or anger, you know. Or greed, you know. Expect too much of something-which will end up in discouragement [laughs], you know, because you cannot, you know-your desire is too much, so accordingly you find yourself in discouragement.

When you have it, you know, when you feel you have it, "Oh. This is not what I want [laughs, laughter]-not what I wanted." This kind of thing is greed, you know. Not-it doesn't mean our instinct, but something more than homemade, you know, desire. Not actual desire: actual desire plus something-that something which is added on pure desire, you know, or our instinct will be change into, you know, constant, you know, desire to improve ourself. Here is reality. And here is something added, you know. This is a kind of impulse to drive this one, you know. And if this driver is not good, you know, drive you-drive this one to wrong direction, you know. This one will be lost. So driver should be a good driver who knows where this one is going. So if driver is good, you know, our instinct will be developed into right direction. And if he is not good, you know, he will be lost. That driver is the desire, we say, when he is foolish-he-when he is not good one.

Ah, what am I talking about [laughs, laughter]? Yeah.

So nirvana, you know, is-if we understand in this way, you know, that is more like enlightenment. When we have good driver, that is, you know, enlightenment. But when we say you are not so good driver, you know, then that is more like nirvana after, you know, getting rid of, you know, bad driver. That, you know-to get right driver we should dismiss the wrong one. So to dismiss various evil-not "evil," but various wrong activity or desire is after getting rid of those things and make this one goes in right direction is maybe, in this sense, we call it nirvana.

Oh. Oh, thank you very much [laughs].

a

[Recording was stopped for an unknown period of time. It resumed as Suzuki-roshi is giving instructions for chanting. He is heard in the background, apparently talking to the class.]

Suzuki-roshi: So let me have one of your-

Student: Here. We've got a sutra card, Roshi.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student: Do you want a sutra card? It's easier for you to hold.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Hall is this way. This is just-

Student: Just a second, Roshi, because they're just all standing up now, and-

Suzuki-roshi: Okay. May-may I stand up here? [Laughter. May have stood on top of a table or chair.] This way, please.

Two fingers-yes. And support your books by-

Student: Excuse me [said to quiet the group].

Suzuki-roshi: -like this. Anyway. Have your feeling or strength here, in your tummy, and stand up like this. And chant sutra. Not like this. With your strength in your tummy we will chant sutra. Okay?

[S.R. gives individual instruction to one or more students. Then all chant Heart Sutra until end of tape.]

---

Source: City Center original tape transcribed by Dana Velden 4/10/00.

Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 8/15/00.

[1] Nyogen Senzaki (1876-1958). One of the first Zen teachers to establish residence in America. He came to San Francisco in 1905, creating a "floating zendo" there in 1922. He moved to Los Angeles in 1931, where he led the Mentorgarten Meditation Hall in his apartment at the Miyako Hotel.

[2] Possibilities include Buddhism and Zen (1953), Ten Bulls of Zen (n.d., but no later than 1956), The Iron Flute (1961), or Zen Flesh, Zen Bones (with Paul Reps, 1957).

[3] Rindo Fujimoto, The Way of Zen. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge Buddhist Association, Inc., 1972. First published in Japan in 1961.

## **2 - Letters from Emptiness**

Sunday, March 08, 1970

"Letters from Emptiness"

How to Understand the Idea of Emptiness

San Francisco

[Recently my thought is concentrated on the idea of emptiness.][1] Whatever I say, I am actually talking about what is emptiness, because this emptiness is something which we must understand literally and completely through experience. But if it is difficult to experience it through experience, you can tentatively understand it as a kind of idea in comparison to your way of thinking or in comparison to the idea you have, [the] various idea you have.

And we classify our idea in two: one is idea of emptiness, another is idea of being. And when we say, usually, idea it is idea of being. And the idea of-your way of thinking belongs to the idea of being, and idea of emptiness makes a pair of opposite with your idea you-ideas you have. So whatever the idea may be, you can say those idea is idea of being. So we should know that.

Besides the ideas about things you have, there is another-another ideas which is not same as-same-which is not same idea you have and which is not brought about in your concept. Actually that is why we practice zazen, you know. You cannot reach the idea of emptiness with your thinking mind or with your feeling as an conception. And to practice-to actualize the emptiness is shikantaza.

This morning I want to point-I want to point out some points in our usual understanding what kind of mistake there is and how different idea Buddhists have. We say emptiness is-in Japanese or Chinese is ku.

[2] Ku is, of course, a noun, and it is-sometime we use it as a verb,

kuzuru. Kuzuru means-is verb and maybe-so you can say "empty"-you can use words "empty" in two ways. One is noun and the other is verb. "To empty." To empty is-to empty a cup is to empty, you know, maybe.

But when we say "empty a cup" or "empty water" does not mean to drink it up [laughs]. It means that keeping the water in it, and still we do not think there is water. That is to empty the water. When we have no idea of water, even though we see it, that is to empty a cup.

So to empty everything means to have no idea of anything, or to go back to the situation where no idea of anything arise. We may, you know, think of some koans-to hear a bird before bird sing, or-this is also difficult word: shosoku.[3] Shosoku means some [laughs]-it is also still difficult-I don't know how to express it. Shosoku, you know-when you receive a letter from your, you know, from your home, that is shosoku, you know. Receive a letter, receiving a letter, and to know something about your home is shosoku: what are they doing [laughs] now, or what kind of flower they have now, what kind of things they are involved in. That is shosoku, you know, to-without any actual, you know, actual picture of it, to know something about it is shosoku. So, you know, we have no letter from the world of emptiness [laughs, laughter]. We have no letter, but to know, you know, what is going on in the world of emptiness [laughs], that is shosoku.

To communicate with the world of emptiness is to, you know-that is maybe enlightenment, you know. When you see the plum flower, or when you hear the sound of bamboo which hit by a small stone, and, you know, that is a letter from the world of emptiness. And to know [laughs], you know, the world of emptiness through this sign is, you know, shosoku. So it is not actual written communication, but it is something, you know, some hint or some suggestion. Through this kind of suggestion to know what is going on in the world of emptiness is maybe so-called-it enlightenment.

There is this kind of world, you know, besides the world which we can describe. Originally, all the description of reality is limited-should be limited expression of the world of emptiness, but we are so attached to the description, you know, and we think this is the reality. There there is some mistake, because what is described is not the actual reality. And when you think this is reality, there is your own idea involved in it. There, you know, there is some idea of self. Idea of self is involved in it when you say "this is it"-that this is a description and this-some description is it when you say so, already your idea is involved in it.

When Buddhist study was not completed, many Buddhists, you know, made this kind of mistake. That is why they attach to the written scriptures or Buddha's words. And they thought this is the most valuable thing and the way to preserve the teaching is to remember what Buddha said.

But actually what Buddha said was the letter, you know, from the world of emptiness. So letter is just suggestion, you know, or some, you know, help to think of his home. But if you read-if someone else read it-some other person read it, it doesn't make any sense, you know. That is-that is the nature of Buddha's words. How to read-or if you want to read a letter from the Buddha's world, it is necessary to be ready for understanding what is Buddha's world. So to understand Buddha's-what is Buddha's world, it is necessary not to rely on usual thinking mind.

And I have to go back to the verb "to empty." "To empty" means without relying on the form or color of being, to have direct, pure experience of it is kuzuru or to empty. To-what should be empty is our preconceived idea, or our idea of being, or our idea of big or small, round or square. This kind of, you know, round or square, or big or small is not reality, you know. It doesn't belong to the reality. Round or square or long or short is some idea.

The idea is when we analyze our experience. When we analyze our experience, you know, this kind of time or space or big and short or heavy and light-this kind of, you know, scale is necessary. And with those scale in your mind, you actually, you know, experience things. But thing itself is-has no scale or no weight. It is something, you know, we add to the things-reality. So the idea is analyzed-when you analyze your experience, there is, you know, idea of time and space. And because we use this kind of a scale always, you know, and we depend on the scale so much that we think this kind of scale is, you know, exist, but [laughs] it doesn't exist. It is, you know-if it exist, it should exist with things, with being. Things itself is mother of the scale in itself. Actually it is so. Or you may say, you know, scale is mother of being, you know. Both is true. If both is true, then scale and being is one being. It is actually one thing, you know, one reality. One reality could be analyzed as some entity, some substance, and the idea we have-the sense of big or small.

So this kind of-when we have idealize something, when we conceptualize something, it is already, you can-it is already dead experience. It is not actual experience. And why we, you know, why we empty things-being-what we empty is not actual reality, but the idea of big or small, or good or bad. This part should be empty because it is some measurement we have. And that measurement [is] usually based on-usually used in a selfish way. When we say "good" or "bad," you know, scale is in yourself. That scale is not always same. According to the person, the scale is different.

So there is-I don't say that is always wrong, but mostly we are liable to use our selfish scale when we analyze-when we idealize something, when we have idea of something. That part should be emptied. We must empty this part. How we empty this part is to practice zazen, and we-we should be more got accustomed to accept things as it is without any idea of big or small, good or bad.

If some artist or some writer to, you know, actualize something or to actualize his, you know, experience, it isn't-they may use-they may write something, they may paint, but if his, you know, experience is very strong and pure, you know, he will give up [laughs] description. "Oh." [Laughs.] "Oh my." That's all. [Laughs.] He-he will give up, because his, you know, experience is so pure and so realistic that-realistic I don't know [laughs] this words is correct or not-so actual that he sh- [partial word]-he have to give up: "Oh no-no-no-no." [Laughs.]

You know, I like to make some, you know, miniature garden, you know, in-around my house, but if-if I go, you know, to the stream and seeing wonderful rocks and water running, I give up [laughs, laughter]. "Oh no!" [Laughs, laughter.] "I shall never try to," you know, "make rockgarden." When my friend who was a gardener, you know-he is very much proud of his, you know, art. And when he came to Tassajara, he said: "I shall never [laughs] work on rock garden" he said. "It is much better to clean Tassajara stream, you know, picking up if there is some paper-picking up paper and cigarette. That is much better. I shall never work on ..." [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

[Japanese garden." That is very true.][4] We copy nature, you know, in the small area. That is maybe Japanese garden, but in nature there is, you know, actual beauty which is beyond beauty. If you-because you see a part of it, you may think this rock should be, you know, moved this way [laughs], and this rock should be moved that way. Then it will be a complete garden, you may say. But if you see from the distance, you know, and if you see more wider area, you know, without moving anything, that is complete garden.

Because you, you know, limit the actual reality with small self, there is "good garden" or "bad garden," and you should change some stones. But if you see the things itself as it is with wider mind, with wider view, there is no need to do anything.

So things itself is emptiness, actually. But because you add some, you know, something to it, it-it doesn't-actually you spoil the actual reality. So if we don't spoil anything, that is to empty things. So if you sit-when you sit in shikantaza, we say don't [be] disturbed by sound, don't operate your thinking mind. It means that don't rely on any sense organs or thinking mind and just, you know, receive the letter from the world of emptiness. That is shikantaza.

So to empty-usually when we deny something, we, at the same time, we-we replace some-something else, you know. That I deny, you know, a blue cup means I want-that I want white cup. That is [laughs] usually what is happening. When you discuss something, when you argue, you know, that you deny someone's opinion means [laughs] to force your opinion to others. That is usually what we are doing, but in-our way is not like that, you know. We just correct the, you know, some added,

you know, element in your observation of things, and-and we purify this kind of selfish idea. To see, to accept things as it is is our way. So we d- [partial word]-there is no need to replace, you know, something.

So to deny is to make it clear and to make it more actual. That is what we mean by empty things. If we empty things and let things be as it is, then things will work. Originally things are related, and things are originally one. So as one being, it will extend itself. So how let things extend itself is, you know, why we empty things.

This kind of practice is missing in our religious practice. So religion naturally will become like a sometime opium, you know, because of lack of this kind of practice. If we have this kind of practice without any idea of religion we have religion. So to purify our experience and to observe things as it is, is to have-to understand the world of emptiness and to understand why Buddha left so many teaching for us.

So naturally in our practice, in our shikantaza, we do not seek for anything because when we seek for something there, there is, you know, our idea of self. Our idea of self is involved in our practice. So that practice is-will not work to purify our experience, to purify our life. So how, you know, we get rid of this kind of tendency is the point we make effort.

When we say "to make our effort," you know, means to push, you know, the idea of self to achieve something. That is [laughs], you know, actually what you are doing when you make some effort, but we make our effort to get rid of this kind of self-centered effort or self-centered activity.

You know, for an instance, you know, if you are writing-reading something, someone may say-your wife or husband [laughs] may say-may say something to you: "Why don't you have a cup of tea?" [Laughs.] You may say, "Oh, I am busy! [Laughing.] Be quiet!" That is not-when you are, you know, reading in that way, I think you should be careful [laughs, laughter]. You should be ready to say, "Yes, that may be wonderful. Give me a cup of tea." And having a cup of tea or stop reading, and after having a cup of tea you should continue your reading.

That kind of attitude is more like our attitude. "Now I am very busy!" [Laughs.] I shouldn't say so, you know, but I always say, "I am busy now. Right now I am busy." [Laughs.] That is not so good, because my mind is not actually in full function. A part of my mind is working hard, but the other part is-may not be working so hard. Anyway, I may be losing balance in my activity.

If it is reading, it is o- [partial word]-it may be okay, but if you are, you know, making calligraphy, you know [laughs]-calligraphy, you know, express yourself, you know, completely. If your mind is not in a state of emptiness, you know, your work tell you, "I am [laughs] not in state of

emptiness." So you should stop. If you are a Zen student, you should be ashamed of making [laughs] such calligraphy. As a Zen student, you know, calligraphy-to make calligraphy is to practice zazen actually [laughs]. Your practice should be there. So when you are working on calligraphy, if someone say, "Please have a cup of tea." "No, I am making calligraphy!" [Laughs, laughter.] Then your calligraphy will say, "No! No! No!" [Laughs, laughter.] You cannot, you know, fool yourself [laughs]. That is our practice, you know.

I think you must understand-you may-you might understand what we are trying here in Zen Center. Sometime it may be all right to practice zazen as-as a kind of exercise [laughs] or training, you know, to make your practice stronger or to make your breathing smooth-smooth and natural. That is, maybe, a part of practice, but when we say shikantaza, you know, our practice is not that kind of practice. So we put more-we put more emphasis on this point. Only when you have this point, various practice will work.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (10/2/00).

[1] The text in brackets is not on tape. It was apparently added by the original transcriber.

[2] Sanskrit shunyata.

[3] shosoku (Jap.): (1) state of affairs; (2) news, correspondence, letters.

[4] The text in brackets is not on tape. It was apparently added by the original transcriber.

### **3 - Our Everyday Life is Like a Movie**

Sunday, March 15, 1970

Our Everyday Life is Like a Movie  
San Francisco

I think most of you are rather curious about what is Zen. But Zen is actually our way of life, and zazen practice is actually as-like as you set your watch-alarm, maybe. Unless you set your alarm, alarm clock will not serve the purpose.

So it is necessary for us to start our activity from some standpoint-to



some ground or we must have-every day we must have starting point. Where to start is most important thing. The sun arise at certain time and setting at certain time. And the sun, you know, always repeats same thing. And we do too [laughs, laughter]. But we do not feel in that way, you know. We-our life is not so organized, and we don't know even how important it is to-where to know where to start our life. Zen student start our life from zazen practice. We come back to zero and start from zero. We have various activity, and how our activity arise from zero is most important thing to know, to feel, or to realize.

Usually, I think, most people practice zazen to attain something, to achieve something. But more important thing is to start, you know, to start our everyday activity-to know where to start to everyday activity and to know how to practice zazen. When we-before actually you practice zazen, you know, or at the moment you decided to sit, it means that you, you know, already started to set your alarm. And when you have that kind of confidence or you have made that kind of decision and start to zazen, that is zero.

And during zazen, sometime, you will hear the bird singing. That is something arise in your practice. In the same way, in our everyday life, many things will arise. But if you know where, you know-if you know where things-from where those things happens, you will not be disturbed by it. Because [laughs] you don't know, you know, how it happen, you lose your confidence in your life. You know, if you-if you know how things happens to you-"Oh!"-you know. And the moment something happens you will be ready for that: "Oh, something arising"- [laughs]-and as if your-like you watch-watch the sunrise: "Oh, the sun is just coming up."

You know, anger, for an instance-sometime you will be angry. But anger actually doesn't come all of a sudden. It comes, you know, very slowly [laughs] actually, but when you feel it comes all of sudden. That is real anger. But when you know [laughing] how it comes-"Oh! Anger is coming-anger is arising in my mind"-that is not anger. May be anger. People may say he is angry, but actually he is not angry. If you know, you know, you are almost started to crying-"Oh, I am crying next minute, two minutes, three minutes" [laughs]-"Oh, I started crying"- that is not crying.

If you know what is zazen, you know, what is the practice, you will accept things as you accept various images in your sitting zazen. So in our zazen the most important thing is to have big mind and to accept things in your practice. And even try not to, you know, observe things how it happens to your mind.

If you practice zazen to attain some stage or enlightenment, that zazen-like-the man who practice that kind of zazen is-will be the same as a man who is, you know, using alarm without setting it. It will go anyway [laughs], you know, go and go and go, until you-until it comes to-to

some, you know, its end. It will go anyway [laughs], but, you know, it doesn't make much sense.

When you sit every morning it makes sense. You know what time it is. To know what time it is is the most important thing for us in our everyday life. To know what you are doing is the most important thing. What kind of effort you are doing and what kind of situation you are now-that is the most important thing.

Our everyday life is like a movie, you know, which is going on wide screen, you know [laughs]. But most people may be interested in screen-picture on the screen without realizing there is a screen [laughs, laughter]. So, you know, when, you know, you don't see anymore, you don't-when the movie stops, you will be, you know- when the movie stops, before it come to end maybe [you may say], "I must come again tomorrow evening" [laughs]. "I will come and see it." And in that way, what you see is, you know, just, you know-what you are interested in is the movie on the screen. And because you think it, it stops. You have, you know, some-sometime you expect something for tomorrow or if-or you will be discouraged because you don't know the screen. But if you realize-if there is a screen, because there is screen in the movie theater- anyway-someone come and show you some more picture. So, you know, the most-most important thing is to have screen in your mind [taps on something repeatedly], and that screen should be white.

The scr- [partial word]-if the screen is colorful [laughs], you know, colorful enough to attract people [laughs, laughter], screen will not, you know, serve for the purpose. But most important thing is to have screen and to have-not colorful-to have plain screen, white-pure white screen. That is the most important thing. But most people are not interested in pure white screen [laughs, laughter]. It is, I think, good thing to be excited by seeing movie. It is good, you know. But why you can enjoy the movie is, you know, to some extent you know that is movie. That is not actual, you know-actually that kind of thing is not going.

So you have, you know-even though you have no idea of screen, but you have-your interest is based on, you know, some understanding of screen or machine. And you know that is something artificial. So you can enjoy it. You can enjoy something which you should enjoy, not more than that. That is how we enjoy our life. If you have no idea of screen or machine, you know, perhaps you cannot see the movie. You will do-always do like this [laughs, laughter] [gestures: probably hiding face]. "Oh no, no, no!"

So zazen practice is, you know, necessary to know what is-what kind of screen you have and to-to enjoy our life as if you enjoy the movie in theater. How can you do it [is] because you have screen here [taps three times]. And you are not afraid of screen [laughs], or you don't, you know, or you do not have any particular feeling for the screen-just-that is just a white, you know, screen, that's all. So you are not afraid of

your life at all, but, you know, you enjoy something to be afraid of [laughs]. You enjoy something, you know, which makes you angry, which-or which makes you cry. And you enjoy cry and anger too.

But if you have no idea of screen, you know, even you will be afraid of even enlightenment. "What is it? Oh, my!" [Laughs, laughter.] If someone attained enlightenment, you know, you may ask him what kind of experience you had when you had enlightenment. "Enlightenment is this kind of experience." "Oh, no! [Laughs.] That is not for me," you may say.

But that is just movie, you know, something which you should enjoy. But if you want to enjoy the movie, you should know that is the combination of, you know, film and light and white screen. And most important thing is to have plain white screen. That is actually not something which you should attain, but which you have always. But why you don't have it-you don't feel you don't have it is your mind is too busy, too busy to see, to realize it.

So once in a while, you know, you should stop all of your activity and you should make your white screen-you make yourself sure that you have white screen. That is, you know, zazen. So that is not something to attain, but something [laughs] you must find out by practice. That is, you know, foundation of all our everyday life and foundation of all our meditation practice. Without this kind of foundation, you know, your practice will not work. All the instructions you will-you have in our practice is to have a clean white screen as much as you can. Always, you know, it is not pure white because of various attachment to it, because of some stain previous made-previously made for it.

We say to practice zazen is just to-just-when we practice zazen we are like a baby in her mother's bosom [laughs]. That is, you know, our zazen. You have no idea of anything. You are quite relaxed, but, you know, is difficult to have complete relaxation in your usual posture. That is why we take some certain posture.

This kind of instruction is necessary, and this kind of instruction is the result of various experiences of many and many people in past. And they, you know, found out this is much better than the other posture, than standing up or lying down. So according to some-under some instruction with this kind of understanding, if you practice zazen, it will work. Whatever practice it may be, it will work. But if you do not have, or if you do not trust your own pure white paper, you cannot, you know, practice. Your practice will not work.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.

Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/29/99).

#### **4 - March Sesshin: Way-Seeking Mind**

Saturday, March 28, 1970

March Sesshin: Way-Seeking Mind  
San Francisco

[First 1-2 sentences of lecture may be missing.] Way-seeking mind is the most important. This kind of chance is-usually in some difficult situation-when you have some difficulty in your everyday life, I think you will have, you know-there you will have chance to arise way-seeking mind. Once you arise the way-seeking mind, your practice is on the track.

Watanabe-Watanabe Genshu-zenji,[1] who passed away several years ago, arise way-seeking mind when famous Arai-zenji "[\\_ftnref2](#)" title="">[2] came to his temple. He [Watanabe] was-he was a chest-maker or what do you call?-he was making, you know-he is-he is not a carpenter-was not a carpenter, but he was-hmm?-[comments from students]-oh, cabinetmaker. He was cabinetmaker. And he-when he went to his temple, you know, to hear Arai-zenji's lecture or to-to see him, maybe [laughs], to see the zenji-famous zenji, he arosed way-seeking mind. And he made up his mind to follow him, and asked his family to let him go. And he joined Arai-zenji's order.

He [Watanabe] had-when he was young, he had a very difficult time at his home always. But he didn't complain about it. He rather enjoy his-to make cabinets. But Arai-zenji was so great Zen master that he, you know, made up his mind to follow him. And so, you know, he doesn't forget his-his life in his-when he was young.

When he became archbishop of Soji-ji temple, he still had a big saw, you know, and tools on tokonoma.[3] And he-he didn't forget, you know, his difficult time when he was young. And he was very grateful for, you know, having difficulties in his early days. Because, you know-because of that he could join the order, and study our way, and practice zazen until he become archbishop of Soji-ji temple. He was unique archbishop.

Of course, when he became Arai-zenji's disciple he went-he has some more schooling. He graduate a college called Toyo Daigaku,[4] but that was maybe-I don't know exactly when, but maybe when he was pretty old.

The most Zen masters, you know-great Zen masters are the monks who had difficult time in his early life. In Meiji period, or, yeah, late Meiji period, our most famous zenji-Zen master is-are Nishiari-zenji[5] and Morita-Morita-zenji, Morita Goyu.[6] Nishiari-zenji became a archbishop

of Soji-ji Temple. Morita-zenji became a-became archbishop of Eihei-ji temple. They were the monks who had very difficult time when they were young.

Morita-zenji joined-or went to Eihei-ji Monastery to practice when he was very young. And his-when he was leaving his temple, his father was very ill, but knowing that his boy-he cannot take care of his boy, he persuaded his boy to go to Eihei-ji monastery. As you know, Eihei-ji-life in Eihei-ji Monastery is not so easy, especially for a little boy maybe thirteen or fourteen. His father must be a very good-must have been very good teacher to know how important it is to continue his practice. But he had not much money for the boy, so only way is to send him to Eihei-ji Monastery. When he was going, he said:

The first duty you will have at Eihei-ji Monastery will be to, you know, collect rubbishes or garbage, and to-or to hit, you know, big bell. You-you should know to collect garbage is the most important duty in the monastery. The older students will sweep the garden and collect the leaves and garbages at certain time-certain place. So young priest or monks should, you know, collect it.

We are told, you know, that even though you sweep the garden, if you don't, you know, collect the garbage in-or take it to the garbage can, you know-in Japan we had no garbage can but we had some place to burn the papers and-or leaves. If we don't take it to the place-to some certain place, you did, you know, half job, not complete job. Fifty percent [laughs]. Another fifty percent is to take it to the place where they burn it. So his father told them-told him to-"If you take the garbage to some certain place, you-that means you-you are doing half of the work, even though you are just one or three people. If you do it, you are doing half of the work, and many-rest of the monks with many heads [laughs] and hands will do half of it. So you must be proud of your duty," he said to him.

"And to hit a bell means to hit-to, you know-to give a birth to Buddha. So each time you hit the bell, you know, Buddha will appear. So when you, you know, at Eihei-ji-if you go to Eihei-ji you should-monks bow each time they hit big bell. So with that spirit you should hit the bell."

And he give him-give the boy various instructions like that. And knowing-without knowing his father was almost dying, he went to Eihei-ji monastery and he started monastic life. The first morning, he hit the great bell, Ekido-zenji,[7] who was at that time the abbot of-or archbishop of Eihei-ji monastery, asked his jisha find out who hit the bell this morning.

I don't know how old Ekido-zenji was at that time. Maybe he was more than 80.[8] Maybe almost 90. And he was sitting in his room and hearing the b- [partial word]-unusual bell, he asked his jisha to find out who it was. And there came the small boy. Ekido-zenji rather amazed to

see such a small boy. He thought some good well-trained monk will appear [laughs], but small boy appear.

So he wondered how he could hit such a-hit a nice good sound, so he asked him, you know, the boy-how did you hit it, and with what kind of, you know, feeling did he hit the bell? And he told him, "To hit one bell means to give a birth to a buddha. That was what my father told me when I was leaving my home for Eihei-ji monastery." Of course, Eikido-zenji was very much impressed by the boy, and he took care of-he took good care of the boy until he become a famous Zen master.

Nishiari-zenji is famous for his study of Shobogenzo, and Morita-zenji is very famous for his zazen practice. There are many stories about his zazen practice. For an instance, when he was crossing the narrow[s] between Hokkaido and Honshu Island, they met a big tornado or typhoon. The ship was almost wrecked. All the seamen, all the passengers, and even seamen including the, you know, captain of the boat was-became seasick, but Morita-zenji in the corner of the room was sitting zazen [laughs, laughter]. He didn't become seasick, and the captain was very much amazed, you know, to see him. And he could eat, you know, and after eating he went to his cabin-and practicing zazen [laughs]. Since then, captain became a very good, you know, student of Morita-zenji [laughs]. But all those-wonderful practice is a result of his difficult practice in his early age at Eihei-ji Monastery.

Our life in monastery, you know, is very simple and monotonous, you know. We are repeating same thing [laughing] every day, over and over. There is nothing to enjoy. So sometime we do something very foolish, you know, to enjoy-how foolish we are! If we find ourselves very foolish, you know, we, you know, we enjoy [laughs] our foolishness, to, you know-to eat radish, you know, without cooking [laughs, laughter]. Just, you know, when we are carrying radish, you know, without washing, without even washing. Bring out the radish and scratch the dirt out [laughs, laughter]. Sometime that is not interesting enough for us [laughs, laughter], so late at night when there are, you know, when they are fast asleep, you know, we, you know, cook it by bucket or something [laughing] outside of the monastery. But once you cook radish, smell is awful! Whole monastery will, you know, [be] filled with the smell of the radish.

Of course, we know, you know, we will be easily found out, but, you know, to do it is most important part. And if we are scolded that is another, you know [laughing]-something, you know-we have something more. They may scold us. "Okay, let's do it!" [Said in a mock conspiratorial voice.] [Laughs.]

Our life in the monastery is so simple and so monotonous, we cannot work fast, you know. We should always work slowly without making noise. We cannot talk loudly. If you enter someone's room, the head of the room will see your-you from your feet to your-up to your head

[laughs]. He will check you, you know. If you have some reason it is very difficult to stay. Maybe recently, you know, their masters want-want them to be a priest-good priest. So even though they don't want-they themselves don't want to stay at Eihei-ji, because their teacher, you know, or their master want them to stay at Eihei-ji, so that is maybe why they stay there for one year or so. But no more-not more than that [laughs]. Most people feel in that way.

So I think we have so many students here, but I don't know how many of you will stay with-with us. I don't know how many. If you have good reason to stay here, you will stay. But if you haven't not much reason, I don't know. What I am saying right now is when you have-when you want to be a Buddhist, it is necessary for you to see your-our everyday life more carefully. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

This-this is something-we say ordinary life but it is not ordinary life. It is very, you know, very dangerous and precarious life. We cannot trust people in city so much. Nothing is permanent or reliable in our society. If so, you know, someone should be-should become reliable person, you know-trustworthy person. Or else, you know, whole society will be lost. If it is-if it is hot, when it is hot we need big tree under which we have cool wind. When it rain, we need someone who has umbrella. When you see our human life carefully, you will find out how important it is to become trustworthy person. It is not necessary to be a great man, but we should be good enough to help our neighbors.

So purpose of Buddhism, we say, [is] to help themselves and to help others. Why it is so is-it is actually our neighbor wants some help in some way. I said to carry-to collect the garbage to the garbage can is half of the job, whole job, you know, but we are liable to, you know,

ignore to carry the garbage to the garbage can. We are liable to ignore something which is some duty which is dirty, which is not pleasant. We are liable to ignore cleaning the corner of the room. If everyone ignore to clean the corners of the room, the room will be filthy pretty soon. Because someone do it, our room is always clean, and we feel very good in a clean room. There is many, you know, liable to [laughs] tend to in our human life, you know, we are liable to do this, to be like this, to be like that. Many liable to [laughs]. Many apt to. Someone must work hard so that we-all of us can enjoy our life.

Maybe our zazen practice is the practice which most people do not like so much [laughs]. We shouldn't try to attain even enlightenment. You should be there on the black cushion for two days [laughing] without any reason why. There is no "liable to." Just to be there, that is why you practice zazen. When you can do this kind of practice-if you can do shikantaza without expecting anything, I think you can do almost everything which is necessary.

With this spirit-when you have this spirit, you will attain enlightenment,

but without this spirit the enlightenment you will have is one of the "liable to." [Laughs.] You will expose your weakness, that's all. There is no true, you know, human nature appear. What you will have is just, you know, false-superficial attainment which is not true.

So final strength will be attained by just sitting. After experiencing-started-starting from various difficulties, the difficulties we have is not actually difficult enough. Just to sit on the cushion is the most difficult thing, as you experience [laughs]. I think you know how difficult it is just to sit on the black cushion. Without true spirit you cannot do that.

So if you, you know, have a chance to arise real way-seeking mind, we should start shikantaza. So for people who has no way-seeking mind, who want some encouragement, who want some candy, we have to give some candy [laughs]. But it is, you know-we should be ashamed of being fooled by candy, you know. Our world is not so easy, you know, and we are foolish enough to be fooled by candy. We are critical with others, and mostly with ourselves very critical. We cannot accept ourselves so easily. That is why we practice zazen.

This time I started some-I started dokusan, but maybe, you know, better to be concentrated on just practice of zazen. Anyway I don't think I can finish dokusan for all the students in two days, so I almost gave up! [Laughs.] I think it's much better to-to just sit with you.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Watanabe Genshu-zenji (1869-1963): 17th dokuju (successive) abbot of Soji-ji.

[2] Arai Sekizen-zenji (1864-1927): 5th dokuju (successive) abbot of Soji-ji.

[3] tokonoma (Jap.): alcove.

[4] Toyo University, Tokyo.

[5] Nishiari Bokusan (1821-1910): the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo. He was a teacher of Oka Sotan-zenji and Ian Kishizawa-zenji, eventually becoming abbot of Soji-ji Temple and head of the Soto-shu.



[6] Juko Morita Goyu (1834-1915): 64th abbot of Eihei-ji. Called the "Double Founder" because of his work in restoring Eihei-ji.

[7] Morotake (Sengai) Ekido-zenji (1805-1879): 1st dokuju (successive) abbot of Soji-ji. According to Zengaki Daijiten (The Great Dictionary of Zen Studies), Ekido was abbot of Ryukai-in, not Eihei-ji, when Morita Goyu would have been a novice. But Ekido and Goyu may also have studied at Eihei-ji for some period of time.

[8] Ekido died at age 74.

## **5 - Zazen is Like Going to the Restroom**

Sunday, March 29, 1970

Zazen is Like Going to the Restroom  
San Francisco

How do you feel now? [Laughs.] Excuse me. I thought of funny thing right now [laughs]. I feel as if, you know-I don't know how you feel, but I feel as if I-I have finished, you know, things in restroom [laughs]. As I am pretty old, you know, I go to restroom so often. Even when I was young, I went [to] restroom more than, you know [laughs], usual person. I had, I think, some advantage, you know [laughs, laughter], because of that. When I went to tan- [partial word]-Eihei-ji and sit in tangaryo,[1] for seven days [laughs], I could go to restroom without any guilty conscience because I had to [laughs, laughter]. I was so happy [laughs, laughter] to go to restroom. I think someth- [partial word]-to go to restroom is something to do, you know [laughs, laughter], with our practice.

Ummon[2] may be the first one to make some connection between our practice and restroom. "What is our practice?" Or "What is buddha?"- someone asked him.[3] He said, you know, "toilet paper"-no, not toilet paper. Nowadays it is toilet paper, but he says [laughing, laughter], "something to scratch your-scratch yourself after you-after finishing restroom." That is what he said. And since then, you know, many Zen masters [are] thinking about or practicing on that koan: What is toilet paper? [Laughs.] What he meant by it?

Anyway, our practice is closely related to our everyday life.

Physiologically it may be-our-to go to-we go-we have to go to restroom, but psychologically I think we have to practice zazen. In our everyday life, we, you know, eat many things, good and bad: something fancy or something simple, something tasty or something tasteless like water.

But after having this kind of food in our everyday life, in term of study, but actually if you eat, you know, if you study too much without practicing zazen, our thought eventually will become very unhealthy. I think that is, at least, one reason why we practice zazen. It is necessary for us to make our mind blank before we study something. It is like a,

you know, to draw something on white paper. If you-if you don't use clean white paper, you cannot, you know, draw something which you want. Sometime you may use some colored paper, but colored paper, you know, is also originally white paper. So it is necessary for us to go back to our original state where we have no-nothing to see, or nothing to think about. Then you will understand what you are doing, you know.

The more you practice zazen, I think, the more you will be interested in your everyday life. At the same time, you know, you will find out, you know, what is something necessary and what is not necessary-what part should be corrected or what part should be emphasized more. So by practice you will-you can organize your life more-more, and at the same time you will know how to organize your life. For some purpose we organize our life, but more important thing is to observe our situation clearly. And to observe our situation clearly we should blank our mind and to start from original starting point. That is, you know, to go to restroom [laughs]. You know, if you go to restroom and get rid of old-squeeze out [laughs, laughter] all the polluted water, then, you know, you will feel good, you know, and you will be encouraged to drink more [laughs, laughter] and to eat more.

But after you eat it, you know [laughs], you should go to restroom. The all-what you eat will be get rid of by going to restroom or exhalation and-inhaling and exhaling. In this way, you know, actually we keep alive. Because I feel, you know, I must say something right now, I make it, you know-I make my idea, you know, I put some water in my idea so that I can talk [laughing] twenty minutes or thirty minutes or more [laughs, laughter].

But actually, I want you, you know, to feel how you feel after zazen. And, you know, in comparison to your everyday life-how usual person enjoy their life-the way to enjoy our life is completely-may be very different-not completely, but-.

Usually, you know, our culture is based on some gaining idea, you know: to accumulate something. Science, for an instance, is accumulation of our knowledge, you know. Modern science-scientist-I-I don't think is greater than the scientist in the 16th century. But we have-the difference is we accumulated our scientific knowledge. And we human being knows how to accumulate it. That is good point and at the same time eventually there is-we have some danger to bury it, you know-to be buried underneath the accumulated knowledge [laughs, laughter]. And we have some danger, also, you know. Trying to survive without going to restroom. Actually, you know, we almost underneath [laughs, pauses, laughter]-we are hardly swimming in the pond of polluted water and air. We are talking about air pollution, but that is just a picture of human being. Actually we are hardly, you know, survive in polluted knowledge.

So maybe that is okay, you know, if we know-if each one of us know

[how] to go to restroom without, you know, attaching to something you have in your body. If you have it in your body, you will become attached to it until you get rid of it. Because we think things are yours, you know, ours, we become attached to it. If we think we have everything, we will not be attached to it.

Actually, we have everything. Without going to the moon, you know, we have it. To go to-try to go to moon means, you know, we are-we think the moon is not ours. Our mind, as Buddha told us, is with-with everything, or everything is our mind. Within our mind, everything exist. If we understand things in that way, then we will understand our activity. When we understand ourselves, we will try to, you know, exchange our property with something else.

To study something is to appreciate something. To appreciate something is to be detached from things. When we become detached from things, everything will be ours. Our practice is, you know, to obtain this kind of big mind-in other word, to-to go beyond our-each being-each being including ourselves, and let ourselves work as it work. That is zazen practice. And when we practice zazen, we actually clean up various attachment we have.

We are very much afraid of, you know, death. But, you know, death is something which should happen to us when we are mature enough, you know. When you are young, maybe, you will be very much afraid of death. And if you die, that is terrible thing [laughs]. Yeah, it is so, you know. But if I die, it is not so terrible thing to me and to you too, because I am matured enough, you know, to die.

So I understand our life-my life pretty well, and I understood what is human life, you know-what is to live one day, and what is to live one year, and what is to live, you know, sixty years or one hundred years. So you-anyway, when you become mature, experienced things-or when you eat, you know, many things in this life, I think you-you will be happy to die as if you go to restroom [laughs, laughter]. Yeah, actually it happens in that way, you know.

Old man of eighty or ninety, you know, haven't not much, you know, problem-difficulties. Physically, they may suffer, but that suffering is not so big as you see, you know. You know, it is our habit, you know, when we feel uneasy, and from, you know-when they are young, they have been, you know, thinking about death [as] something terrible [laughs], you know, so when they are dying, you know, they think it is terrible. But actually it-it isn't.

And there is some limit in our capacity to endure suffering-physical suffering. And mentally we-we have, you know, limit of capacity, but we think it is limitless. That is, you know, why we under- [partial word]-we have limitless suffering is because we have limitless desire, you know. So that kind of desire, as Buddha said, create our problem. If you

understand our life clearly, actually there is not much problem in our life. Because we do not sit, you know, and we are creating problem, one after another, we are accumulating our problems one after another with limitless desire, so we have fathomless [bottomless?] fear.

So if we only know how to clear up our mind, we will not have so much problem as usual person would have. But as-as you go to restroom every day, you know, we have to practice zazen every day.

If, you know, zazen practice is just for-just to have good feeling in restroom it is all right if you go once [laughs], you know. But, you know, our actual practice or need of practice is much more than that-not to at-[partial word]-not just to attain some freedom from things, but to continue cleaning our mind. That is absolutely necessary.

And in monastic life, the most important thing will be-or the most good practice-the best practice will be to clean restroom. So wherever you go, whatever monastery you may go, you will find out someone-some special person who is cleaning restroom always. We do not, you know, clean our restroom just because it is dirty. Whether it is clean or not, you know, we should clean, you know, restroom until you can continue it-you can do it without any idea of, you know, clean or dirty. If so, that is actually, you know, our zazen practice.

To extend our practice to everyday life is maybe difficult, but actually it is quite simple. It cannot be so difficult, but, you know, as we are lazy, you know, as we don't continue it [laughs], that laziness makes it difficult, that's all. That is why we put emphasis on endurance, or to continue it. We say there should not be any cessation of practice. Practice should go, one after another.

Some student who practice very hard, you know, zazen practice, liable to ignore our everyday life. If someone, you know, attain enlightenment, you know, someone may, you know, ignore our life: "I had attained enlightenment under some great Zen master, so whatever I do, that is okay. [Laughs.] I have complete freedom from good and bad. The only, you know-those who do not have enlightenment experience stick to the idea of good and bad." [Laughs.]

Saying in that way, they ignore their everyday life. They do not take care of their life. They do not how to-they don't know how to organize their life and what kind of rhythms they should have in their own life. Old man has-an old man has, you know, old man's rhythm of life-way of life. Young man has, you know, young ones has their own, you know, way of life. How to know the rhythm of their own life is, you know, to-to understand what they are doing. And if you want to understand what we are doing, it is necessary to see our activity, our life, with clear mind-not m- [partial word]-yeah, mind-or through zazen experience.

Why I came to America was, you know, I was almost, you know,

disgusted [laughs] with Buddhist life in Japan. You know, I have too many problems [laughs]. That is maybe why, you know, I came to America. I didn't know that, but I think perhaps [laughs] that will be the reason-would be the reason why I came to America. But when I was, you know, in Japan, I didn't practice zazen [laughs] as I do here, as a matter of fact [laughs, laughter]. Since I came to America, you know, I have-I don't have same problem, you know, as I had in Japan. But I had very different problem [laughs] which I had in Japan. Hmm. I have no time to explain it [laughs, laughter].

Anyway, you know, my mind is like a garbage can [laughs]. So, you know, even I am in America, which is called free country, you know [laughs], my mind is garbage can-even though I am, you know, I am practicing-practicing zazen with you. I am a Japanese, and I have many Japanese friends there. So I have enough problem which Japanese-most Japanese people have [laughing]. In addition to, I have some other problem.

So sometime I-I, you know, I wonder, you know, what am I doing here, you know. But when I know what I am doing, you know, clearly, without any overestimation or underestimation, very honestly [laughs], truly, I have not much, you know, burden in our mind-especially zazen practice has been [sighs]-I think will be-the great help, you know. If I haven't had practicing zazen, you know, I wouldn't have survive in this way, you know.

Last year I was pretty weak, you know, but I am recovering even little by little. I think that is merit of zazen or because of zazen I think I can survive anyway. And, you know, I have no joy of accumulating anything, you know. But I have joy of getting rid of, you know, something dirty [laughs]. That is, you know, how-why I can survive in this way.

I started my practice when I was pretty young, actually. But the more-actually I think I started my practice in its true sense after I came to San Francisco. I think you have pretty difficult time with me [laughs]. I know that, you know, and I am doing, you know, something-I am making you, you know-making your practice difficult. But this kind of effort to understand things from another angle without communicating [with] the people who-who is brought up [in a] quite different cultural background, I think you will understand things more clearly.

To understand things just, you know, [from] some certain egoistic personal or national viewpoint is our weak point. So we cannot develop our culture in its true sense. When our culture came to this point, only way to-to make our culture healthy is to participate [in the] various cultural activity-cultural activity of various human being. Then you will understand yourself better, as I understood myself better, you know-zazen better since I came to San Francisco.

If you understand yourself better and others better, you know, there is not much to study-just to be yourself. And just to be good American is just to be good Japanese. And just to be good Japanese is just to be, you know, to be good American. Because we stick to [laughs], you know, Japanese way or American way [laughs], our mind become wastepaper basket.

I think that is-if you notice this point, I think how important-you will understand how important it is to practice zazen. Maybe I am forcing you Japanese practice [laughs]. I know, you know, what I am doing [laughs, laughter]. But there is some reason, you know, why I do this. If you are ready, you know ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... to get rid of various dirty things, then there is no need. But fortunately or unfortunately, even though you don't like it, we should go to restroom [laughing]-stinky restroom. I am so sorry [laughs, laughter], but I think we have to go to restroom anyway [laughs] as long as we live.

If I am young, you know, I like to sing a Japanese folk song right now [laughs] about restroom [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (4/4/00).

[1] tangaryo: a period of continuous sitting for several days in the monastery quarters bearing the same name; initial sitting required of a novice to enter a Zen monastery. From tanga, itinerant monk; ryo, quarters.

[2] Yunmen Wenyan (Ummon Bun'en): 864-949. Dharma successor of Xuefeng Yicun (Seppo Gison).

[3] Mumonkan (The Gateless Gate), Case 21.

## **1970 april (3)**

### **1 - Buddha's Birthday Lecture**

Sunday, April 12, 1970

Buddha's Birthday Lecture  
San Francisco

The April-April the eighth is the day we celebrate Buddha's birthday in

China and Japan. As you know, Buddha was born as a prince of Shakya tribe-a king of Shakya tribe. And when he was born in the Lumbini Garden,[1] nagas[2] poured sweet tea. That is why we pour the sweet tea. But actually we don't know the historical origin about this because we have not much record about the sweet tea.

But-but we have record about the festival we have-we had right now. Maybe in Japan they started to mix this kind of tea for the infant Buddha. And in China and in Japan, the infant Buddha statue is very lovely and very tiny. The largest one in Japan is maybe fifteen inches high, which is in Todai-ji Temple, where the big Buddha is.[3] As the Vairochana Buddha in Todai-ji is big, the infant Buddha is also big. But usually infant Buddha for this ceremony is as small as this [gestures?].

In Japan, right n- [partial word]-nowadays we celebrate around eighty-around eighth of April on Sunday. Here in America, Japanese people celebrate his birthday mostly also around eighth on Sunday. The other day when we have meeting, we had, you know, beautiful cake for the birthday, and then some of them celebrated Buddha's birthday right here, singing "Happy Birthday" [laughs, laughter]. I think that is the first, you know, happy birthday song for the Buddha [laughs, laughter]. Many things is happening here! [Laughter.]

Zen group in America, including Zen Center, [are] developing-developing so rapidly. And after, you know, painting the hall and decorating flower shrine, and cleaning up various rooms and hallway, we have this ceremony. This is, I think, very meaningful thing. The flower shrine and altar we have right now is very tentative one-not permanent one. I think this is very meaningful.

The Soto practice is something like this always-something had been-has been something like this. We are trying to improve the way we celebrate Buddha, the way we decorate altar. But if we lose the spirit this is-maybe in this way could be very, you know, awful thing, you know, to just decorate without taking care of things. Like ambulatory [traveling?] actor, you know, goes around various place without not much, you know, artistic sense. But if we practice-continue to practice-like we have been practicing our way in America, something which is very meaningful and beautiful will result.

Celebrating our Zen Center effort, headquarter of Soto School in Japan promised us to give us another maybe \$3000, and they allowed me to wear yellow robe. That is the robe I weared for the first Buddha's birthday in Zen Center. I don't know why, but I-I do not like that kind of, you know, beautiful [laughs]. Some things too beautiful.

But today I felt something quite different feeling. I appreciate their appreciation of our effort to develop Buddha's way, which was-which has been transmitted more than 2500 years. This is the most meaningful thing. In this way, if we make our effort, something will

result in this country. And as the Buddhist-bodhisattva vow is to continue our way forever. If so, Buddha's teaching, something which was told by Buddha, will be developed forever. With this spirit we should celebrate Buddha's birthday, even [though] the way we celebrate is not perfect.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (12/30/99).

[1] The Lumbini Garden or Grove is located near the capital of the Shakya kingdom in present-day Nepal.

[2] naga (San.): literally, serpent or dragon; a benevolent half-divine creature.

[3] One of the Seven Large Temples of the Southern Capital. The Great Buddha, cast in bronze and dedicated in 752, is housed in the Daibutsuden.

## **2 - Officially Opening Beginner's Mind Temple**

Saturday, April 25, 1970

Remarks at the Ceremony Officially Opening Beginner's Mind Temple  
San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally): On this day of the opening of Mahabodhisattva Zendo and main office of Zen Center, we arranged this altar, making offering of fruits and vegetables which were produced in this land of Mahabodhisattva, reciting sutra of Daihi-shin Darani, the Sutra of the Great Compassionate One.

With this merit, we want to express our way-seeking mind with our deceased friend Trudy Dixon, Baiho Sesshin [1 word],[2] and ZenkeiDosakuKoji, Soto Sanjo,[3] and Sister F. Carlson, and all those who helped our activity by the spirit of Buddha or by various kinds of offering.

Hereby, we want to practice bodhisattva way step by step, so that our practice of step by step was paying back the mercy of Buddha and great bodhisattvas in India, China, and Japan.

Hereby, now, I have one statement which has been in my mind for more than ten years: Even on top of the mountain of great merit, we should try not ... [Tape recorder stopped!]



-----  
Source: City Center tape first transcribed verbatim by Katharine Shields (6/19/00). Checked against tape by Bill Redican (9/28/00).

[1] The tape on which this transcript was made was a compilation tape numbered SR-70-08-09. The original tapes appear to be SR-70-04-25A and -B. The original tapes may contain the complete lectures, but they are afflicted with sound problems that must first be remedied.

[2] Two Buddhist names were given to her at her lay ordination in 1967: Baiho Sesshin ("Fragrant Plum, Pure Mind").

[3] Sanjo may mean "delegate" or "visitor": e.g., delegate from the Soto-shu (school) headquarters.

### **3 - How to Have Sincere Practice**

Tuesday, April 28, 1970

How to Have Sincere Practice  
San Francisco

Since Tatsugami-roshi[1] came, you must have heard Dogen-zenji's name so many times. But Dogen-zenji may not like to hear his name so many times [laughs]. But unfortunately he had a name like Dogen, so [laughs] there is no other way to address him. So we call him Dogen-zenji or Dogen.

As you know, he didn't like to say "Zen" even, or Zen-in China they called monks who sit in zazen, called [them] "Zen monks," but he didn't like to call "Zen" even. And he said if necessary you should call us "Buddha's disciple." Shamon, you know, he called himself Shamon Dogen-"A Monk Dogen."

In China, there were many various schools like Rinzai, Soto, Ummon, Hogen, Igyo. But Nyojo-zenji's-Nyojo-zenji,[2] who was Dogen's teacher then, was not, according to Dogen, [from] one of the five schools of Zen or seven[3] schools of Zen. His Zen is just to practice zazen, to realize-to actually realize by his body Buddha's mind, Buddha's spirit. That was his Zen. That was why Dogen accepted him as his teacher.

Before he-Dogen went to China, he studied Hiezan [Onjo-ji?]-Tendai-main temple of Tendai school. And after Tendai, he went to Eisei-Eisai-zenji[4]-Yoshin-ji [Kennin-ji?], and then he went to China because Eisai-zenji passed away when he was very young. So he went to China to continue his practice with good teacher.

He may have-according to Kenzei-ki,[5] he already attained enlightenment under Eisai, but he wanted to continue his practice with right teacher. So he went to China with Myozen, who was also one of the-Eisai's outstanding teacher-no, disciple. But he couldn't accept-although he visited many temples and saw many Zen teachers, but he couldn't accept them as his teacher until he met with Nyojo-zenji. And when he saw Nyojo-zenji, without studying under him, when he saw for the first time, he accepted him, Nyojo-zenji, as his teacher. And Nyojo-zenji also thought, "This is my disciple. This is my disciple who will carry my practice."

And when he was practicing with Nyojo-zenji he attained-he-someone-Nyojo-zenji was scolded someone who was sleeping in his practice. And at that time-the feeling or experience he had at that time was submitted by Dogen to his teacher. And he became a completely-he transmitted-he received the transmission from Nyojo-zenji and came back to Japan.

The first thing we should notice here is Dogen was a monk who wanted to be sincere-one of the sincere good monks of Buddha or disciple-disciple of Buddha. That's all. And he has nothing in his mind when he went to-he saw Nyojo-Eisai-zenji, he already gave up scholarly study of Buddhism which he was-he had been involved in for long long time.

But his problem is how to be a good disciple from the bottom of his heart and mind. So for him to have this spirit it was the most important point. He was so sincere student that he couldn't accept teachers who is not so sincere as he was. Already he gave up scholarly study, so he couldn't accept someone who is talking about Buddhism. Already he experienced what is Zen, so he couldn't accept someone who is just talking about what is Zen. But what he wanted to see is a man who [is] really practicing Zen in its true sense. So when he saw Nyojo-zenji, who is practicing his way, he accepted him as his teacher. And when Nyojo-zenji saw him, he could acknowledge his sincerity-his sincere practice. And-the next question will be what is sincere practice? What is the way-seeking mind?

Perhaps, you know, you want to know what is sincerity in your practice. First of all, when you become very sincere you cannot accept which is superficial. But bef- [partial word]-when you are not so sincere, it is difficult to know what is sincerity, who is sincere student. It is difficult and almost impossible. Only when you become very sincere, you can-you will know what is sincerity.

It is like to know-to appreciate art. You know, when you see-first of all, if you want to appreciate good art, the most important thing is to see the good work. If you, you know, if your eye-if you see a good work always, if you-in case you see something which is not good enough, you will immediately know this is not so good because your eyes is already sharp enough to know what is bad, you know, what is good work. And when you know what is good work, you will know what is bad, you

know-what is not-so-good work.

That is why Dogen-zenji always put emphasis on the teacher. If you want to know what is sincerity, you should have good teacher. Only when you have good teacher you will know-by him you will know-by seeing him you will know who is good teacher-what is good teacher. When you see sincere person, you will know what is sincerity. That is not something which I can describe. That is something you will feel by your intuition. That kind of intuition will be gained by seeing good teachers always.

And next thing which is important is to give up or to be ready to give up everything, including your understanding of teaching or your knowledge about, you know, Buddhism. Most of you may think, you know-may accept some teacher who say-whose knowledge-whose knowledge is understandable-acceptable for you. You will say he is good teacher [laughs], you know.

But the standard is-you cannot judge your teacher by your low, you know, standard. Only when you have well-polished-ups, you know, eyes or standard of judgment, you will understand-you will see-you can tell which is good and which is bad. To have-but as long as you have some standard, that standard may be your own, you know, standard which cannot be perfect.

So best thing is, you know, to give up everything. Many teachers, you know, give up-burned all the sutra they study and practiced zazen only. In that case, he had-he did not rely on anything, but he just practiced zazen to purify his mind. To accept true teaching-teaching can be-any teaching can be your good teaching for you, but because of your foolish judgment, you know, teaching does not make much sense. You-you are spoiling good teaching by your own judgment. But when you have no judgment, and when you see or accept teaching as it is, that is, in other word, good teaching.

What he-what Dogen transmitted from his teacher is this acceptance-giving up everything. Great spirit-to-to be ready to give up everything. Especially when he is practiced zazen, he has nothing in his mind. He was just practicing zazen. That, you know, purity of practice struck [struck?] him.

When you are, you know, trying to give up everything, you don't-you haven't give up everything yet. When you become tired of foolish, you know, discussion or foolish study of, you know, foolish mind-to seek for something which is called truth or true teaching, you will be completely involved in pure practice, giving up everything.

My teacher, Kishizawa Ian, he was a-actually a great scholar. But his study was started after when he give up everything [laughs]. He didn't care for position or fame or, you know, reputation. Whatever people

may say about him he doesn't care. And he continued his study and his practice just to meet some ancient teachers who devoted themselves to the-to our teaching. When we, you know, realize this point, there is no Soto or no Rinzai, you know. Before you give up everything, you have Soto or Rinzai. When you give up everything, there is no Soto or Rinzai.

In Dogen-zenji describing various teachers' ways of practice, among them there are Rinzai teachers, Soto teachers, and some other schools-teachers of many schools. He just, you know, wanted to see him through books. That was also true with my teacher. Whenever he meets some student or some scholar, what he ask is-give me some record you have. Whatever record it may be, he was very much interested in to see it, to read it. He was seeking for his friend always, his teacher always. Whether he is famous or not, it doesn't matter for him. Only when you give up everything, you can see true teacher.

Even name of Buddhism is already dirty spot on our practice. It is not teaching but the stu- [partial word]-but their character or their effort. When you seek for even enlightenment, his mind is not big enough. He is not sincere enough because he, you know-he has some purpose in his study. To, you know-for us I think everyone want to see a great man. That is not, you know-that is not a selfish desire. It is the desire which everyone has. But desire to accomplish something or even to propagate Buddhism is not pure enough. Just to-just to see someone who is holy and great and pure is our purpose of studying Zen or Buddhism. [Gap in tape: Recorder stopped for unknown period and restarted on same side.]

... on what point your teacher could be strict. First of all, when you are lazy [laughs] he will be very angry. If, you know, good, intelligent student, you know, always involved in something which is not pure enough, he may be angry. He is wasting his time.

As much as possible, we should follow our inner voice, rejecting useless things and how-sometime, you know, we will think something is necessary to support yourself. But Dogen says if you study hard-pure-if your practice is pure enough, you will be anyway supported by Buddha. You should[n't] worry who will support you or what will happen to you. You shouldn't worry about this kind of thing. Moment after moment, you should completely devote yourself which you-listening to your inner voice. That is to see someone who is great in its true sense. To see someone who can accept-who you can accept-that is the most important point for Zen student.

So if you cannot accept a teacher as your teacher, you should seek for someone-someone else as your teacher. Without this kind of spirit, it is almost impossible to study our way.

With this spirit, or to polish up our way-seeking mind, we practice zazen, you know. How you practice zazen is, you know, to have right

posture. He s- [partial word]-Tatsugami-roshi said [laughs] very interesting remark, you know, "How about your mudra?" "Hai." [Laughs.] That was very good!

"How about your eyes?" "Hai." [Laughs, laughter.] In short, zazen is, you know, "Hai." That is a [laughter]- "How about your," you know, "spine?" "Hai." [Laughs.] "How about your chin?" "Hai." [Laughs.]

It is, you know-actually you are not checking your posture. You are, you know, just, you know, accepting your posture: "Hai." [Laughs.] That is zazen. There is no more activity in your practice, and that spirit is the greatest of all the spirit you may have [laughs]. Even though, you know, you are like this, you know [probably gesturing], "How is the posture?" [Laughs, laughter.] "How is your breathing?" "Okay" [said in a humorous, laboring voice] [laughs, laughter].

There is no other secret in our practice. If you have something more than that, that is heresy [laughs, laughter]. You have some extra. When you have some extra fancy practice, you know, your practice will not reach to the point. I think everything is-may be the same.

Today I was mending someone's broken cup, you know. If I fix it-Chht- [laughs], that is okay, you know. If I-after fixing it, if I do like this [probably gesturing] [laughing], you will, you know, break it. So the work you do will not be so good. If you-if you just do it [laughs], that is zazen. But usually, you know, you do like this [probably gesturing] [laughs, laughter]. That is extra, you know, and waste of time, and you are spoiling yourself by doing this. "Hai." [Laughs.]

"Don't kill," you know. It is same thing with precepts. "Don't kill," you know. You may s- [partial word]-you may think, "No, I cannot survive [laughs] if I don't kill anything. No, that is not possible." That is you are doing this way [probably gestures]. "Don't kill." "Hai." Whether it is possible, or not is it is out of the question. "Don't kill"-we don't want to kill. So someone-if someone said, "Don't kill," "Mmm. [As in "yes.]" That's right." [Laughs.] "I will not kill." Then you have perfect buddha-nature at that time.

Because you say, you know, "that is not possible," or "impossible," "right" or "wrong," and because you compare Buddhist precepts to, you know, Christian commandment, so you lose the point. When you say "okay," whether it is commandment or our precepts, it doesn't matter. There we have buddha-mind or perfect mercy of God-of the god.

So if we notice this point, there is no other secret. Rejecting everything, giving up everything. When you listen to your inner voice directly, without even trying to listen to it, whenever you chance-you have chance to hear it, there there is the way. There there is a voice of Buddha.[6] [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

So when-when you see or when you listen to your teacher, you will not think about his nationality or his sex or whether he is old or young-it doesn't matter. That is what Dogen says. Even a-a-a girl of seven years old may be your teacher. If you know this point-secret of practice-that is pure practice which you can apply to your everyday life.

Our instruction of practice-pull in your chin, or keep your spine straight, or mudra-about mudras-are concentrated on this point. This is the front door to the various religion. There is no other doors. As Dogen-zenji said, "Don't hang around"-hang around [laughs, laughter]-"hang around the gate. You should directly enter the gate." Hai. Okay. Then you are inside of the gate, you know. If you sit [probably gestures] [laughs, laughter]-and if you peek in the inside of the gate, wondering what-what is going [on] there, you have no chance to, you know, practice pure practice. It is quite easy if you have-if you say "Hai!" That's all. No other secret.

My teacher[7] had many disciples [laughs]. Not so many, but pretty many. And he was always angry with us-always [laughs]-because we are lazy. We are always pretending, you know-we were always pretending to study, you know, Dogen's way. But actually, we were not. So he was very angry with us.

But he cannot be always angry with us, so he start to speak something to the audience, you know-many people in lecture hall. He [laughs]-instead of angry with us, he was angry with people-all the audience. Rrrr! [Laughs, laughter.] Ohh.

So I was-we were listening to him, you know-we feel as if we are scolded. And, you know, when he was not, you know, scolding us, we realized, you know, what we are doing, and we become-became very sorry.

"The first precept-'Don't kill.'"

This is a precept transmitted from Buddha to us.

"Can you keep it or not?"

And he said, "Yes! I will keep it!"

This is the way you keep precepts, you know. He was almost screaming [laughs]:

Dai-ichi husessho-kai, nanji yoku tamotsuya inaya?

Yoku tamotsu![8] [Laughs.]

"This is the way you keep precepts!" you know.

We have-we don't have that kind of spirit. When you say, "Yes I will!" there there is Buddha's voice. When you hesitate, you are always, you know [laughs], you are always saying nothing happened to you. Only when you say, "Yes I will!" and feel how you feel it when you said "Yes I will!"-when you fix your mind to do so, whatever happen. Without spirit-without this spirit, you cannot, you know, extend our way, especially in America, I think.

I may be difficult to accept Tatsugami-roshi's way, you know. I know that [laughs]. I know very well. But, you know, you should try, and you should say, "I will do it!"-not because it, you know, Buddha's teaching or Japanese way or American way or appropriate to our society or not. You should say it-you should do it-and feel what it was.

[Laughs.] Did you see the movie 2000? [Laughs, laughter.] That is what you are doing. 2001-or what it?-2001-square, I am. All the monkeys, you know, hanging around [laughs, laughter]. [Probably gestures like a hominid.] That is, you know [laughs], what we are doing. If you feel it-if you, you know, seize it, nothing happen. It is yours. Maybe that is the key point of practice and way to save all sentient beings.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican 9/26/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Tatsugami Sotan Ryosen-roshi: Soto Zen master and ino-roshi at Eihei-ji monastery in Japan for many years. A teacher or master of Jean Ross, Grahame Petchey, and Philip Wilson (all students of Suzuki-roshi) while they attended Eihei-ji. He visited Tassajara to help establish monastic forms and practices. He was head of training at Tassajara for the Spring and Fall 1970 practice periods.

[2] Ch'an master Tiantong Rujing (Tendo Nyojo): 1163-1228.

[3] The five schools Suzuki-roshi mentioned plus the two schools into which Rinzai split: Yogi and Oryo.

[4] Also Yosai-zenji.

[5] Biography of Dogen written in Japanese by Kenzei, 14th abbot of Eihei-ji.

[6] The rest of the lecture was not in the original transcript. It was

entered here from Side B of the original tape.

[7] Kishizawa Ian-roshi.

[8] Suzuki-roshi is speaking in a loud, ironic, and formal voice-probably imitating his teacher Kishizawa Ian-zenji-presenting a short dialog of two voices. Dai (great); -ichi (number one); hu (not); sessho (kill); -kai (precept); nanji (thee [older form of Japanese]); yoku (well); tamo (keep); -tsuya inaya (or not [makes the sentence a question]). Yoku tamotsu! (I must keep it well!)

## **1970 mei (9)**

### **1 - Sesshin Lecture #1: on breathing**

Saturday, May 02, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #1  
On Breathing

San Francisco

Right now you-your feeling has changed from the feeling you had in your sitting. This is important. When you start a two-day sesshin you think, "I must sit two days continuously." But that is not the way you should practice [laughs]. If you, you know, think in that way, you may feel-you may be very much discouraged: "Oh my! I have to sit two days or seven days."

It is actually better to sit one period after one period: "Okay, I will sit one period." Then, after kinhin, you must say to yourself, "I must sit one more period." [Laughs, laughter.] And then, you know, you start kinhin. And after kinhin you think "one more period." In that way, if you practice zazen, you don't feel so bad. [Laughs, laughter.] I think-if I say so, you may say, "You are fooling me" [laughs]. But actually, it is not so. That is, you know, how things is going-how things are going always. And so, you know, according to our teaching, time is like, you know, like a circle of fire, you know. This is, you know-here there is burning fire. This is actually-time is going, you know. It looks like one red circle, but-it is not so-actually it is continuation of, you know, each fire. It looks like so. This is famous, you know, parable: senkarin.[1]

Usually you understand time something continual from past to future. But actually it is the successive, continuous-continuation of events-each events. One after another, events take place. So it-one after another, it takes place-things take place. You naturally think, you know, there is something-there is some-something like time which is always continuing-continuously exist. Or you have idea of some line which, you know, [extends] from past to future, you know. But this is just abstract idea from each event.



So actually what is taking place is each event. Now, you know, you are sitting. Moment after moment you are sitting. One period after one period-another period you are sitting. So if you indulge into this kind of continuity of time, you become lazy and you cannot practice-you cannot put your effort fully on each moment.

We say this kind of practice-zengo-saidan [2]-saidan is "to cut." Zen is "before," and go is "after": "before and after" should be cut-should be separated. If this is wine, you know [laughs-takes drink of water, so was probably referring to his cup of water]-if you take wine always before each meal, you will be always drunk [laughs, laughter]. That is not our practice, you know. Our practice should be practice piece by piece, you know, not always like-we say in Japanese, we say [laughs]-do you know a horse, you know, sometime-horse is, you know-horse pee [laughing]-horse, you know-horse piss, or what do you say? Horse is-once horse is, you know, start to-I don't know what you say [laughing, laughter]. It comes out-it doesn't stop-ssssss-for pretty long time. We say, "Don't do it like a horse." That is not good practice. If you practice two-day sesshin like a horse, maybe that is worse than horse.

So, you know, each period you should renew your practice. So sometime you may drink, but sometime you should be able to stop it. If you cannot stop it, you know, that is bad practice. In Japan we keep wine in a uden[3]-I cannot pronounce that word-barrel?

Various students: [Various inaudible.] Keg. Keg.

[Laughs.] That ["barrel"] is very difficult word for me to pronounce. If you, you know, take continuously wine, that is-we say "wet barrel," you know. Wet barrel is not our practice. Sometime our body, you know, should be very dry, you know, from wine. If you, you know-even though you take maybe a lot of wine, if you take it once in a while, we say that is the medicine-the medicine of all medicines, we say [laughs, laughter]. Medicine of a hundred medicines, we say. It-it is medicine if you take once in a while.

So our practice should be, you know-although we practice zazen every day, we should renew our practice day by day, one after another. So even, you know, in one practice it is good to check your practice. As [Sotan Ryosen] Tatsugami-roshi[4] said, you know, "How about your mouth?" "Hai." "How about your ears and shoulders?" "Hai." "How about your neck?" "Hai." In that way, you can renew your practice.

Before your practice-when your practice is not so good, it is better to check your practice maybe several time in one period. But when your practice make-is pretty good, there will not be not necessary to check so often. Breathing, you know-breathing is very important for you, but if you want to have good breathing, you have to have good posture. And when you have good posture, you should understand how you take good breathing.

Tonight I want to explain how we take good breathing. Why your posture is important for your right breathing or good breathing is you need, you know-good structure of muscles around your, you know, waist. And those muscles, you know-usually, you know, your breathing is going, you know, like this [demonstrates]. And it doesn't reach here [possibly pointing to hara], and you haven't-you haven't a feeling of muscles here around your waist. And the good breathing-when you-good breathing means deeper breathing-deeper breathing is, you know, when you-this is just natural breathing-usual breathing. And deeper one is-must go, you know, from here, you know, deeper to your tummy. It should reach here. And from here, you know, to here, actually you have nothing to exhale anymore. Your lung is empty, but your muscles is, you know-will work-start to work with some feeling. And actually your diaphragm is pressing everything down a little bit, just to make space for your inhaling.

So, you know, although you have nothing to exhale, you are making, you know, you are preparing for your next inhaling. I-I don't know, you know, my explanation is physically, you know, physiologically right or wrong. This is my feeling.

When you do so, you know, you will have deep calm feeling, but if you take inhaling and exhaling like this-just like this-you have no chance to, you know, to have deep, calm, empty feeling. So one after another, you know, your feeling will be replaced by holding your breathing. You stop-actually you stop your exhaling and hold a little while and inhale.

And when you start this-as someone-I think that was Sekida.[5] Do you know Sekida? Some Japanese priest who is teaching at Hawai'i. He, you know, he is in Diamond S- [partial word]-what was-what was-

Various students: Diamond Sangha?

Oh, Diamond Sangha. But what was the-

Student: [1 word unclear.]

No. I mean the mag- [magazine?]

Student: Publication?

-publication.

Student: Oh. Also Diamond Sangha [1 word].

Diamond Sangha. Yeah. He explained exhaling this way. [Gestures, laughs.] This is interesting, you know. [Exhales with a barely audible "mmm" sound.] So he-sometime, especially for beginner, it is difficult to exhale smoothly, you know, from the beginning to end. So if you, you

know, do this way [exhales again with audible overtones to breathing, laughs]-this is easy, actually. I think that is interesting. I think you can- you may try that one, but if possible, you know, do it smoothly, you know. Like this-not like this, but this is great help, you know. He suggested-he was suggesting exhaling this way. Anyway, inhaling is-if your exhaling is complete, inhaling is not so difficult. Just do it naturally [takes breath] and exhale.

Some Zen Master said your breathing could be three times a minute, you know. It is pretty long. But how you do it is to have deep exhaling. And because your mind is calm and your physical activity is not so, you know, fast, so that kind of slow breathing will be sufficient.

The pain, you know, in your legs is, you know, almost [laughs] continuously, you know, come. But if you have this kind of practice, or this kind of, you know, technique or-not technique, but practice, by this kind of practice you can endure the pain. The only way you can, you know, endure your pain is, you know, to forget it, you know [laughs]. Let it-let it be painful. That is the only way. If you are painful, that is not-even though you are painful, that is not my problem [laughs, laughter]. So be painful if you like [laughs, laughter].

How you have this kind of feeling is to have good breathing. To have calm-calmness of your mind. So when-if you are completely concentrated in your perfect breathing, you will not be bothered by anything. But it may take time, you know, before you, you know-before you can apply this kind of technique when you are painful. So at first, maybe, when you become painful, you know, it is-how you endure it is to build up, you know, right practice. But usually when you become painful you [laughs] start to move, you know, to-start to move your legs. That will not help. So to, you know, fix your posture, and pain does not go this way. It goes up and down and up and down [laughs, laughter], so there is nothing-there is no need to worry about it. It will naturally come down [laughs], although it may go up again [laughs, laughter]. So it will not hurt your legs.

This is the problem everyone has. Even Japanese people have this problem of pain. I think we Japanese people has more, maybe, pain because our legs are short, you know, so it-this is like this, so [probably points to own legs, laughs]. Yours is long, so, you know, on your ankle, you know, it is not so-the angle is better, you know. Our legs are short, so angle is sharp, you know, so pain we have here is worse, I think.

No problem, you know-in zazen, no problem to, you know-this way no problem. But problem we have is this way [probably gestures], you know. That is why it is so painful. And here [probably gestures], you know, we have pain. So if legs are short, you know, the pressure we have here is more-more pressure we have here. And here [probably gestures], we twist-we have to twist [laughs] our legs more like this because of short leg [laughs, laughter].

And someone may think it will, you know, stop your circulation. I don't think that is true [laughs]. If you have-if your friend is a doctor, please ask him, you know, why it is it doesn't prevent circulation so much, you know, by crossing our legs this way. I don't know why, but it doesn't stop our circulation so much.

This is also true in our everyday life. But, you know, this kind of, maybe, theory is also true, but we Zen student does not try to understand our everyday life psychologically or applying this kind of, you know, theory in our everyday life-on our everyday life. But we, you know, we rather extend this kind of feeling which we have in our practice.

So without thinking or without trying to extend our experience to everyday life, naturally we should be able to organize our everyday life. And we have to acquire some-a kind of character so that you can always act properly, think properly, observe properly. Why we cannot observe things properly is because we have a kind of, you know, pattern of life, you know. We are always-each person is always repeating same habitual, you know, way over and over. It is very hard for each-for him to change his way. Even though you know what you are doing [laughs], it is difficult to change it.

So best thing is, you know, without working on your worst point, you know-instead of working on the painful difficult point, to, you know, to adjust your way, you know, by practice of Zen. So if you adjust your way of life in zendo, in your everyday life, you know, there is no need--not much need to try to correct your way or try to adjust your way, because you can do it without thinking, without being concerned so much about it.

No Zen master, you know-almost all the, maybe, famous Zen master is-are the people [laughs] who had very bad habit when he was young. It is-I-it is amazing to find out, you know. If you the picture of a good Zen master when he was young, you know, you will be amazed [laughs, laughter]. You can see, you know, by the picture, you know, how, you know, short-tempered he was [laughter] or how stubborn he was [laughs]. You can see, you know, just by glance of him-"Oh!" [Laughs, laughter.]

But, you know, you-it is almost, you know, impossible to believe that he was his picture when he was young. Of course, you know, it took many, many years it be a Zen master [laughs], but that is possible, you know. I think that is a great encouragement for us [laughs, laughter].

I was very short-tempered, very short-tempered when I was young. I know how impatient I was when I was young, but people said, "He is the most patient." [Laughing, laughter.] I feel very funny when he said, "He is the most patient person." I immediately want to say, "No!" But-but it was-on the other hand, it is good feeling, you know [laughs],

when they admire my, you know, patience. "Oh, he is very patient."  
[Said in an ironic voice.] So I just listen to them. "Okay." [Laughs,  
laughter.]

Zazen practice is, you know, may be difficult-very difficult, but I think it  
is easiest way to correct your, you know, short point-shortcoming. It is  
almost impossible to correct your shortcoming. [Sentence probably  
finished. Tape turned over. Little or nothing seems lost.] But by practice  
we can do it.

After so many times of repeating our human life, we say he attained  
that kind of-he obtained that kind of character. When we talk about a  
great Zen master, maybe so. But I think when they say so, I think they  
have some reason. That reason-they have some experience of it. To  
know their former lives is a kind of, you know, magical power which only  
a buddha has.

But if you know how, you know, how our practice change your  
character, you know, I think you can understand what they actually  
mean. Maybe, you know, if you try to change your character in-only in  
this life, it is almost impossible. Actually it is not possible, but zazen  
practice will change your character completely. This is a kind of magic,  
you know, even though I don't know my past life. But I knowed-  
[laughs]-I know this life and how I change, you know, from my  
childhood life to my life we-I have now.

Whether your practice is good or bad, if you sit, I am sure you will  
change. The old students, you know, who have been sitting for many  
years, you know, I think, know this fact and see the change our-which  
our student made.

So day by day, you know, without having big ambition, you know, just  
to sit is enough. Don't be involved in hasty, you know, idea [laughs]: "I  
have been sitting for three years, but nothing happen," you may say.  
But a great thing happened already. That he sit for three years is big  
[loud laugh, loud laughter] change. That is also-already big change, you  
know, and he-he doesn't give up [laughs] the sitting. But he complains,  
that's all. It is good sometime to complain.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Sara Hunsaker  
and Bill Redican 9/6/00.

[1] senkarin (Jap.) or hsüan-hua-lun(WG Chin.): Spinning a burning

piece of rope or stick in a circle gives the single burning ember the appearance of a ring of fire. Used in the Yuanjue jing (PY Chin.) or Engaku-kyo (Jap.)-The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment, an early 8th century Chinese Mayayana sutra-as a metaphor for the illusory nature of existence.

[2] zengo-saidan: cutting before and after; severing the past and the future; transcending the sequence of time.

[3] Spelling uncertain.

[4] See also SR-70-04-28.

[5] Katsuki Sekida (1893-19??): author of Zen Training (1975) and Two Zen Classics (1977). He taught in Hawai'i from 1963 to 1970.

## **2 - Sesshin Lecture #2: helping others**

Saturday, May 02, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #2  
Helping Others

San Francisco

First of all, a sincere-our practice-sincere practice-our sincere practice is not, you know, practice just for himself. This is not so difficult to understand. Bodhisattva practice is not just to help himself, but to help others. We put more stress to help others. That is bodhisattva practice.

I think because you are not so considerate in your everyday life, you have that question: you know, why we have to practice zazen, or what is sincere practice? If you find out how difficult it is to help others, with bodhisattva mind, with mind of selflessness, you may, you know, imagine how difficult it is to practice to help others. And actually, all the problems we human being has [are] caused by our carelessness, careless activity, or selfish activity. That is, you know-those small careless activity one by one accumulated will cause a big trouble for our society. If we realize this point, you know, we find out the reason why we must practice zazen.

I think you have-you must have read-some of you must have read Zuimonki.[1] You know, in Zuimonki, Dogen-zenji is discussing about this everyday problems we have, and he, you know, explain what is bodhisattva mind.

Last night, Yoshimura-sensei,[2] you know, was asked to help someone's schedule of trip [laughs], and he had to sit up until half past twelve [laughs]. [Laughter.] He knows, you know, of course, we have sesshin, you know. Even though he may sleep, you know, today-today's sesshin, knowing that he has to help someone who [is] making trip-this

is, you know, already a big problem to discuss, you know: whether he should help others, sacrificing his sesshin, or whether he should refuse-  
refuse it because practice of zazen is more important than making a trip.

Now, what will you do [laughs] when you are asked, you know, "please help me," you know? Without knowing how important it is to practice zazen, what will you do? Ahh, this is, you know, very-may be very difficult problem. We cannot say, you know, you should refuse it or you shouldn't refuse it. The point is, if you refuse it because you have strong confidence, you know, in our practice-just because you have strong confidence in our practice, then you should refuse it. But [if] even a slightest, you know-not doubt, but slightest selfish idea is involved in his word, maybe he shouldn't. Sometime we refuse things because of some reason, because of making some excuse. But that is-mostly those excuse is just for himself, you know, based on his selfish idea.

So you say to practice-if you come and sit here that is our practice. If you think so, that is, you know, too easy understanding of our practice. To practice zazen, refusing everything, without doing anything, asking someone else what he should do, and making time for himself, and practice here, is, you know-when you practice here you have a big responsibility. If you feel very good, you know [laughs], asking everything for your wife or some-for your friend, and feel good to practice here, that is too selfish practice. That is not our practice. Here, you see, you may find out how-what is sincere practice.

Because he couldn't, you know, refuse it, he sit up until half past twelve. So accordingly, he may be sleeping [laughs] on cushion today [laughs, laughter]. Do you think that is, you know, bad practice? It is very difficult to say whether our practice is good or bad. If you think [about?], [3] you know, the real meaning of practice, you cannot easily criticize someone's practice. Of course, if he sleep, you know, he will get a big slap [laughs] from student-even student.

But a kyosaku, [4] you know, is not-symbolize Buddha's mercy, which is not involved in right or wrong, good or bad. Just to help, you know, someone's practice, there we have Buddha's kyosaku. But most people mix up ordinary criticism with Buddha's kyosaku. Buddha's kyosaku should be very strict. It should be like a sword. But our mind-or Buddha's mind should be actually the most generous and merciful, ready to help everyone, as much as possible.

Originally, we cannot rely on moral code, or idea of right or wrong. Because we cannot rely on any rules or moral, we must practice zazen so that we can be both very strict and very generous, always ready to help others. So our zazen is not just matter of a form. The spirit we practice is the most important.

In Zuimonki, Dogen-zenji is talking about when we are asked to do

something-or for an instance when we-when you [are] are asked to write a letter for your friend about something-when he need some help, about money-you should ask someone about some legal, you know, thing-you should ask some- [partial word] someone else. And at that time, you know, if you asked-if he doesn't-if he cannot write a letter, you should write a letter of introduction-you should introduce him to-or your friend or to lawyer or some businessman.

But you may say, "I am a monk," you know, "I have no time [laughs] to be involved in worldly things like that." You may easily say so. But think-reflect on your feeling at that time. It is good reason, but, Dogen-zenji says, you-there must be-there cannot be-you cannot say there is not a slightest idea of selfishness is involved in my when I said-in me when I say so. You can-you may not be able to say so so easily. So perhaps you should write a letter for him-letters for him.

Then his disciple, Ejo-zenji,[5] asked Dogen-zenji again: "As you may be all right," you know, "if you write a letter for him, but it will create a big trouble for the lawyer or for the businessman," you know [laughing]. "He may have a big trouble, I think," he said. "Still you should write a letter or not?" What-"Still he should write a letter for him or not?"

Dogen-zenji says, "Yes, even so you should." [Laughs.] "But whether businessman will help him or not is," you know, "his problem. So you should-if you think that will create some problem for them, you should write," you know [laughs, laughter]. "It may create some problem for you, but whether you should help or not is-should be decided by you. I am helping him, and I am just writing intr- [partial word]-letter of-introducing letter. So think [about?] this point clearly, and if possible please help him."

So if you think, you know, if you are very careful in your everyday life, it is not so simple [laughs], you know, to help others. But usually, making various, you know, excuse for himself and try not to help others. That is what is going on in this society.

If we become very careful, in one hand, we will have more trouble. But on the other hand, this society will be for every one of us. Actually, this society is for someone who has various ability. So this society is not actually for the disable people. So that is why we must have set up-or we must some welfare system. We say "welfare." That is, welfare is excuse [laughs]. That's mere excuse-very cold or very careless excuse created by human lazy cold nature.

If we become more careful about each one's situation, instead of having strong welfare system, we can, you know, enjoy our life with each other. The joy of someone who has ability will be appreciated when he help others. And when he see someone who is helped by him actually, really, sincerely, he will appreciate his life and he will appreciate his talent.



But nowadays, you know, we are just-someone who has ability is busy in working on machine and paper [laughs], you know. He has not much, you know, joy in his life, even though he has great ability: even though he can write a good poem, or even though he can produce beautiful art. They are working for, you know, for the publisher, for the businessman, and he cannot produce what he want to-actually what he want to do. That is what is going [on] in this world. Even though he want to paint in some way-if he is an architect, if he want to design in his own way, you know, because of manager's order, you know, you-his design should be straight, you know, simple line as much as possible, and building should be always square [laughs, laughter], so that the building doesn't cost so much money.

So all the talent and ability of human being is sacrificed because of this kind of careless, cold excuse. In Zen word, a man of immense, immense ability, immense power, should not be fooled by clever words [laughs]. A man of great ability should not be fooled by clever words. So that we can [be] free from those clever excuse, we should practice zazen. There is no other way to acquire-to be free from this kind of superficial understanding of world-understanding of this-our human life. Newspaper, magazine, television, you know-all those publication, if you think [about] this point, easily fool you, you know. It is quite easy for them to fool us. Sometime various-even sociology, psychology, or various cultural study ... [Sentence not finished. Probably something like "may fool us." Tape turned over.]

When we are not fooled by it, when we can use it, you know, to help others, it is the-those studies will give us a great advantage for human life. But because we have spirit of, you may say, Zen, we are enslaved by those studies. If you think [about] those point[s] carefully, things which is happening near at hand, you will realize what is way-seeking mind in its true sense, and what is sincerity, what is the spirit of Zen. Our spirit of Zen, especially Dogen's spirit of practice, is based on everyday life-problem we have in everyday life. If you think [about] this point, just to spend-just to share-just to spare our valuable time for zazen is not zazen.

If you practice zazen, you should pay full respect to the people who is not sitting, who is busy in his work-in their work. When you think about what they are doing, you know, you cannot goof off [laughs, laughter]. This is my favorite word [laughs, laughter]. On your cushion, you cannot waste your time, you know. When you have this kind of respect, you can practice real zazen.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican 9/8/00.

[1] Eihei Dogen, Shobogenzo Zuimonki (The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Record of Things Heard).

[2] Ryogen Yoshimura was a Soto priest who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 (see Wind Bell, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30).

[3] The word "[about]" was added by one of the transcribers (WKR) because of Suzuki-roshi's practice, throughout this talk but not in most other talks, of dropping "about" after "think." Suzuki-roshi did not say: "If you think you know the real meaning of practice ...."

[4] kyosaku (Jap.): warning stick used to alert sleepy and/or idle monks.

[5] Koun Ejo-zenji (1198-1280): Dogen-zenji's senior student and dharma heir. He recorded or edited Zuimonki and served as second abbot of Eihei-ji.

### **3 - Sesshin Lecture #3: sincere practice**

Sunday, May 03, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #3

Sincere Practice and Way-Seeking Mind

San Francisco

To have-to have sincere practice means to have sincere concern with people. So our practice is actually based on our humanity. So Dogen-zenji says to accomplish humanity is to raise-to hold up Buddhism and help people.

So what is the way to establish humanity? That is the way to establish humanity is tao or practice, he says. By practice we can establish humanity, and our practice is based on humanity, so human being practice true human nature is our zazen. And he says the way is not something which was established by Buddha or some particular patriarch.

We must have spirit to attribute various good things to others, and accept various evil or mistake as your own. That is the spirit. With this spirit, we should establish our human way. And how to establish our human way is how to practice zazen. So you may understand zazen practice is not some special practice for special person. And this is the only way to accomplish or to establish our human way in this actual world. If you want to seek for the way for human being-if you try to

seek for the way for human being some other way, it is almost impossible.

And so Dogen-zenji was very strict, you know, with our human way. That is why his way is called it menmitsu no kafu,[1] you know. He doesn't, you know, ignore even a drop of water, like a well-well-made rice paper. And-and he, you know, is always asking us, you know, "Your way is like this, and-do you-can you accept that kind of way as your own way?" [Laughs.] And he criticize, you know, our weakness and our darkness or carelessness in our everyday activity-treating things, treating your friend, receiving teaching from your teacher. And after all, what he will say is, "practice zazen." That is only way [laughs] to polish up your everyday life, and to do it without making so much effort. That is the only way.

And the Fifth-Fifth Patriarch Gunin-zenji,[2] referring to this point, he says, you know, "The way who-which was established-established by Buddha['s] time, it cannot be our way because time is different from our time, and people are different, and society is different from our time-society and people in our time." So the way we mean-tao we mean-is not something established already by someone-some special person. The way is not something which was established already, but which could be find out according to the circumstances in-in each moment. That is the real way. How we, you know, find out our way is to practice zazen. From our practice, real way-realization of our true way, will reveal itself. You will naturally find out the real way. That is the real way. If so-if so, to practice zazen is to establish human way.

If we say "zazen practice," you may think this is some special, you know, practice, but it is-actually it is not so. Because you think zazen practice is some special way, you become-you goof off on [laughs]-on black cushion, making some excuse, you know: "I am something-I am doing something good. I am-I am inv- [partial word]-trying to find out something-some truth [laughs, laughter] on a black cushion." Or "I am following Buddha's way." Or you may say, as maybe you-you may not know what is zazen, but "Zazen is," you know, "the way which Buddha established, so if we follow his way [laughs], that is zazen." But according to Dogen-zenji, that is not zazen at all.

If you understand zazen in that way-if you understand your zazen is-understand zazen is nothing, you know, but our human activity, the way everyone must do-if you understand in that way, you will not be involved in any idea of schools of Buddhism [laughs]-Rinzai Zen or Soto Zen [laughs], Buddhism or Christianity, you know. Because you don't have actual understanding of zazen, and your way of practice-your spirit of practice is not real, you know-is not-does not comes-come from-from your innate-inner voice, because you ignore things you are doing in your everyday daily life, [you may say] this is-"Zazen is important [laughs], but those things are not so important, so if we practice zazen, even though [I] ignore my fault-two, three of my fault-it may be okay."

[Laughs.] If you practice zazen with this-in this way, your zazen is not true zazen. That is heresy [laughs].

We-as you know, we respect transmission, you know. Transmission is-although we have nothing to transmit, you know, we have no [laughs, laughter]-nothing to-to transmit because what we should transmit is, you know, our human way [laughs]. So human way is something everyone has, you know. Everyone has same feeling. If we drop off various superficial understanding of things and superficial feeling, the-our feeling is same. Our inmost nature is the same. There is no Japanese feeling or American feeling. It is the same, exactly the same. If you see Japanese people, you know, you-you will have American feeling [laughs], but if you forget all about Japanese or American way, there-we have no special feeling. For an instance, you know, when you practice zazen there is no American [laughing] zazen or Japanese zazen. Zazen is the same. If we stop thinking, when we are free from our emotional activity, there is no two zazen. And only when we have, you know, both Japanese people and American people have this kind of feeling, you know, which is not American or Japanese. Then we can, you know-we will have good relationship.

Once in a while, you know, you may want to be an American or a Japanese even [laughing]. Once in a while-not always. And you will feel to-to behave like Japanese, you will feel good. And I feel good when I say something like you say in slang someday [laughing]. I feel very good, but not always.

But the feeling you have when you behave like Japanese, and the feeling I have when I behave like American is the same [laughs]. No difference. So if we don't stick to something, there is no Japanese or American. There is no good or bad.

So that is why the Fifth Patriarch of Japan said because time is different, people is different, and society is different, there is-there cannot be no set-up rules for us. The rules should be found out in each moment, and how we find out is to practice zazen. From nothing-when we resume nothingness, we will find out our way according to the situation. To see various event is to see the way we act. To see people-to see someone is how to-how to be friendly with him, you know. There is no special way to become friendly with someone.

In this way, although true way was-was kept in its perfect understanding, and true practice was kept-has been kept from Buddha to us, but the true way always mixed up some secondary way: so-called-it tao or way. When we say "way," it cannot be true way already. When I say "way," you may think this way or that way, Japanese way or American way [laughs]. So it is-true way is something which you can substitute for something else. That is true way.

If I say so, you may think the way is only one [laughs], but approach-

although approach is different, the way is one. But, you know, even though you say so [laughs]-I don't know, you know, whether you understand. That only one way. Even though if I say so, you know, way is-true way is one. But the approach is different.

But what I mean is not like that. Those who talk about non-sectarianism [laughs], you know-every religion has one goal. The top is the one. But the way to it will be different. So there is no way-there is no need to discriminate, because the conclusion is the same. So whichever way you take, you will reach the same point.

But when you say so-even though you say so, the point you mean is not the point we mean. Even though, you know, we put emphasis on practice of zazen, it does not mean we have some special point. We have, you know-we rather resume to our human nature, which is universal, without seeking for some point. So before we start zazen practice, or before we [get] involved in various kind of religion, real, you know, way is there. So to forget all about religion, including Zen, is our way-and to find our way moment after moment, according to the circumstances, and to respect people, to respect things without ignoring anything.

And if you make mistake, you should be faithfully make repentance. Without doing so, you know-"everyone make mistake, so it-it is okay." If you say so, that is not your inner voice. That you say so already means, you know, you have, you know, some pain in your heart. "Everyone is-is doing so. It is okay." If it is okay, there is no need to say "okay." [Laughs.] It is not okay, so you say it is okay [laughs, laughter].

So whatever you do, if you think more, if you are, you know-if you start from nothingness, you will see many things going on in your, you know, mind and to which you should be regret-regretful. We should be more conscientious about what we are doing because [when?] we see it. Sometime we don't see it. When we are not practicing zazen, our mind is mixed up [with] something else, we don't see. This is, you know, why we practice zazen.

And reason we practice zazen is very strict. We don't feel so good, you know-very strict. But being encouraged by strictness of the human nature, we will continue our practice forever, as long as we have human nature. So human nature encourage our practice, and our practice will help our full expression of human nature. So, you know, helping with each other, encouraging with each other, our practice will go on and on. [Sentence probably finished. Tape turned over.]

... how our practice is going. And so dreaming of some attainment, aiming at some selfish goal to practice zazen is, you know, not at all our practice. It is far from our practice.

Buddhism was established by Buddha when he saw, you know, every

creatures fighting with each other, killing with each other. That is why he started Buddhism. Our way is not the way to get out of this kind of problem, but to see actually what we are doing moment after moment, from which we cannot escape. You know, each moment we are doing this kind of things. That you eat something, already you are killing something. So you cannot escape from what you are doing actually. That is why we practice zazen. And by practice we can resume to-resume our fundamental being-so-called-it buddha-nature, where we should start our real activity. This is actually Buddha's teaching, and to have full realization of this experience is our practice.

So you may say our everyday life start from practice, and our practice will be encouraged by our everyday life. So everyday life and practice are really two side of one coin. That is why we say, you know, everyday life is our koan. Koan in its usual sense-it is official document [laughs], you know-koan-you know, public announcement is koan. Public announcement-it is public announcement because you cannot change it [laughs]. That is koan. But koan in its true sense is something which appeared from our innate human nature. You cannot, you know, substitute for something else. Once it, you know, [is] issued you cannot change it [laughs]. Very strict. So with this strictness to yourself, we should practice zazen. This is the secret of solving all the problem-problems we have.

When Dogen-zenji talked about our way, someone asked:

"You say you should be," you know, "strict with yourself, and you should not be concerned about what people may say about you, or whether it is good thing or bad thing to do something. But if you act in that way, there is big danger-there may be big danger for you. It may be better to follow some rules." [Laughs.]

But he said:

"It-it is very much so, but our way is not," you know, "so easy. [Laughs.] Our human way cannot be so easy."

Because our mind is very touchy and very subtle, we do not allow any mistake for us. So it is not-cannot be so easy. The only way for us is, if you make mistake, then you should be, you know, regretful and you should make confession of it and pray for [to] Buddha. Without doing this, you-if you say, "I am following Buddha's way," you are fooling yourself.

If you get many offerings, you know, following Buddha's way [laughs], you are, you know-that is not Buddhist way. That is a kind of heresy, you know. To receive something which you should not receive, that is heresy, he said. When you are, you know, push[ed] into such a strict, you know, small corner of our everyday life, you will find out you have to sit. This is, you know, how you arise the way-seeking mind, and this

is what he means by sincere practice.

Thank you very much.

---

---

Sources: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 4/10/00.

[1] menmitsu no kafu (Jap.): "a very careful and considerate style." See also SR-70-05-27, Suzuki-roshi's first lecture on the Sandokai.

[2] Chinese: Daman Hongren or Ta-men Hung-jen; Japanese: Daiman Gunin or Daiman Konin. 601-674. Chan patriarch and teacher of Huineng.

#### **4 - Negative View, Positive Practice**

Tuesday, May 05, 1970

Negative View, Positive Practice  
City Center, San Francisco

Once a time of one thousand or two thousand is not so long time in comparison to our idea of time. It is just, you know, one thousand or hundred years of time, maybe, one month or less than one month.

We came to the point where we must study Buddhism from various direction, and here we are started to study Buddhist way from various angle. And this is not so easy task. I think that is why we must have Buddha or Dogen-zenji, because each one of our effort-by each one of our effort cannot be satisfy.

Our purpose of studying Buddhism-in Japan this kind of study started, maybe, from Meiji period-early part of Meiji period. Of course there were some exceptionally great teachers before Meiji period. But after Meiji period, we started to study Buddhism, applying Western way of study. Very strong: more scientific way of study, like you study anthropology or sociology. So Buddhism culture [was] analyzed from various angle and criticized from various angle: whether Buddhism is-has been helping human being or not. Now in this way, after Meiji period, we started to study Buddhism very sincerely and very objectively and very critically.

So right now we haven't, you know-even [though] we belong to same school of Buddhism-the each one has his own opinion or his own, you know, understanding of Buddhism. So I think it is a time when we get together and study Buddhism from various angle. And we should not be

discouraged by knowing various teachers' way is not the same. It cannot be same. And one teacher-even one teacher-changing his way, always, because he find some reason why he should change his way. If there is some, you know, decisive reason why he should change his way, he should, you know. If he is a Buddhist, he should change because we should-we don't stick to our previous understanding, moment after moment.

We continue our practice and our understa- [partial word]-our study. I heard-I hear various informations from Japan, you know-what kind of practice is going at Eihei-ji or some other monasteries. The more I hear various different information from various source, we feel, you know, the need of discussing-a need of real, you know, sincere study-a need of-you know, affirming, you know, our belief.

Something which we have been doing in Japan may be difficult for you to accept. Tonight I want to concentrate-I want to be concentrated on some point which, maybe, which you may find it difficult to accept [laughs]. Something-you know, this is the point I want to talk tonight is the charac- [partial word]-one of the characteristic of Buddhist thought and one of the-and which, you know, you do not have in your culture. If I am right-you know I haven't study Western culture so much-so I can't say definitely, but I find some difficulties for Western students to-when you want to accept our Buddhist teaching. For an instance, you know, freedom, you mean is not the freedom we Buddhist mean.

Buddha, you know, rejected asceticism. But still, you know, Buddhist way is-there is ascetic element in it. The love, you mean is not the same as when we say "love." Desire, you know, we mean, is not the same when you say "desire." The we, know-almost all the time we say-we do not say "good desire" [laughs]. We say-we Buddhist say "evil desires." Evil is, you know, always follow to desire.

For an instance, you-you choose-you like some bright colors, you know, but Buddhist use subdued color [laughs]. This is very-this is one of the characteristic of Buddhism. Blue, or, you know, yellow, red, or white, black: those are, you know, those are not subdued color. The subdued color is the mixed color. The Bu- [partial word]-the material we use for robe is not the material people may like. We shave our head, you know, wear okesa. Those, you know-this is-why we shave our head is to be free from the desire to put some ornament, you know, on our head-on our head, you know.

This kind of negative and opposite-negative tendency or element in our teaching will be very difficult point. But on the other hand, you know, when you start zazen practice, or when you start some particular-some practice-you become more-you tend to be more ascetic than are [?] people. You want to observe-you want to be strict vegetarian, you know. And e- [partial word]-when you start something, you go on and on and on, but the way you push your-you carry on your practice is



more positive-not negative way-positive way. I think this is the difference between the-there is-some slight, you know, flavor is different. Nuance is different.

The negative attitude we have is after realizing what we are doing in our everyday life-what kind of nature we human being has. And to avoid this kind of fault, Buddhist, you know, try to-try to make our human tendency-bad tendency weaker, because we know this kind of tendency will create many problem in our society.

So we try to control or restrict, even, our activity. Instead of working fast, we try to work slowly, step-by-step, moderating our tendency. This kind of thing-tendency or element-may be very hard for you to understand.

The-why old people or people in old tradition [are] interested in Buddhism is people who live in the countries where there is old tradition, they understand good side of the culture and bad side of the culture. So they, you know, are not so interested in a kind of achievement. They achieved in their history. So they reflect [on?] their culture more, and after reflecting on their culture-or after getting tired of their own culture, they start to became-become interested in Buddhism which is negative. Here there is some reason, you know, why Western, you know, young people become interested in Buddhism or Zen.

So young generation, you know, in America became tired of, you know, materialistic culture, and they start to realize what will become of America if we, you know, push this kind of effort. So maybe this is wrong. We started to realize something-something missing in our culture. So that is why Buddhism is now developing in this country.

But still there is, I feel, slight, you know, difference, and we Buddhists are not so interested in success in life or achievement of some special thing or propagating our way. Before we try to propagate our way, we try to accept the teaching completely. Unless-until we have strong confidence in our teaching, we do not try to, you know, push our teaching to someone else. And we understand that to have good understanding or to accept teaching as his own is already the best way to propagate our way.

To study Buddhism is to teach Buddhism. And to know ourselves is to know others. This is, you know, our way. So instead of working towards outside, we work towards inside. And this is rather hard, you know. I think you are trying very hard to work towards inside. But still, there is slight difference, you know. It must be so, you know. It is quite natural for you to be so but-but when we, you know, make one step further from this stage in our study of Buddhism, we will-we must have-and it is natural to have this kind of difficulties. If we are not patient enough, you know, to get through this kind of difficulty-unless we make more effort

on this point, our effort will not make much sense in its true sense.

So now what we want is-what we should do here is to develop our study from your bottom of your heart. That is the most important point. You must be very faithful to yourself. And even though you cannot accept a teaching of Buddhism, you should try best effort to understand it and accept it. That does not mean, you know, I'm forcing Buddhism to you. But from your side, you should make more effort and-to accept or to think over and over what Buddha is suggesting for us.

And next point, maybe, we should not, you know, try to be successful, you know. We should be concentrated in our effort rather than work, you know, towards people. Of course, we should-we should not reject people, but we should not invite many people unnecessarily. So once someone come, we should try best effort to show our way, if possible, not by mouth, but by our actual practice.

And we should, I think, as already we started, we must start a kind of study-mutual kind of study, or more wider study from various viewpoint. For an instance, inviting Japanese priest here and-or study-go to Japan and study Japanese Buddhism, whether it is good or bad. If it is bad, we should know why it is so bad. Bad thing may be some medicine for us.

I don't think, you know, Buddhism in Japan is so healthy now. I must acknowledge [laughs] this point. I am sorry, but [laughs]-I am sorry for Japanese Buddhism, but I have to acknowledge it-accept it. But it does not mean there is no need to study Japanese Buddhism. Japanese Buddhism is still alive in some way. And some people started very sincere study, and we see the result of their study in magazine or in various books they publish. They found out many things which was not came to our knowledge yet. So the study is going, anyway. But even though they make best effort in their study that will not be-that will not-never be perfect. So I think American people also start this kind of sincere study. And from various angle, if we study Buddhism, will come to the good understanding of Buddhism.

The negative attitude in Buddhism arised [arose] from deep insight-insight of our human nature. Why we study Buddhism is because we find some weak point in our human-human nature. Without-if you accept various desires you have, you know, or instinct you have, there is not much reason why you have to practice, for an instance, Zen. Because you, you know, you know the good point and bad point of thinking mind or emotional activity. We practice zazen because that is the only way to go beyond thinking mind-emotional activity.

Since I have been explaining negative, you know, negative practice in positive way [laughs], so it is difficult for me now to explain it negative way [laughs]. But actually, what is written in the scripture is negative side of Buddhism almost all the time, you know. Their description is concentrated on negative side of Buddhism. But when you realize why

they take negative viewpoint, then we can take a positive practice to make best use of our desires.

Visitor: Excuse me. Excuse me. May I ask a question? Did anyone park a station wagon at the corner of Laguna and Rose? [4-6 words unclear.]

Zazen practice is become attracting people, you know, because of its positive side of attaining enlightenment, you know, or improving your state of mind: to have some, you know, power-physical or spiritual power to do things as you may want to do-or to solve your everyday problem, or to improve your mental activity, or to make your-make yourself physically strong. But actually in-especially in shikantaka Soto practice, is very negative.

[Laughing.] You may be very much discouraged to practice Soto shikantaza. But it is so, you know. We try not [to] think in our practice. We try not [to] see things, you know. Or we try not [to] hear things. But sound-if sound come, we-naturally we will hear it. But we shouldn't be disturbed by it. We shouldn't be curious about the sound-what it is. How we do it, you know, is to have right posture. To have-"right posture" means, you know, if-I-if we want-I want to explain what is right posture, you know, it should not be like this, or it should not be like that. Or it you are not like this or like that [probably gesturing, laughs]. If you are not like this or like that, this is right posture, we say, you know [laughs].

So from the beginning to end, our practice is negative [laughs]. There is no other way to explain it, you know, well-so well in positive way. Don't, you know, be bothered by it-don't be bothered by it. Don't see it, or don't-[interrupted by coughing]. So how you don't think is, you know, just to be like this [laughs]. That-just to be like mountain, according to Dogen-zenji, gotsubuchi.[1] When you are like this [probably gestures], you know, this posture which is not, you know, this way or that way will-practice-various practice-that posture will work on various problems you will have.

So if the sound-even [if] the sound come-if you are not disturbed by it, there is real practice. And we say this is not something you can attain by practice. It is something which you have originally when you are just you-when you are not something more than that.

So we have, you know, very difficult time to convince or to explain our shikantaza. If-we want to explain it, so we rather concentrated on practice. Actually, to practice our way is the only way to understand what is, you know-what Buddha meant by not being so and not being that: just to be like that or to see things as it is.

So even though we sh- [partial word]-we must study Buddhism from various angle, but we should [not?] neglect [?] our practice, you know, which is only way to-to understand what he meant, you know-what

Buddha meant by his sermon. The purpose of our practice is not to attain anything or to-to make you a Zen student. Purpose of practice is just to be yourself, you know, nothing more than that. And by experience, various teachers and patriarchs found out this is the best way, you know, to see-to encounter Buddha, you know. Only when we practice zazen and when we have complete practice, we could-we can understand which is difficult to understand in-by our study, through scriptures or through sermon.

And when you understand what Buddha meant through practice, you will not be attached to Buddha's sermon or Rinzai way or Soto way. There is no Rinzai way or Soto way in shikantaza. Maybe to say "shikantaza" is already wrong. Although we have this kind of zeal in our practice, but it does not mean to stick to something. To get free from attachment, or to get free from teaching, we practice zazen. So negative way of expression or positive way of expression doesn't matter. Whichever it is, we can understand what he meant. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... be always negative. We do not deny that we exist here, eating something, doing something, thinking something, feeling something. Just to feel-just to think properly, we actually practice zazen. So if one thing happen, that is the whole picture of Buddhism. If some-another thing happen, that is whole picture of the Buddhism. So there is, you know, no need to stick to some particular thing. Positive or a negative is on your side, not Buddhist side.

So the practice we have is not just negative practice. It is the way to jump into the reality, or jump into the actual reality we are [in] right now, without any hesitation of thinking about it, or choosing the way, without concerning negative or positive. Just do it, you know.

Maybe that will be the most positive way. And at the same time, it is the most negative way because you stop everything. That is very negative. But at the same time [laughs], that is the most positive way, you know. From this viewpoint, we put stress on our practice so that we can study our way from various directions without any confusion.

So before you discuss, you know, about our way of putting our teaching in word, maybe better to have actual practice and think what it is, actually, and see what it is-what does it mean.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed by Katharine Shields (May 22, 2000) and checked by Bill Redican (9/11/00).

[1] Suzuki-roshi pronounced it "gotsugochi," which may be related to gotsugotsu (Jap.): high and dignified; upright; immovable; steadfastly, intently; used to describe single-minded practice, especially zazen. Possibly found in Shobogenzo "Gyobutsu-yuigi."

## **5 - Zen Center and City Practice**

Sunday, May 10, 1970

Zen Center and City Practice  
City Center, San Francisco

This morning I want to reflect on our long, long practice, which we started maybe more than ten years ago. The purpose of Zen Center is, as you know, to provide a Zen meditation hall or whatever it is, you know: some place to practice zazen, and practice with some teacher, was the original intention of Zen Center. And with this purpose we organized non-profit organization. And now, here, when we, you know, acquired this building, we named this building Mahabodhisattva Zendo. It is-reflecting on our practice that was, you know, nothing but the bodhisattva way: to help others and to help ourselves.

In the meantime we had Tassajara zendo because we needed some place where we can practice our way, putting everything aside and being completely involved in our practice-not-maybe not completely, but [laughs] more completely [laughs]-almost completely. For a human being this "almost" is always necessary [laughs], or else we cannot survive. "Almost" is, you know, actually the secret of practice.

But anyway, we can practice our way almost completely putting everything aside. That was the purpose of Tassajara zendo, and that we have that-this special zendo means at the same time to-we can understand actually what is Zen-Zen practice in more traditional way, or else, you know, or else we do not know what we are doing here-unless we know some background of our practice. In here, it is difficult to, you know, have-to have full understanding of our practice here and with-what we are doing here.

It is something like to know your family, you know. When we know your friend's family, you will know your friend, you know, much better. Even though your-you know your friend-you think you know your friend, if you do not know the background of your friend, you-sometime it is difficult to understand your friend.

If you want to know who is Buddha, it is, you know, necessary for us to know-to have some understanding of his culture background. This is always true. And for most of us, because of various reasons, it is difficult to study our way in Japan because of language difficulties and some peculiar, you know, development of Zen in Japan. So as much as

possible we want to practice Zen in the most original, you know, more original, you know, form of Zen. So it may be quite natural for us to go back to Dogen and to know his way-and forgetting, you know, everything developed after him-and to go back to Dogen, or to go back to Bodhidharma or Buddha, will be the most important point for us.

It is not so easy to, you know, to establish Dogen-zenji's way or Bodhidharma's way or Buddha's way, but we-at least we should try. It is much better, even though it is not perfect, it is much better than trying to, you know, introduce something else [laughs], you know, we-that is also up to our effort.

But most important thing will be how we practice so-called-it bodhisattva way-to help ourselves and to help others. This point is missing in Japan. Original bodhisattva way is to help ourselves is simultaneously to help others. In Japan, when we help, you know, others, we forget [laughs], you know, to help ourselves. We, you know-it is-sometime it is good-it should be like that, but if, you know, our zazen practice-when zazen practice does not follow, you know, we lose our way. We will be-easily become a-will be-we will be easily enslaved by people [laughs]. That is not bodhisattva way.

Without losing, you know, ourselves in city life, you know, to help others-how to help others is the point. We should be-whatever we do we should be Buddhist. To be Buddhist should not be just to practice zazen in calm nice building like a hermit [laughs]. That is not our way. Mahayana bodhisattva way is to-wherever we are, without losing our practice and help others is our way.

To realize-for actual realization of our practice, we should keep our way, you know, as simple as possible, so that many people can follow our way easily. Here I must say "as much as possible" [laughs], because our human life is already complicated and difficult [laughs]. So when I say "simple way," you may think-if you go to Zen Center, they are observing very simple way-much simpler [laughs], you will, you know, say "much simpler way than our mundane practice." But that is not permissible [laughs].

We-I think we must have, you know, almost-almost-almost same difficulties as, you know, city people have here too. Or else, you know, as we are human being which-whose life is always-whose mentality is-as, you know, very complicated, anyway. Wherever we are it doesn't make much difference because our mentality, you know, is-because of our mentality we have very complicated life.

So even though you come here, your life cannot be simpler than city life. The difference is, you know, we have-we are not inst- [partial word]-we are enjoying the complicated, you know, life, when people in the city is involved-being involved in various things and being confused in the activities which is going with them. Anyway, even though you

come here, you know, so that you can help others as much as possible- so that we can give our seat [?] more people as much as possible, you know, we must have some rules-which is-which should be very practical.

To set up practical, you know, practice, you know, so that we can practice our way more quickly without spending much time-and giving to share our facility with more people, we must make best effort to fulfill our bodhisattva spirit. As our, you know, purpose of Zen Center is like this, naturally we open this place, you know, for everyone. And because we open-because we open our facility to neighbors-our neighbors, we will have constantly new students.

To share this building with new students, we should, you know, give them some guidance, or show them some example of our practice, so that they can feel better in this building. So that we can help them, we must have some skill, you know. That is why we, you know, must have Tassajara. So new student, when they come, if they want, they can stay here longer, and they can go to Tassajara, and coming back from Tassajara, acquiring some, you know, way to help people-coming back here and help people here. In this way, I think we can continue our-we can fulfill the purpose of Zen Center.

This is the main, you know, structure or spiritual structure of Zen Center and Tassajara. No one did not try to be so [laughs]-no one had this kind of idea from the beginning [laughs], but for-while we are, you know, practicing zazen, naturally this kind of, you know, framework was resulted or set up by all of us. And I think this is very meaningful thing. Something, you know, so-called-it bodhisattva way appeared in this country, without knowing what it was [laughs].

As we already, you know-as you call this building "Page Street"-maybe "300 Page" or "Page Street Center" [laughs] or-. Pretty soon you will-all of us will decide "Page Street Zen Center" or "300 Page," or I don't know [laughs], and Bodhisattva Zendo, you know. Maha [1] is-maha is-something, you know-when we say-when we write "Mahabodhisattva" it sound, you know, something great [laughs]. Maybe "Bodhisattva Zendo" will be enough [laughs, laughter]. But if we say "Mahabodhisattva Zendo," then more people will come [laughs, laughter]. That is a purpose of inviting, you know, more people here-Mahabodhisattva Zendo [laughs, laughter]. That is also, you know, a part of bodhisattva practice. But if I say so, Zen Center should reserve for the name maha-not small one [laughs]. The Bodhisattva Zendo will be-each one of your home will be the Bodhisattva Zendo. This is Mahabodhisattva Zendo [laughs], where there is-there is many small zendo in, you know, residence-residential part of Page Street Zendo.

To come here, I think, each one of you must have struggled pretty hard, I think, you know. But anyway, we are very fortunate to be here and to practice here in its pure, original sense.

As, you know, Buddhism is very, very old, and Buddhist spirit penetrated every corner of our culture in Japan, China, and India, Buddhism is like a great river, extending its branch stream in various kinds of mountains and fields, but the water, you know, which is running is the same: sometime muddy, sometime pure, but water is water. Muddy water can be a pure water, and pure water could be sometime muddy water. We should not reject the branch of the river because the water is not so clear. We should accept whatever the river could be. But we should not forget all the water is the same-originally the same. So only by zazen practice, you will find out pure water in muddy water, without being attached to pureness-clearness of water.

Dogen-zenji says Zen practice is for everyone, whether they are clever or they are dull, man or woman, or old and young. Zen is for everyone, because he could see the pure-pureness of the water in muddy water. So when we, you know-why we practice zazen here is to find out the pure spiritual practice, even though they do not-they are not aware of it. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

[To find the spiritual pure practice in][2] city life, this is the reason why we practice zazen. But this is, you know, not something-this practice is not something you can compare with some, you know, ordinal [ordinary], you know, activity or practice. Only when you, you know, understand what is practice, you can, you know, start this kind of pure practice. So if you want to-to help people in its true sense, I think you should at least to go to Tassajara-you should go to Tassajara and practice longer.

I am afraid that Tassajara, you know, will be-will become a very important practice-Tassajara practice will become very important for-for Zen or for Buddhism because of various reason. I wish you can practice your zazen in various places, you know, but more and more I feel some burden, you know, on our shoulders. This is not so, you know [laughs], agreeable feeling because it is too much for us.

I want to share this kind of burden with many people, as much as possible. But actually, you know, we need your help. With your help, I think we can share the great burden which was given by, you know, our successive teachers.

Physically, you know, I feel much better this year [laughs]. So, you know, I may survive [laughs]. I don't know how long [laughs], but, you know, let's try hard, and I want you help us, you know.

Thank you very much.

---

---



Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Katharine Shields (May 4, 2000) and Bill Redican (May 15, 2000).

[1] maha (Sanskrit): great.

[2] The text in brackets was supplied by the tape operator, who recorded on tape: "The words that are missed here by turning over the cassette are: 'To find the spiritual pure practice in city life.'"

## **6 - How to Observe Precepts**

Sunday, May 17, 1970

How to Observe Precepts  
San Francisco

This morning I want to talk about Zen-Zen precepts. As you know, precepts is not-real meaning of precepts is not just rules. It is rather our way of our life. When we, you know, organize our life, there you see something like rules, you know. Even though you are not intending to observe some particular rule, but there you see some rules.

As soon as you get up, you know, to wake you completely up, you wash your face, you know. That is our precepts-one of the precepts. And at a certain time you eat breakfast, when you become hungry. That is, you know-it looks like you are observing some rules to eat breakfast at some certain time. But it is actually the way of life you follow or you are doing, you know, naturally in that way. So if you practice zazen, you know, there is some rules in your practice. So zazen practice is, at the same time, precepts-one of the precepts. So zazen and precept, if you really understand how we-how Buddhist get the idea of precepts, you will understand the relationship between Zen and precept. The precept is just the way of life.

As a Zen students, we rather, you know, put emphasis on our everyday practice, including zazen practice. But when you think about how to, you know, cope with the problem you have in your everyday life, you will realize how important it is to practice zazen. The only power of practice will help you in its true sense.

For an instance, you know, when you hit mokugyo [laughs], if you try to, you know, control chanting, you know [laughs], by here: "Please face this way," you know. "Oh, that is too fast. So I must make them-make them-make their chanting slower." Or, "That is too slow. I must make their chanting little bit faster." That is-but actually, how you do it is not by here.

If you try to do it by your hand [laughs] or your mind, it doesn't work. Only when you do it by your hara, you know, the feeling-by the feeling

you have in zazen practice, then [laughs], you know, you can do it. Just by your mind or by your hand, you cannot do anything. It doesn't work. Student will not follow your mokugyo. Only when you do it, you know, with your zazen, you know, power, then you can control it.

When you can control yourself very well, you know, without having any idea of controlling anything, you know, when you do in right pace, then you can control yourself. And when you can control yourself like you sit in zazen posture-zazen, then you can control the chanting perfectly. This is true with your everyday practice, you know.

When you do something, just, you know, by your skill or just by your mind, you know, you cannot-you will not be supported by people, and you-so you cannot help others. Only when you do it with zazen mind you can help others. And you will be naturally supported by people. This is also-so, if-if the precepts, you know, is some moral code which you have in your mind, that precepts doesn't work at all [laughs]. When you forget all the precepts and, without realizing-without trying to observe it as you eat when you are hungry, you know, then there is-naturally there is precepts. So when you forget all about precepts, and when you can observe it quite naturally, there is precepts, and that is how you keep our precepts

In your zazen practice, you know, you have-you just sit. You have no idea of attaining anything. You just sit. And what do we mean by "just sit" is-when we, you know, just sit, we already include everything, and we are not even a part of this cosmic being. We are one with everything. When we are one with everything, you know, we include, you know-this is just explanation, but-the feeling is you include everything, and actually this is not just-it is not true just for zazen.

When you, you know, drink a cup of tea, you know, that activity include everything. Actually it is so. Because you say "this is tea" and "this is me" [laughing], it doesn't include anything. You are here and tea is there, you know. This is just tea, which doesn't include anything. But when you, you know, drink it without thinking what it is, and being with-completely with the-one with the tea, because you have no idea of "tea" or no idea of "you," this activity, you know, include everything.

So, as Dogen-zenji said, if your activity-everyday activity doesn't include everything, that is not Buddhist activity. It looks like almost [laughs] impossible, you know, to feel in that way, but actually if you realize, you know, or if you experience what is zazen practice, you know, then, you know, you will understand what is your everyday life and how everyday life should be for yourself and for others. And each activity-you will realize that each activity should be zazen.

The famous Zen master Ummon[1]-his words-koan-koans are very famous for-for its subtlety-very subtle. Now he explained this point in various way. But this point is, you know, difficult to explain unless-the

only way to understand is through practice. By words it is almost impossible, but in Zen mondo-question and answer, the-he tried to express this point in various way.

So later, the Zen masters, you know-referring to his point and said, "His word is like a," you know, "like a cup and its lid," you know, "which fit very well" [laughs]-a cup and its lid-cover-which fit, you know, perfectly. Or, "Follow the wave and drive the wave." Follow the waves and drive waves. Following waves and driving waves. Do you understand? Follow-waves come. The boat follow the wave and drive the wave like mokugyo, you know, follow [laughs]-follow the chanting and drive the chanting [laughs]. Do you understand? Follow the chanting and drive the chanting.

If you follow, you know-if you just follow the chanting, your mokugyo will get slower and slower and slower [laughs]. So-but unless you listen to them, you know, you cannot control. So you have to listen to them, and at the same time you should lead-you should drive their chanting. So it is not just follow the chanting, but it is-you should drive the chanting too. Follow-following the chanting and driving the chanting-the way-how you do it, you know? If you ask him how you do it, he maybe-he will say [knocks on wood twice quickly, laughs], "What are you thinking about?" [Laughter.] "Just sit," he may say so.

How can I make, you know, the perfect cover for this cup [probably referring to his water cup]? If you-the only way is, you know, to-just to make a lid and cover it. That is the way. But if you think too much about it, and if you work on it too much, the lid will become smaller and smaller [laughs]-a little bit more [laughs]. Then it will get smaller and smaller and it will not fit. If you do not, you know, observe the cup, you know, it may be too big. So observing the cup and making it, and [probably gestures]-that's the way [laughs]. That is, you know, how you practice zazen. That is power of practice.

So to know the center of things, you know-or to have whole picture of things or events is the point of our practice. And how you do it is to find, you know, to know the center of yourself. When you know where is your center in zazen, you know, that is the center of yourself and everything. When-if you do not lose your center wherever you are, it means that you are boss [laughs, laughter]. If you lose your center, you know, you are not. You are, you know, already mixed up even though you, you know, you insist yourself you are not in the center.

So how you keep our precepts is how you organize your life. And how you organize your life is how you practice zazen. This point is explained in various way. When we practice zazen, you know, there is nothing outside of us. Everything is-all-whole being is included in our practice. So the merit of practice is just for yourself. Because there is only one whole being, there is no "you," you know, or no objective world. Objective world and subjective world is same in our practice-is one in

our practice.

We, you know, explained in this way, but it is explanation of our zazen practice. It is so when you just sit without involved in thinking mind or emotional activity. When you just, you know, remain on your black cushion, then that is the practice we mean-which is explained in various way.

So, you know, what Bodhidharma said, "No merit." [Laughs.] "No merit." What will be the merit of practice? No merit [laughs], because there is nothing but practice. So there is no merit to give to anyone or to have-to own it for yourself. No merit. Merit itself is zazen. Zazen itself is merit. So no merit-zazen-just zazen.

If you say "merit," there is no zazen. If you say zazen, there is no merit. So, he said, "No merit." Whatever you do there is no merit. If there is merit, that is, you know, dualistic practice. If you observe precepts in that way, that is, you know, heresy [laughs]. If you have-if you think, "I have to," you know, "observe this precept and this precept and ten precepts, one by one," that is wrong practice.

For a long, long time, many Buddhists tried to observe our precepts with great effort, you know. So-but that kind of practice is, for us, a violence [violation?] of the precepts [laughs] because, you know, you-your precepts became-fall into dualistic precepts. "Here is precept. I have to observe it." That is not the way we practice zazen.

The Mahayana Buddhists said, you know, dualistic practice is the violence [violation?] of practice for Mahayana students. Why is it? Because when we observe rigidly, you know, or when we are caught by precepts, that is violence [violation?] of precepts. Then, if we have no idea of precepts what will happen? [Laughs.] That may be also a violence [violation?] of the precepts too.

There is precept, but, you know, the precept should be observed without any idea of observing it. That is how you practice-how you observe precepts. In short, when you observe precepts in the same way as you practice zazen-and that is perfect precepts transmitted from Buddha to us.

So as a Buddhist, whether you know the each of the sixteen precepts or two hundred fifty precepts or not, you know, we should be able to practice-observe precepts. And when we practice zazen we should not just, you know-we should not practice our way just "this is zazen." This zazen include, you know, various study of Buddhism. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

This morning when I join you, you know, I felt a deep feeling. I think that is because you were sitting just before you coming. This kind of feeling is important. This is the real sangha, you know. With this feeling

I think you should carry on our practice and our life in this building.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Katharine Shields (May 16, 2000) and Bill Redican (May 16, 2000).

[1] Ummon Bun'en (Jap.) or Yunmen Wenyan (Chin.): 864-949. Chan master.

## **7 - Money and Labor**

Sunday, May 24, 1970

Money and Labor  
City Center, San Francisco

Good morning. Actually this morning I asked Yoshida-roshi[1] to give some talk to you, but as he-as she has just arrived from Japan, and she said she is not ready to speak yet, so I am going to speak [say] something.

I introduced her already to you, but some of you here may not know her, so I think I have to introduce Yoshida-roshi first. [Aside of 1-2 sentences in Japanese.] Yoshida-roshi. [She answers briefly in Japanese. Suzuki-roshi then whispers Domo arigato.]

She is one of the important disciples of Hashimoto-roshi who passed away-

[Susuki-roshi asks Yoshida-roshi a question in Japanese about Hashimoto-roshi. She answered briefly in Japanese.] Ah.

-who passed away four years ago.[2] Hashimoto-roshi is famous teacher who studied various old rituals and form of especially okesa and robes and-besides study of Shobogenzo. By Hashimoto-roshi our rituals improved a lot, so we are so fortunate to have her here.

Joyce-Zenkosan-has been studying with-under her at Kaizen-ji[3] near Nagoya Temple, and we expect her always to come and give more fundamental understanding of our rituals and way of observing things-not only just rituals, but also how we should behave according to Dogen-zenji's way.

As Dogen-zenji, you know-since Dogen-zenji, it is seven hundred- more than seven hundred and fifty years [since he was born], so everything is

not so clear. And meantime, you know, our way [was] mixed up with some other things which was not so good. So still we are studying his way, what was his way. And because we have many things which we cannot accept completely, so that is why we study Dogen-zenji's way. We think Dogen-zenji's way cannot be like that [laughs]. That is why we study. Maybe that is wrong-wrong, but anyway we want to accept teaching sincerely with our heart or true mind. That is why we have to study. And we think he is the most sincere student or teacher among the teachers we had-we have had.

This morning I want to speak on relationship between our everyday life, especially relationship between material and our-we Buddhists: what kind of, you know, attitude we have about material. When we say "spiritual life," you know, people [are] liable to ignore material. That [laughs] is big mistake, according to Dogen-zenji. Material and, you know, mind or spirit is same, according to Buddhism. We-we-we know that all-all of us has buddha-nature, but, if so, we are very careful how to-the relationship between-between us. But we tend to ignore the relationship between we human being and other being, like plants or river-especially, you know, food.

You know-you-you think food is very important, so you study food. But the way you study food is not always right because you put emphasis on yourself, you know, ignoring the value of food, you know. We have very selfish discrimination about food [laughs]. I think that is a kind of selfish attitude of human being. According to Buddha, everything has buddha-buddha-nature. If so, we should respect everything as you respect yourself. That is, you know, main point. So how you, you know, appreciate food is the most important point-before you have discrimination about food.

Buddhists from all the time-all-always noticed this point very strictly. You may say that is too much. But, you know, for an instance, my father[4] was a priest, you know. When he was going home, he, you know, if he find some, you know, vegetables on the roadside, he picked up [laughs] and he brought the old vegetables the farmers and people-which farmers and people throw away. And he cooked it [laughing] for us, and so I had to eat it.

There was small river in front of the temple. The many rotten old, you know, vegetables would [come] floating down from upper river [laughs, laughter]. So as soon as he find some vegetable-like thing, you know, not exactly [laughing, laughter]-to me, you know, that was not exactly vegetables. It-it might be good for compost [laughs], but not for eat. But he cooked it, and he said, "Everything has buddha-nature. [Laughs, laughter.] You should not throw away." And wherever he goes, you know, he talked about how valuable the food is, you know. You should not throw it-throw them away.

So my teacher, you know, my master[5] was my father's disciple, so he

was also very strict with, you know, food. Here you say, you know, you study what food is good for you, you know, what kind of food you should take. But to me, you know-and they are very much proud of their knowledge of, you know, food: how much, you know, nourishment some certain food has, and this is acid, and this is [laughs]-this food contain a lot of-what do you say-alkali?-yeah-opposite of acid. But, you know, to me it is-yeah, I understand. I think that is good [laughs]. But before you say so, you know, you forget something [laughs]. You are-you make-you make-I wonder if you don't make big mistake, you know.

To appreciate the value of food is first. And what kind of food you choose is next, I think. Dogen-zenji, you know, left instruction about our cook, what kind of, you know, spirit we must have when you become a cook in the monastery. He says the duty of cook in a monastery is completely different from usual, you know, cook in city. Completely different. So you should know what is the duty of a cook. And he left, you know, Tenzo Kyokun-instruction for the cook in the monastery.[6]

And in the-in his instruct- [partial word]-one of his instructions was, "Don't say kome." Kome is "[uncooked] rice," you know. You should say okome. O is honorific, you know, prefix to kome. Kome is rice; okome means, you know, we-if-when we say okome we respect, you know, expression of-as a[n] expression of respect we say, without saying kome. Dogen-zenji says, "You shouldn't say kome. You should say okome."

So Japanese-most Japanese people, you know, put honorific prefix to everything. Instead of saying chawan,[7] we say ochawan. Instead of saying kesa, we say okesa. That is, you know-this kind of understanding is the understanding we Buddhists have had. Dogen-zenji put emphasis on this point. He didn't throw away even leftover water. He respectfully returned the water to the river. All the confusion we have right now in our society comes from the lack of understanding of what is, you know, about what is material.

You know, in our society we respect labor, you know. Labor is [laughs], you know, the most important element when you value things. But before you, you know, count, you know, value [of] the labor, there must be something you should think, you know-something which was given to us. There is something here, and if you work on it, you know, it will serve your purpose.

But labor is not-is not only thing which you should count. Most you-you pay only for labor. That is, I think, a kind of arrogance of human being. You should-you ignore the buddha-nature which everything has. If we notice this point, our system of life will change a lot. Of course, you know, labor is important. Labor is-why labor is important is labor is-will be-make sense when you work on, with respect, work on things with respect. That is the-should be the true nature of labor, you know. Labor is-without, you know, understanding or without having deep respect to

the things which was given, and to only to count labor is big mistake. So labor doesn't make any sense. Labor is, you know, when we work on things with respect, that is our human life in its true sense.

We, you know, we pay, you know, mostly you think you pay for the labor, but, you know, I don't think that is right understanding. You pay for the labor and for the things which was given to us by God, according to your understanding, or by Buddha. Only when we have this kind of understanding of things, our system or economic-our economic system will change. I am not, you know, economist [laughs, laughter], but I feel in that way.

So money is also, you know-should be treated in that way. You pay-you work on things with respect. Money is, you know, to exchange the value of things and labor, you know. So money include, you know-behind money there is respect for the-for the material or for the things, you know, which was given to us from Buddha, and our respect to the labor, the effort someone else made.

And to exchange means to purify, you know. You-when you exchange things, you know, it means to purify things. If you pay some money, you know, you don't w- [partial word]-you have no-you don't owe anything for anyone, you know. But that is also, you know-something is missing in that idea. Even though you pay for the labor, you know, there is something which you cannot pay [laughs]: that is, you know, the value of things which was given to you by Buddha.

But only when you pay, with respect, you know, for the things which was given to us for the labor which was worked by someone else, with respect, then, you know, in this sense, if you pay some money when you get something with this-only when you do it with this kind of understanding, you can purify your life, your activity of changing things. Without this, you know, idea, if you-even though you pay for the things you get, you owe a lot of [laughs]-you owe a lot.

So that is why, you know, we must have always deep respect for things, for money, for labor. This is, you know, Dogen-zenji's, you know, idea of everyday life.

So the money is not yours. It belongs to our society. Because you think the money is yours, you know [laughing], you will even, you know, you sometime you think to-"money is dirty." You think in that way-maybe some people may think, or some people may, you know, attach to the money too much. That is, you know, the-that kind of, you know, idea is dirty idea [laughs]-not pure idea. When you say "money is dirty," your understanding is dirty [laughs, laughter]. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... won't be dirty, if material which was given to us is, you know, pure or the effort we make is pure.



Here, you know-so to accumulate money can be allowable. Only you accumulate to be ready to, you know, go to hospital [laughs, laughter], to be ready to die, you know-funeral parlor [laughing, laughter]. It costs a lot of money. I have \$1000-\$2000-a lot of money [laughs]-so, you know, we must have maybe \$500 or \$1000.

But to rely on the power of the money is wrong. That is the-that is the way Buddha did not like at all. At that time, the money system was not so strong, so he said, "Don't accumulate things. You should eat," you know, "you should live on the food you-food which was offered just before you eat. And you should not beg [for] more than the food which will suffice next meal," you know.

This is, I think, big-I think Buddha was big scholar of economy [laughs]. That is, you know, the most important, you know, point of economy, I think, you know. Why we have money is to exchange things. We should not, you know, stop the current of the money. So in this sense, you know, we say everything changes. That is Buddha's, you know, first principle. Everything changes, including, you know-money is the-not symbol, but, you know-money express the value of or-value of things, which change. If the value, you know, if things is valuable because we can eat, you know, or we can live on it, then money also should-should not stop. If money stops, it-that is business depression [laughs]. If money is going smoothly all over our-in our society, our society is healthy.

So money is-money purifies our, you know, world. It is not something dirty. It is very pure. It is very important thing for us, when we take good care of it, when we respect it. Because you don't respect-you don't pay enough respect to the money, money become dirty. Dirty. Doesn't matter how much money you have, you know. Even [if] the money is sm- [partial word]-amount of money you have [is] little, you should pay respect to it, and you should make best use of it. How you make best use of it is to make it, you know, work-to make it help our society.

The other day, you know, we officers discussed how we should run this Zen Center, you know. We don't like to say you should pay [laughs]: "If you want to come and study with us, you should pay some money," you know. We don't like, but for us, you know, that is a part of practice, you know. Just sit in black cushion is not only practice, you know [laughs]. The all-how you treat money is, you know, very important practice for us.

Most people forget all about how you survive here, you know [laughs]. You think you can survive alone in the remoted mountain [laughs], but even though you are in remoted mountain, or that you can go to the big mountain, is because of the money [laughs]. You cannot work to the Sierra or Rocky Mountain. It is very foolish idea, you know, to ignore-to-not to understand how we survive here. If you, you know, miss this

point, whatever you say, that is payback [?]. It is much better to-to read white paper [laughs].

Before we study Buddhism, we should know what we are doing and how we survive here. So we think this is a part of practice, but we do not, you know-we do not reject people just because of money. We-we are ready to help with each other, but each one of us should purify our zendo with money [laughs], first of all [laughs, laughter]. That is why I say: "You should pay! Give me some money!" [Laughs, laughter.] If you give me some money, someone will take-will take good care of it, you know. We should not accumulate money for Buddha [laughs], because Buddha didn't-didn't like to accumulate anything.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Yoshida Eshun-roshi: Teacher of okesa sewing in the lineage of Hashimoto Eko-roshi. Hashimoto-roshi (teacher of Katagiri-roshi) learned the Nyoho-e pattern of the okesa from Kodo Sawaki-roshi. Sawaki-roshi in turn had studied, at Koki-ji temple, the style of okesa sewn by the 18th-century Shingon and Ritsu master Jiyun Sonja, who had reconstructed the traditional pattern for the okesa from the Mahavagga and other Vinaya-pitaka texts. [Source: "Notes on Okesa Lineage at Zen Center," an interview with Shohaku Okumura-roshi, 23 February 1996, recorded by Shosan Victoria Austin.] See also SR-71-06-20.

[2] In SR-69-09-00A, Suzuki-roshi gave 1967.

[3] Not found in Zengaku Daijiten.

[4] Suzuki Butsumon Sogaku (c. 1858-1933).

[5] Gyokujun So-on (c. 1877-1934).

[6] Tenzo Kyokun ("Instructions for the Tenzo") is a fascicle of Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[7] chawan (Jap.): teacup, rice bowl.

## **8 - Sandokai Lecture #1**

Wednesday, May 27, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #1  
Tassajara

[This is the first in a series of lectures on the Sandokai

(Chin. Cantong qi or Tisan-tiung-chii), a poem by Sekito Kisen.

Historical details of the series are appended to the end of this lecture. Japanese transliteration in all lectures is by Kazuaki Tanahashi (1999). English translation in all lectures is by Suzuki-roshi.]

[The following line of the Sandokai is discussed in this lecture:

Line 1 Chikudo daisen no shin

Line 1 The mind of the great sage of India]

I am so grateful to have chance to discuss about or to talk about Sandokai. This is one of the most important teaching for us. And meaning is so deep, and the expression is so smooth, that it is, you know, pretty difficult to have some feeling, you know, when you read it.

Sekito Musai-daishi[1] (his posthumous name is Musai-daishi), and he is [dharma] grandson of the Sixth Patriarch[2] [Eno] and son of Seigen,[3] the Seventh Patriarch. As you know, under the Sixth Patriarch there were many disciples, but the most important disciples are Nangaku[4] and Seigen-Seigen and Nangaku. And later, under Seigen, Tozan[5] appeared, and under Nangaku, Rinzai [6] appeared. And Rinzai and Soto is the most powerful schools under the Sixth Patriarch.

Sekito's, you know, way-Seigen's way is more gentle in comparison to Nangaku's way. And Sekito's [Seigen's] way may be, you know, elder brother's way, you know, who is mostly gentle [laughs], you know. Nangaku's way is, you know, maybe like second boy or third boy's way, who is rather naughty [laughs]. You know, in Japan, mostly, if someone is very gentle, you may be the first son [laughs], we say, you know. And sometime the first boy is not so able [laughs]. We say "Soryo no jin roku." [7] You know, Soryo no-the first one, first boy is mostly very gentle. And we, you know, understand in that way when we talk about Soto and Rinzai. Tatsugami-roshi[8] put emphasis on memmitsu no kafu.[9] That is more Soto way. Memmitsu is "very careful" and "very considerate" and "very," anyway, "very careful" in doing things. That is more Seigen's way.

Anyway, Sekito, who wrote this poem, was is the [dharma] grandson of the Sixth Patriarch. His way, in one word, to find everything in his mind. So in other word, to have the Great Mind which include everything is his way of practice. So if you read this Sandokai, you will understand this point clearly.

Usually, you know, our understanding is, you know, to-we-even though we say "to observe things-as-it-is," you know, actually we are not observing things-as-it-is when we think, you know, "Here is my friend," you know, "There is a mountain," "There is the moon," you know. When we say so, the friend or mountain or the moon is not, you know, the moon itself, or the mountain itself, or your friend himself. It is, you know-friend- You, you know, think [laughs] your friend is your friend. The friend you think, you know, the mountain. The moon, you think, the moon. It is not actually the moon itself, or friend himself, or mountain itself.

You think, you know, "Here is I. And there is mountain," you know. In this case, when you observe things in that way, that is dualistic way of observing things. "Here is a- There is a mountain," you know. "I must climb up that mountain when I go to San Francisco. San Francisco is there [laughs], and I am here. So after climbing up that mountain, I have to go to San Francisco, which is," you know, "Bay Area." That is how we understand things.

That is not actually Buddhist way of observing things. We find, you know, the mountain, or San Francisco, or the moon within ourselves right here. That is, you know, our understanding. That is the mind, so-called-it "big mind," you know. Within the big mind everything exist. To see things is not like, you know, to find out things which is on the-in the shelf, you know, one, two, three, four [laughs]. That is, you know- Most people understand things in that way. But in that case, you know, "I am here, my mind is here, and there are many things on the shelf. And one, two, three, four."

The Sandokai, you know, Sandokai: San is "things," you know, san is "three." San-do-kai. San is "three"; do is "sameness." Do means "same," you know. To identify something with something else is do. And san is "three." Do is actually "oneness" or "one whole being," which means "Great Mind." The san is "many beings." San.

Kai means, you know, the- Actually, we think there is one big whole being which include everything, and there is many things which we find in one whole big being-great being. So san-do. Even though we say "many things," or actually it is many parts of one whole big being, including all of us. So if you say "many," that is many. If you say "one," that is one. "Many" or "one" is, you know, different way of describing one whole being.

To have complete understanding of this relationship between one big whole being and many things which exist in one big whole being is kai, you know. The, you know- Kai means, "to shake hand." "Hi," [laughs], "how are you?" [laughs]. When you shake hands, you know, you feel, you know, really one. You feel- You have real feeling of friendship, you know. So "many things" and "one whole being which include many

things" is a good friend, you know, or more than friend, because it is originally one. If you say "many," that is many; if you say "one," that is one. So two names of same thing [laughs] should be very good friend, you know. It is originally more than "good friend." So we say, kai. "Hi, how are you?" That is kai. This is the name of the, you know, this sutra: Sandokai.

Originally this title, Sandokai, is the title of Daoist book, you know. But in the same title, you know, he [Sekito] described Buddha's teaching in almost same way, and under the same title. That is what he tried [to do].

And what is the difference between Daoism and, you know, Buddhism is- Do you know-someone knows what is the difference? Very similar, you know. If you read it, you know, as a book it is maybe same. But way we read is different, you know. When Buddhist read it, that is Buddhist book; when Daoist, you know, read it, that is Daoism. It is rather, you know- It is actually same, you know, vegetable [laughs], but if Buddhist eat it, you know, that is, you know, Buddhist food; and if, you know, vegetarian people eat it [laughs], that is vegetarian food. There us it is just food [laughs]. There is that kind of difference.

Now we, you know- The way we eat food, you know, is not just because the vegetable-some-a kind of vegetable has some particular nourishment, you know-you know, yang, or acid, or alkaline. We, you know- To eat food is part of our practice [laughs]. That is the difference. We, you know- For sake of practice we eat food. Not just to take nourishment-to help our way, to practice Buddha's way, we eat food-not just to support ourselves as a, you know, human being or as a kind of animal like, you know, like this [laughs].

That is, you know, to treat-to eat food or to understand food or things as they-as something which exist with or without not much, you know, relationship or not much contact with our practice is Daoist way. And Buddhist way is to practice our way, we eat food. So it include always our mind, our practice: not small mind, big mind-which include things. And if we, you know, think, "This is just vegetable," you know, that is not our way. We must treat things as a part of ourselves, which exist in our practice or in our big mind. Do you understand this point?

Why we, you know- In other word, in another word, small mind means mind which is under limitation of desires, or some particular emotional, you know, understanding of, or some discrimination of good or bad, you know. "this is good," and "this is bad." So actually, even though you think you are observing things-as-it-is, but actually you are not. Why? Because of our discrimination, because of our desires, we are not observing things-as-it-is.

So Buddhist way is, after trying very hard to eliminate, you know, this kind of emotional discrimination or prejudice of good or bad, you know-

to see things-as-it-is. After doing so, it is possible to see things-as-it-is.

So, you know, when we say "thing-as-it-is," means to practice hard to get rid of our, you know, desires-not to get rid of, or [but rather] to know, to count our desires-to calculate [laughs], you know. If there is computer [laughs], you must put, you know, the data, as a-one of the data will be our desire, you know. This much desire [laughs]. And this much nourishment. And this kind of color. And how heavy is it, you know. So one of- We should count our desires in it. Then you will see the thing-as-it-is.

So usually we don't count our desires, you know. Without reflecting on our selfish judgment we say, "He is good" or "bad." Someone who is bad, you know, to me is not always bad, you know. To someone else he may be a good person, you know. In this way, we see things-as-it-is. So when we have, when we understand the mind transmitted from Buddha to us, we can see things-as-it-is.

This is buddha mind. Chikudo daisen no shin, you know. Chikudo is "India," you know, Chikudo. Daisen [means] "great sage." No shin: Shin is "mind," big mind which include everything. Chikudo daisen no shin. Shin of the great sage, daisen, of-in India. Chikudo. So Chikudo is "in India." Daisen is "great sage." No is "of." And shin is mind. "Mind of," you know, "great sage in India" [laughs]. It [the order of characters] goes opposite way, you know. Chikudo daisen no shin, you know. "In India, great sage of mind." "Mind of great sage in India."

That is the buddha's mind which include everything. In other word, the mind we have when we practice zazen is the great mind in which we don't try to see anything, you know. We stop thinking. We stop emotional activity, you know. We just sit. Whatever happen to us, we just sit. If something happen, you know, we are not bothered by it. It, you know, it is like something happen in the great sky [laughs]. Sky doesn't care [laughs] whatever happen to the sky. What kind of bird fly, the sky doesn't care. The great sky doesn't care. Even the atomic bomb [laughs]. It doesn't care, you know. That is the mind transmitted from Buddha to us.

When we sit, you know, maybe many things will happen. You may hear the sound from the stream. You may think of something, but your mind does not care. Your great mind is there, just sitting. Even though you don't see things or you don't hear, you don't think you are hearing anything, you don't think you are thinking something, maybe, you know, something is going on in the big mind. And that is the way, you know, how we observe things, you know. We don't say "good" or "bad," you know. We just sit. And we say, "Oh, good morning," that's all, you know. And we enjoy, you know, things. But we have no special, you know, attachment to it. At that time, we have full appreciation of it, but that's all. One after another, things will happen to us in that way-with full appreciation. That is the mind which is transmitted from Buddha.

That is, you know, at the same time how we practice zazen.

So if you do not practice zazen, you know, even though you enjoy some event or something, later it will cause some trouble to you [laughs], you know. Do you understand this point [laughs]? I think you have various experience of this kind. You know, because you think, you know, "This is it! It should be like this." [Laughs.] If someone makes some opposition to you, you will be angry. "No! It should be like this!" "Zen Center should be like this!" [laughs], you know. Maybe so, but it is not always so. If time changes, you know, if, you know, we-Zen Center student lose Tassajara [laughs] and move to some other mountain [laughs], the way we have here cannot be the way we will have some other place, you know.

So we shouldn't stick to some particular way, and we should be always open our mind, you know, to observe things-as-it-is, and to accept things-as-it-is. Without this preparation, if you say, you know, "This is the mountain," "This is your friend," "This is the moon," the moon will not be the moon itself. That is, you know, difference between so-called-it "naturalism" and Buddhist way.

So Buddha's teaching is the teaching of or study of human nature, you know [laughs]-how we should study, how foolish we are, you know, what kind of desire we have, or what kind of discrepancy we have. Or what kind of tendency we have. So my motto is, you know [laughs]-I don't know how to explain it [laughs]-my motto is-I am always, you know, careful-I always remember in your word, you know, "to be liable to," you know, liable to. We are liable to live like this. We are liable to say in this way. When, you know, we should be, you know- We should remember this word: "liable to" or "tendency." You know, this is- "Tendency," you may say, "The tendency is also the thing itself," but if you say so, it means that you ignore yourself.

Mmm. Just before I- When I was preparing for this lecture, someone came and asked me about self-respect, you know. "What is self-respect? How we obtain the self-respect?" Self-respect is not something which you can, you know, feel you have [laughs]. Do you understand? When you feel, "I have self-respect," that is not self-respect anymore. When you are just like this, you know, without thinking anything, without trying to saying something special, just to talk what, you know, I have in our mind and how I feel, you know, then there is naturally self-respect.

So when we are, you know, closely related to you all and to everything, then, you know, I am a part of one big whole being, you know. When I feel something, you know, we-I am not exactly, you know-maybe almost a part of it [laughs], but not quite. When I don't feel anything, and when I do something without any feeling of doing something, then that is you yourself. When you are completely with everyone, you don't feel you are who you are. That is self-respect.

So when you feel you are someone, you know, you have to practice hard-you have to practice zazen harder. Actually, it is, as you know, it is very difficult, you know, to sit without thinking, without feeling. When you don't think, you're very [laughs]-you will sleep, you know [said quietly, almost as aside]. [Laughs.] Without sleeping, to be you yourself without thinking, that is our practice. When you are able to do that, you will be able to say things without thinking too much, without having any purpose. Just to express yourself you speak, you do something. That is self-respect. That is complete self-respect.

So how you obtain this kind of self-respect is maybe to practice zazen, to [be] strict with yourself, especially to be strict with your tendency. Everyone has, you know, their own way which is peculiar to himself and which is not universal to everyone. So we must know that. But if you try to get rid of it, it is just try to not to think in your practice. Try to not to hear the sound of the stream. That is impossible [laughs, laughter]. It is not possible. So let your ear hear it, let your mind think about something, but without trying to think, without trying to hear, without trying to stop it, you know. That is practice.

So more and more you will have this kind of habit, or strength, or whatever you say. Or power of practice. If you practice hard, you will be like a boy or a girl again, or children, you know. When we are talking about self-respect, you know, some bird [laughs] was singing outside. "Peep-peep-peep-peep." [Laughs, laughter.] That is self-respect. "Peep-peep-peep-peep." It doesn't mean anything [laughs]. Maybe, you know, it is-he was just, you know, singing, or even without trying to sing, it goes some, you know, "peep-peep-peep-peep" in various way [laughs]. If you hear it we couldn't stop laughing, you know, smiling. It has- We cannot say it is just a bird [laughs]. It controls whole world-whole mountain. That is, you know, self-respect.

So that we can have this kind of everyday life, this kind of practice, we, you know, study hard. When we come to this point, there is no need to say "one whole big being" or ... [tape changed] big being, you know. There is no need to say "bird" or "one big whole being" or "many things which is included in one big whole being." It may be just a bird. It may be just a mountain ... [tape changed again!] -Sandokai, you know [laughs]. Very, you know- If you understand really this point, there will be no need to recite Sandokai [laughs]. Chikudo daisen no shin ... [laughs]. This is Chinese. Or it is Chinese or Japanese [laughs]. There is no need- It is not matter of Chinese or Japanese. It is just a bird. But, you know-

This is just my talk [laughs]. It does not mean much, but- So we say Zen is not something to talk about. It is something which you experience in its true sense and which will be very difficult. Anyway, this world is difficult, so don't worry [laughs]. Anyway, this world is not so easy. Wherever you go, you will have problems you should confront



with. So it may be- It is much better to have this kind of problem rather than you know, mixed-up various kinds of problems.

Hmm. Excuse me. What time is it?

Student: 9:25.

Oh. Just right time.

Student: 9:45.

Too late? Okay.

Student: Too early.

Too early [laughs, laughter].

Student: What's the next feature?

"Next feature" [laughs, laughter].

Student A [David Chadwick]: Can I ask you a question?

Mm-hmm. "What will be the next part"? Hai.

David Chadwick: You did not say, I don't think- I didn't hear you say what "Sandokai" means together. You said what each word means, but I didn't-

Suzuki-roshi: San is "three," you know.

David Chadwick: No, no. You said what each word means. But together, what does "Sandokai" mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Sandokai means, you know- It is difficult, you know, to say in one word [laughs]. You know- To express, you know, one big mind, you know, he [Sekito] picked out this three words: San-do-kai. And the teaching is, "What is many? What is one? And what is oneness of one and many?" That is kai, you know. So that is- The title is- It is the title of Buddhist big mind or transmitted mind. There is no other way to say it. Okay? Hai.

Student B [Mel Weitsman]: The other day when I was doing the mokugyo,[10] there was this small spider that crawled across the top of the mokugyo. And there was nothing I could do [laughs, laughter]. I went a little bit off to the side, you know, but he went right into it. It was too powerful for him to escape, you know. And the next-

Suzuki-roshi: You didn't kill it.

Mel Weitsman: Something did [laughs, laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: By mistake. Happened in that way.

Mel Weitsman: Yeah, but I couldn't stop.

Suzuki-roshi: But you hit some other place.

Mel Weitsman: Some other place, but he still went right into it.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You know, it can't be helped. Buddha killed him [laughs, laughter]. He may be very happy. Mokugyo [as an aside to someone]. Yeah, you know, to live in this world is not so easy.

Mel Weitsman: No.

Suzuki-roshi: Not at all easy, you know. When you see children playing, you know, by the stream or, you know, on the bridge, you will be really scared, you know. And I think- I always thought, "Oh, how can I survive," you know, "in this way? How could I survive without, you know, "making any accident? On the freeway, many cars is going zoom, zoom, zoom." Something happens, that's all. You know, it is very- It is- If you think, you know, about it, if you stop and see and think, you know, you will be terrified [laughs].

You know, in Kashmir-oh no, not Kashmir- Do you know someone who is 165 years old who has more than two hundred, you know, boys and girls, son and grandson, and great-grandson [laughs]. He may think, you know, sometime, you know- He may, if he think about each one of them, he may be scared of- He may lose, you know, easily one of them in this busy life.

So if you, you know, think about our practice, it can be a very strict practice. It can be, you know. You should be ready to kill something even you are Buddhist. Whether it is good or bad [laughs], you should do that sometime. It is inevitable, you know, to survive without killing anything. So, you know, what kind- We cannot survive by some feeling, you know. We must have deeper- We must be involved in deeper practice than emotional practice. That is the strict side of our practice. And if it is absolutely necessary, you know, you should stop hitting mokugyo even though, you know, all of us get into confusion. Yeah. Sometime. Not so easy. Hai.

Student C: Would you explain more what you mean by "strict practice"?

Suzuki-roshi: "Strict practice"? Things is, you know, going in very strict way. There is no exception, you know. If you read this, you know, you will see he refers to this point. Where there is something, there is some rule behind it, or truth behind it, which is always-which is going strictly, you know, controlling things without any exception. We think we care

for freedom, you know [laughs], but the other side of the freedom is strict rule. Within the strict rule there is complete freedom. The freedom and, you know, strict rule is not two separate thing. Or it does not mean to put someone in strict rule. Originally we are supported by strict rules or truths, you know. That is the other side of the absolute freedom.

Student C: Could you give us more examples in our individual lives?

Suzuki-roshi: When you get up you should get up [laughs]. When everyone sleep you should sleep. That is example [laughs]. Hai.

Student D: Sometimes we think there is some special situation at Tassajara. How do we know if we should, at that time, follow the strict way or if we should perhaps make an exception?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. That is, you know, that is why we divide our responsibility, you know. With your responsibility, you know, you should decide. Almost all the time, we have no time to discuss things with someone else. If you discuss something with someone else, you will be too late [laughs, laughter]. So you have to take your [own] responsibility by name of Craig [?] [laughs]. That is inevitable. If you make mistake, that is your mistake. So if you decide things in that way, you know, the things will go more smoothly without being involved in idea of good or bad, you know. Hai.

Student E [Reb Anderson?]: My responsibility is such that it's very easy for me to follow the strict way, because that is part of my responsibility. Other people have somewhat different situations, and sometimes, because my responsibility is to follow strictly, we have some discussion, and I sometimes think that maybe they should do different than me. Is that right?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Sometime you should shut your eyes [laughs, laughter]. You are unfortunate to see something, you know. If you see it, you should say something, so maybe it help to practice your way, you know, without, you know, without looking around. And that is the best way, you know, actually. If you look around, you know, if you see this side of the people [in the zendo], the other side of the people will [laughs] will sleep, you know. If you watch this side, the other side will sleep [laughs, laughter]. Oh, it's better not to see anything [laughs, laughter]. They don't know what he is doing, you know. "He may not be sleeping," [laughs], "so all of us will," you know, "stay awake." That is the advantage of zazen practice. You know, if you see something, you know, that's all. The rest of the things will be ignored. If you don't see anything [laughs], you cannot ignore anything. So that is the big mind which include everything.

If someone moves, you know, you will notice [laughs]. Even though you don't try to see it, if some sound come you will catch it. But if you stick to someone, you know, the rest of people will be very happy [laughs,

laughter]. If you don't catch anyone, you know, no one can move.

Okay?

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/1/00.

Sandokai Lecture Series by Suzuki-roshi

Lecture 1: Wednesday, May 27, 1970-SR-70-05-27

Transcripts: "I am so grateful ...."

Branching Streams: [11] "I am very grateful ...."

Lecture 2: Saturday, May 30, 1970-SR-70-05-30

Transcripts: "I explained in last lecture ...."

Branching Streams: "In my first lecture I explained ...."

Lecture 3: Monday, June 1, 1970-SR-70-06-01

Transcripts: "After all, it's better to follow ...."

Branching Streams: "'The spiritual source shines ....'"

Lecture 4: Wednesday, June 3, 1970-SR-70-06-03

Transcripts: "Last night I explained ri and ji."

Branching Streams: "In the last lecture I explained how people stick to ji ...."

Lecture 5: Saturday, June 6, 1970-SR-70-06-06 (Visiting class)

Transcripts: "Purpose of study of Buddhism is to have perfect ...."

Branching Streams (Lecture 13): "The purpose of the study of ...."

Lecture 6: Wednesday, June 10, 1970-SR-70-06-10

Transcripts: "In my last lecture, although I did not literally ...."

Branching Streams (Lecture 5): "Everything has its own nature and form ...."

Lecture 7: Saturday, June 13, 1970-SR-70-06-13

Transcripts: "As we have big blackboard, I want to explain ...."

Branching Streams (Lecture 6): "According to Buddhist thought ...."

Lecture 8: Wednesday, June 17, 1970-SR-70-06-17

Transcripts: "In last lecture I explained the independency ...."

Branching Streams (Lecture 7): "In my last lecture I explained ...."

Lecture 9: Saturday, June 20, 1970-SR-70-06-20

Transcripts: "... I must talk about mei and an ....

Branching Streams (Lecture 8): "First I will talk about the two terms ...."

Lecture 10: Thursday, June 25, 1970-SR-70-06-25

Transcripts: "Now we are still talking about the reality ....

Branching Streams (Lecture 9): "We are still talking about reality ...."

Lecture 11: Saturday, June 27, 1970-SR-70-06-27

Transcripts: "Today's lecture will be about how we observe ...."

Branching Streams (Lecture 10): "Now I would like to talk about ...."

Short Zazen Talk: Sunday, June 28, 1970-(No tape)

Transcripts: "You should sit zazen with your whole body ...."

Branching Streams (Short Lecture): "You should sit zazen ...."

Lecture 12: Saturday, July 4, 1970-SR-70-07-04

Transcripts: "Tonight and tonight lecture and one more lecture ...."

Branching Streams: (Lecture 11): "Koto means 'words' ...."

Lecture 13: Monday, July 6, 1970-SR-70-07-06

Transcripts: "Here it says: 'Ayumi o susumureba ...'."

Branching Streams: (Lecture 12): "'Progress is not a matter of far ....'

[1] Sekito Kisen or Sekito Musai (Chin. Shitou Xiqian or Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien,

700-790): Eighth Chan Patriarch.

[2] Daikan Eno (Chin. Dajian Huineng or Wei-lang, 638-713): Sixth Chan Patriarch.

[3] Seigen Gyoshi, Gusai-zenji, or Kosai-zenji (Chin. Qingyuan Xingsi or Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu, 660-740): Seventh Chan Patriarch.

[4] Nangaku Ejo (Chin. Nanyue Huairang or Nan-yueh Hai-jang, 677-744): student of Daikan Eno and master of Baso Doitsu.

[5] Tozan Ryokai (Chin. Dongshan Liangjie or Tung-shan Liang-chieh, 807-869): student of Ungan Donjo and one of the founders of the Soto school of Zen.

[6] Rinzai Gigen (Chin. Linji Yixuan or Lin-chi I-hsuan, d. 866): founding master of the Rinzai school of Zen.

[7] soryo = first son [?]; + no = of; + jin = [?]; + roku = not so bright.

[8] Sotan Ryosen Tatsugami-roshi: Head of training at Tassajara for three practice periods. Former ino-roshi at Eihei-ji monastery in Japan.

[9] Memmitsu [or menmitsu] no kafu (Jap.): "a very careful and deliberate style."

[10] Mokugyo: A wooden drum struck to provide a rhythm for chanting.

[11] Shunryu Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the Sandokai*. Berkeley, UC Press, 1999. ISBN 0-520-21982-1.

## **9 - Sandokai Lecture #2**

Saturday, May 30, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #2  
Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 2 tozai mitsuni aifusu.

Line 3 Ninkon ni ridon ari,

Line 4 do ni namboku no so nashi.

Line 2 was handed down closely from west to east.

Line 3 People may discriminate the dull from the keen,

Line 4 but in the true way there is no Patriarch of North or South.]

I explained in last lecture about the title of this scripture, Sandokai-what does it mean by San-do-kai and Chikudo daisen no shin. Tonight, maybe, it is necessary to explain about the background of this poem-why Sekito-zenji-Sekito Kisen-daiosho, wrote this poem.

As you know, under the Fifth Patriarch[1] there were outstanding teacher who is called Jinshu,[2] and when the Fifth Patriarch announced that he will give transmission to someone, and everyone thought that, of course, Jinshu will receive the transmission. But actually Eno,[3] the Sixth Patriarch-Eno who became the Sixth Patriarch-Eno who was pounding rice in the corner of the temple received the transmission.

But Jinshu was a great scholar. So later Jinshu became-went to the northern country and became a great teacher. And Jinshu's school was called Northern-Hoku Zen-Northern School of Zen, Hoku Zen, Hoku Zen. [4] And the Sixth Patriarch, who went to south, spread his teaching in southern countries, and his school was called Nan Zen, Southern-South Zen.[5]

Later, as you know, Jinshu's school became-after Jinshu, his school became weaker and weaker. But in north, the Sixth Patriarch's school became, after the Sixth Patriarch, stronger and stronger. But at Sekito's time, you know-Sekito is the Eighth Patriarch, Eno is the Sixth Patriarch, and Seventh Patriarch is Seigen.[6] And Seigen's disciple is Sekito. Sekito is the author of this poem. In Sekito's time, Hoko-shu or Northern Zen was still powerful. But there were another disciple. Of course, Sixth Patriarch had many, many disciples. Maybe more than fifty. We can count fifty, but there must be more disciples under the Sixth Patriarch.

And one of-there were a disciple whose name is Katakū Jinne.[7] Katakū Jinne denounced the Northern Zen, which is, you know, Jinshu's Zen, pretty strictly, and he was a very active person. And what he said was not exactly-we cannot accept his teaching, you know, as a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. Not exactly so, but he was very alert and active person. And he denounced, or his disciple, denounced the Northern Zen a lot.

So [in] Sekito's time there was, you know, some conflict between Southern Zen, which is Eno (Eno's, the Sixth Patriarch's) Zen, and Jinshu's Zen. So Sekito Kisen, the author of this poem, wanted to solve this, you know-wanted to make this dispute clear from his own viewpoint. This is, you know, why he wrote this poem.

So he-first of all, he started by Buddha's teaching, you know, Buddha's

teaching, which is the teaching "a Great Mind of Sage in India," you know. That is the first thing he started to say. And it says:

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India

[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

"Flowed unseen from west to east." Tozai mitsuni aifusu. In Chinese, tozai mitsuni aifusu. To means, you know, "China." And zai-"east" [west] means India. "In India and China, Buddha's great mind [was] transmitted all over, unseen-flowed unseen from west to east."

And next, you know, you don't have translation. And next sentence is not like this, you know. I have here someone's translation, but next, if you follow the order of the sentences, next one will be: "People discriminate the dull from the wit." This is-it means, you know, dispute between-which is better, you know, Northern School or, you know, Southern School? People, you know, say "Northern School is better," or "Southern School is better." People may-people say so, you know. It is actually, you know, it means, it means the dispute between Southern School and Northern School. And a strong criticism of [by] Katakū Jinne, Katakū Jinne. Katakū Jinne. Katakū Jinne is-was born 668 and died 670 [760]. Katakū Jinne. He is-he was-at that time, you know, maybe you must have studied the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. That sutra was compiled, maybe, compiled by someone who is under the strong influence of Katakū Jinne. So in that sutra, you know, Jinshu's teaching is pretty badly denounced, you know. Jinshu was not so good, you know. Only the Sixth Patriarch [laughs] was great teacher. It seems in that way because, maybe, the sutra was compiled by someone under the influence of Katakū Jinne. Anyway, this kind of dispute was very strong at that time.

So:

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India

[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

It means that, you know, Sekito knows, you know, the true teaching of the great sage of Shakyamuni Buddha, which will include both Southern School and Northern School without any, you know, contradiction. From his viewpoint, you know, there is no need to, you know, to fight [laughs]. Because they don't understand real teaching of Buddha, they get into dispute. That is what he mean [laughs].

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India



[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

You know, although they may not understand, you know, the teaching of the great sage, Shakyamuni Buddha, but his teaching flowed all over. If you have the eyes to see or have the mind to understand his teaching, you will understand it. And if you understand it, there is no-it is not necessary to be involved in this kind of dispute. Actually, it meant this kind of thing. "Flowed unseen from west to east."

And next sentence is-I translate it in this way: "People discriminate the dull from the wit." "The dull from the wit." It does-[laughs] does it make sense [laughs]?

Student [David Chadwick]: "The dull from the sharp."

Mm-hmm. "Dull from sharp" or-

[Conversation in background between students: "Dull from sharp" vs. "Dull from wit."]

"Dull," you know, it means that-it is, you know, difficult to translate. *Jokon gekon*, we say. *Jokon* means "better-those who has," you know, "more appropriate capacity of potentiality to understand Buddha's teaching" is someone who [is] not only alert, you know, or sharp, or clever. The cleverness is sometime barrier of-clever people sometime cannot understand Buddha's teaching. "Some," you know, "appropriate potentiality," you know-that is *Jokon*. *Gekon* means, you know-*Gekon* means "someone who-people who find it difficult to understand, to accept Buddha's teaching." But this is not so important, you know, in this sutra . This is [in] some rhetorical sense he says:

[Line 3] People discriminate the dull from the wit,

[Line 4] but true way has no patriarch of south or north.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi.]

You know, this is important [laughs]. "True way has no patriarch of south or west [north]." No patriarch, you know, of the Sixth Patriarch or Jinshu. Jinshu is good, and the Sixth Patriarch is good. And Jinshu is good for someone who study things literally, you know. And the Sixth Patriarch's teaching will be good for some, you know, someone who has quick, sharp mind- [partial word]- -minded fellow.

But although, you know, according to the people, you know, teaching someone explained Buddha's teaching in detail, so that he can understand words after words. But for someone it is necessary to, you

know, to point at the point without using so many words. So it is up to the people, but not-but for the great teacher, you know, there is no difference. Great teacher can be, you know, even [if] he is really great teacher, there is no difference in his true understanding. But his way of explaining teaching will be different.

"The people discriminate the dull from the wit," or-"but true way has no patriarch of south or north." Tozai mitsuni aifusu. "Flows-flowed unseen." Unseen is this-mitsuni. Mitsuni aifusu. Memmitsu no kafu.[8] This is mitsuni.[9] Mitsuni means, you know, "not secret." Sometime it means "secret," but "unseen" looks like "secret," but this "unseen" may not be so good a translation. Mitsuni means "exactly," you know, "exactly"-without no gap between the two.

Here the main purpose of this Sandokai is to explain reality from both side. The title is Sandokai: San means "many"; do means "one." And what is "many"? And what is "one"? Many is one; one is many. If you really understand reality, even though you say "many," each one of things are not separated from the other, you know. It is closely related. If so, it is one. But even though it is one, it looks like many [laughs]. So "many" is right, and "one" is right. So even though we say "one," we cannot ignore, you know, various being like stars and moons and, you know, animals and fish-the various being.

But although they are many, they do not exist separately; they are not separated from each other; they are closely related. So that is-from this point, we say they are interdependent. So "one" is-when we, you know, discuss about the meaning of each being, we say "many." We have many things to discuss. But if we come to the conclusion, or if we come to the real understanding or reality, you know, in fact it is just one. So all the discussion will be included [in] one real understanding of things. So "one" and "many" is very famous words. One and many.

And the other-another way to explain it, the reality, is differentiation. Differentiation is [laughs] equality. Equality. Equal value-things has equal value because they are different. You know, if man and woman is same [laughs], "man" and "woman" has no value. Because man and woman is different, "man" is valuable and "woman" is also valuable. So to be different is to have value. So in this sense, we have equal value-equal absolute value. Everything has absolute value, which is equal to everyone. But usually, you know, we are involved in the standard of evaluation, exchange value, you know, materialistic value, or spiritual value, or moral value. "Morally he is good," you know. "He is not so good." You know, if you-because you have some standard, you can say, "He is good." Moral standard will define the value of people. But the moral standard changes always [laughs], so, you know, virtuous person is not always so. If you compare [him] with someone who is like Buddha, he is not so good [laughs]. So "good" or "bad" is caused by some evaluation-standard. But the truth, you know-things-because things are different, you know, because of the difference, everything has

its own value. That is, you know-that value is absolute value. Mountain is not, you know, valuable because it is high. Or river is not less valuable because it is low. Because mountain is-because mountain is high, on the other hand, you can say, because mountain is high, mountain is mountain. And it has absolute value. The water is-because water runs lower valley, you know, it is valuable. Because, you know, mountain-quality of mountain and quality of the river is completely different. Because it is different it is-it has equal value. "Equal" means absolute value.

So if we say-if we evaluate things from absolute viewpoint, it has equal value. So, you know, equality is, you know, differentiation, according to Buddhism. Differentiation is equality. So in usual sense, you know, differentiation is opposite to equal, but we understand equality and differentiation is same thing. And one and many is same [laughs]. If you think "one" is different from "many," that is wrong-your understanding is too materialistic and too superficial.

Anyway, so it says:

[Line 1] The true mind of the great sage of India

[Line 2] flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi-close to Masunaga's.]

This kind of true mind, you know, this kind of understanding of reality started by Buddha, flowed unseen from west to east. Whether you understand or not, what Buddha says is true. So "unseen from west to east." But people easily get into confusion, you know, because of the evaluation of things-discrimination. Dull from wit-the wit. Dullness or sharpness. But from the standpoint of the patriarch, you know, it is same. There is no-for the Patriarch-Patriarchs-all the Patriarchs understand this point. So there is no Northern Patriarch or Southern Patriarch.

Ninkon: nin, "human"; kon<sup>[10]</sup> is, you know, kon, is kikon-it-ki-kon. And this is, you know, technical term of Buddhism-kikon.<sup>[11]</sup> And sometime we say rikon.<sup>[12]</sup> Ri is "sharp," or someone who has advantage in studying or accepting Buddha's teaching. Ri. Don is "dull." But here [in the Sandokai], you know, [we have] ridon: "dull"-someone who is dull has great advantage in studying Buddhism [laughs]. It is not, you know, always dull person bad to study Buddhism. Clever one is not always have advantage in studying Buddhism. But temporarily we divide our human potentiality into rikon and donkon.<sup>[13]</sup> Dull one is good because he is dull [laughs]; sharp one is good because he is sharp [laughs]. You cannot compare, you know, and you cannot say which is good. Do you understand this point [laughs]?

I'm not so sharp so [laughs] I understand very well [laughs, laughter].

My master always called me, "You crooked cucumber!" [Laughs.] "Crooked cucumber." The first-I was the last disciple of my teacher, you know, but I became the first one [laughs] because good cucumber ran away [laughs, laughter]. All the good ones run away. Maybe they are too smart.

I was not smart enough to run away [laughs, laughter], so I was caught [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, for studying Buddhism, you know, my, you know, dullness was advantage, you know. If I were a sharp, you know, fellow, I should have run away [laughs] with them [laughs]. When I was left alone, I was very sad, you know: "Oh, no-" But when I left home, you know, I left home by my own choice. I told my parents, "I will go." [Laughs.] And they said, "You are too young, so you have to stay more here." But I must go, and I left my parents, so, you know, I couldn't go back. I could, but I thought I couldn't [laughs]. So, you know, I have nowhere to go. That is one reason. Another reason was I was not smart enough [laughs].

So, you know, smart one is not-haven't-smart one haven't always advantage, you know, and dull one-dull person is good because he is dull. We understand in this way. So actually there is no dull person or no smart person. It is same. Anyway, it is not so easy [laughs]. It is difficult. For the smart person, there is some difficulty for smart person. For dull one, there is some difficulty, you know, for dull person. For an instance, to study, you know, he must study hard, and he must read one book over and over again because he is not smart. But smart one forget [laughs] quite easily, you know. He may learn it very quickly, but, you know, what he learn does not stay so long for smart people's mind. But dull people, you know [laughs], for dull one it takes time to remember something, so over and over we should read it. If you read it over and over and remember it, it will not go so soon. So, you know, maybe same thing.

[Line 3] Ninkon ni ridon ari,

[Line 4] do ni namboku no so nashi.

"In the true way there is no Northern Patriarch or Southern Patriarch." That is very true. That is, you know, Sekito's understanding. By the way, Sekito was the-actually the Sixth's Patriarch's disciple. But after the Sixth Patriarch passed away, he became disciple of Seigen. That kind of things happens, you know, very often. I have some disciples here, maybe, you know, but if I die, those who cannot be-couldn't be my disciple will be disciple of some of, you know, disciple of my disciple, you know. Sekito was one of them like that.

Here, you know, to study Buddhism is not like to study something, you know-it takes time. Until you accept the teaching completely, it takes time.

And the most important point is, you know-you yourself rather than your teacher, you know. You yourself study hard. And what you receive from your teacher is the spirit of study, you know, to spirit to study. That spirit will be, you know, transmitted from warm hand to warm hand, you know. You should do it. That's all [laughs]. There is nothing to transmit to you.

And what you learn is-maybe from books or from the other teachers, so that is why we have teacher-master and teacher. Teacher could be various great teacher. Master is one, and we-master's disciple is-we call deshi, "disciple." And for the-for the students, whether he is his disciple or not, the student like this, like Zen Center. Some of you are-is my, you know, disciple. Some of you are not my disciple. Then, those who are not my disciple is called zuishin. Zuishin is "follower," or-and he may stay, you know, pretty long time under some teacher. Sometime longer than the period he stay with his master.

My, my tea [incomplete word-"teacher"?]-when I was thirty-two, my teacher passed away-my master passed away. So after that I studied, you know, under [Ilan] Kishizawa-roshi. So most of the understanding, you know, I have is Kishizawa-roshi's understanding. But-but my master is-Gyokujun So-on is my master.

So, anyway, in the true way has no patriarch of south or north. True way is one, you know. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over. It resumes with Suzuki-roshi and students laughing.] Our practice is not to put [gather] something in your basket. We don't force it, but it is rather to find something in your sleeve. What do you have?[14] But before you study, you know, hard, you don't know what you have in your sleeve, that's all [laughs, laughter]. Buddha has the same thing, and I have the same thing. "Oh! [Laughs.] It is amazing!" you know.

So we must have-that is the spirit we must have, you know. Anyway, you should study hard, whatever it is, whatever is said. If you don't like what I say, you shouldn't accept it [laughs]. It is okay. Eventually you will accept it [laughs, laughter]. If you say, "No!" I will say, "Okay. Go ahead. [Laughs, laughter.] Try hard!" I think that is the characteristic of Buddhism. Our, you know, approach is very wide, and as a Buddhist you have big freedom to study. And in what you say-whatever you say, it is okay, so there is no [laughs] patriarch of south or north [laughs]. We know this. Like Sekito says here: "Born, we clutch at things and later compound our delusion by following ideals" [Masunaga's translation]. And this is very-maybe very easy to understand, but what he is trying to say here is the relationship or the important teaching of Buddhism, you know. "Clutching at things"-it may be better to say in this way: "Clutching at things" (I just, you know, this is my translation, so you can change it)-"Clutching at things is delusion." This is more literal translation. "Clutching at things is delusion."

[Line 7] Ji wo shusuru mo moto kore mayoi.

[Line 8] Ri ni kano mo mata satori ni ara zu.

So:

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion.

[Line 8] And to recognize the truth is not always enlightenment either.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi.]

It may be, but it is not always. "Clutching at things is delusion, but to recognize truth is not always enlightenment." Or you can say, "Recognize the truth is not enlightenment either."

"Clutching at things" means, you know, to stick to things, to stick [to] many, you know, many things you see. Understanding each being is different, you know, so, you know, this is something special, you know. "He is something special." If you think so, you will stick to him. That is, you know, not-that is illusion. But, on the other hand, even though you recognize the truth, you know, that everything is one, even though you understand in that way, it is not always enlightenment, you know. It is just, you know, understanding by your head, by your thought, by your thinking. Real enlightenment include both. Enlightened person do not ignore things and do not stick [to] things. And he does not even to stick to the truth either. There is no truth which is different from each being. Being each being itself is truth, you know. Truth is something, you know, which is beyond, which is controlling each being. You may think in that way, you know: "There is truth, like a truth of gravitation," you know. The apple is the each things, so behind the apple there is some truth which is working on an apple is the truth of, theory of gravitation. Even though you understand things in that way, that is not enlightenment, it says. This is the backbone of all this-all of this Sandokai.

[Line 1] The true mind of the great sage of India

[Line 2] flowed unseen from west to east.

[Line 3] People discriminate the dull from the wit,

[Line 4] but true way has no patriarch of south or north.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi-close to Masunaga's.]

So far is, you know, he, you know-this is introduction, maybe. Introduction about what he want to say here at this-under that circumstances where there were various poliminous [polemic], you

know, understanding of which teaching-which school is better.

This is, you know-so far is the introduction, and-

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion,

[Line 8] and to recognize the truth is not enlightenment.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi.]

This is the, you know-oh, excuse me. I skipped, you know, to-I changed the order of the sentence. In this translation, you know, something should be, you know, in-the main backbone of the poem is translated in the introduction. So [laughs] I think I have to change the order. No, I am not changing, I [laughs] want to follow the original text.

"Clear source":

[Line 5] Source of the teaching is clear.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi-close to Masunaga's.]

Source of the teaching is clear. And kept-

[Line 6] The streams of the teaching kept pure or unsullied.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi-close to Masunaga's.]

[S.R. unsure of pronunciation, so he spelled out "unsullied." Students pronounced it.] And then, you know, come to this sentence:

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion,

[Line 8] and to recognize the truth is not enlightenment.

[Translation by Suzuki-roshi.]

This is the teaching which was started by Buddha and kept unsullied in various stream. Hmm. Okay? [Laughs.]

I think if you, you know, type this, you know, in three-big-three-

Student A [David Chadwick]: Double-space.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, double-space or more. So that I can change the order and, you know-

Student B [Lew Richmond?]: Roshi, couldn't we just work from the Japanese and forget that translation?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Couldn't we just work from the Japanese and forget that translation?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: Throw away that translation and work from the Japanese- from, like, you know, we had the biggest group [?]-what we're learning is like-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

David Chadwick: You probably know English much better than [Reiho] Masunaga, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Uh-huh, yeah. I am trying [laughs, laughter], you know. I am trying hard to follow the order, you know, so that, you know, it is-if you translate it in fluent English, you know, it will-you may find it difficult to explain it. This is very, you know-the original poem is very, you know, full of technical terms. And you cannot, you know, change it. If you change it, you will lose, you know-it doesn't make, actually, much sense, you know.

So even though it is difficult, I think we should follow the original text. That is because I have to-I want you to understand completely, I feel I have to follow the-even though it is difficult-I want to follow the original text faithfully.

So maybe it is difficulty for me and for you too. So you can forget all about Japanese, you know, but [laughs, laughter]-but as you are reciting, you know, every morning, so I am trying to follow the meaning of those words.

Student B: But when you explain to us, for instance, San-do-kai-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -San-do-kai-

Suzuki-roshi: Hai. Yeah.

Student B: -it's not so difficult for us to make it into right English.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Oh.

Student B: When we understand what san means and what do means and what kai means, we can make a sentence out of it.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.



Student B: You follow what I mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: But Masunaga, for instance, he says [the title is], "The Union of the Spiritual and the Phenomenal Worlds." Now that is not as meaningful to us. It's good English-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -but it is not as meaningful to us as translating San-do-kai.

Suzuki-roshi: I see.

Student B: You understand?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so.

Student B: And then we make it into-then each one of us will make it into a different sentence, ultimately. [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Some, yeah. Maybe, you know, I think that is easier eventually, you know, after all you [will] find it easier to understand if we follow one by one.

Student B: Mm-hmm

Suzuki-roshi: And you are reciting it, you know, in Japanese, so that is why I started to, you know, talk about this one.

Mmm. I think we have no more time. [Bell rings.]

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and notes by Marian Derby. City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican, 6/5/00.

[1] Daiman Konin (Chin. Daman Hongren, 601-674): Fifth Chinese Ancestor.

[2] Daitsu Jinshu (Chin. Datong Shenxiu, c. 605-706): student of Daiman Konin; founder of the Northern School.

[3] Daikan Eno (Chin. Dajian Huineng, 638-713): Sixth Chinese Ancestor.

[4] Hoku-shu Zen (Chin. Pei-tsung ch'an): Northern School of Chan Buddhism.

[5] Nan-shu Zen (Chin. Nan-tsung-ch'an): Southern School of Chan Buddhism.

[6] Seigen Gyoshi (Chin. Qingyuan Xingsi, 660-740): Student of Daikan Eno.

[7] Katakū Jinne (Chin. Heze Shenhi, 670-762): student of Daikan Eno.

[8] Memmitsu (na) (careful, considerate; detailed; meticulous) + no (of) + kafu (...). [See also Lecture SR-70-05-27, where this phrase was introduced.]

[9] That is, memmitsu and mitsuni have the same root (?).

[10] kon: root; character or nature of a human being, as in kikon and rikon. [See Sandokai Lecture 3, SR-70-06-01, p. 8, and earlier discussion in this lecture on jokon vs. gekon.]

[11] kikon: "The capacity of the common people to understand the teachings of Buddhism"-Daito Shuppansha, Japanese-English Bud. Dict. (1971), p. 174.

[12] rikon: "People with keen minds who are capable of understanding the subtle teachings of the Buddha"-ibid., p. 234.

[13] donkon: "A man of inferior spiritual capacity"-Hisao Inagaki, A Glossary of Zen Terms, 1991, p. 52.

[14] From the tape turnover until this footnote number, the gap in the lecture was reconstructed by Marian Derby from her contemporaneous notes.

## **1970 juni (10)**

### **1 - Sandokai Lecture #3**

Monday, June 01, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #3

Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 5 Reigen myoni kokettari.

Line 6 Shiha anni ruchusu.

Line 7 Ji wo shusuru mo moto kore mayoi.

Line 8 Ri ni kano mo mata satori ni ara zu.

Line 5 The true source is pure and stainless.

Line 6 The branch streams flow in the dark.

Line 7 Clutching at things is delusion.

Line 8 To recognize the truth is not always enlightenment either.]

[Suzuki-roshi sneezes directly into the mike as it is being set up. He and students laugh.] I want to know the feedback. [Laughs, laughter.] Oh my. [Laughs.]

After all, it's better to follow one character after another like this. [Points to the blackboard where the characters of the text are written.[1]] This part is not so difficult. Reigen-rei is-rei is "something wonderful," you know, "something beyond our description, beyond our words" is rei. Gen is "source-source of the teaching." Reigen-"source of the teaching."

The source of the teaching of Buddha, you know-Buddha-what Buddha talked about is the source of the teaching which is beyond our words in term of right or wrong. And this is important, you know. Rei-gen. Whatever we can think about is not source, you know. It is already something comes-come out from the source. The source is something unknown. Only buddha knows. Or only when you practice zazen you have it. Or even though you don't practice it, or whether you realize it or not, you know, something which exist before our realization is source. The source is not like something, you know, to, you know, to put on lettuce [laughs, laughter]-not that kind of thing, you know. It is something which you cannot taste, you know, in term of tasty or not tasty. That is real source.

And this source can be- Here it says ri. Ri is "truth," we say. But when we-"truth," you know, when we say "truth," you know, in our language, the truth is something which you can see, you can figure out. But that-in Buddhism that is not truth. Truth is something which is beyond our description, which is beyond our thinking, is the truth. Ri. And reigen is, you know, more figuratively speaking, ri can be "the wonderful," you know, "source," wonderful which is beyond our language-description. And this is source-source of all being.

By the way, when we say "being," you know, "being" include our thought too. You see? The being-when we say "being," being can be many things which we can see is being, but which we can think is also being [laughs], you know. So usually, [when] you say "truth," the truth means something underlying theory or something is truth, you know.

That the sun rise from east and set in west is truth, or that the earth is turning, you know, by itself in some certain direction, is the truth. But in Buddhism that is not truth. That is being also--being which is in our big mind, you know. So in our m- [partial word]- Whatever it is, what is in our mind in term of big or small, right or wrong, that is "being." So if you think about something in term of right or wrong, or you may say "This is eternal truth" [laughs], you know, but that is-for us that is "being" too, because that is some eternal truth is something which is in your mind.

So we do not, you know, make much distinction between things which exist outside of ourselves or which exist within ourselves. You say "outside of myself" [laughs], you know, but it is not true, you know. "Outside of yourself." You feel in that way, you know, but actually, when you say "There is river," river is already within your mind, you know. So, you know, hasty people may say "River is there," but if you think more about it you will find out the river is something which is in your mind is river. So it is a kind of thought we have in our mind.

And if you say "There is river and here is my mind," that is dualistic, you know, understanding. That is hasty, primitive, shallow understanding of things. That is so-called-it u.[2] U, you know. [Laughs.] U. U is, you know-maybe better to remember this words, you know: u or mu. Mu [3]-opposite of mu is u. U-uken[4] is, you know, pre-Buddhistic, you know, understanding of things. When you become Buddhist you have no more idea or [of] u or mu.

Anyway, [reigen means] the "real source," "true source," or "source which is beyond our thinking."

Myoni kokettari: myo is, you know,"clear"; koketsu means-ko is "white," and ketsu is "stainless." It means that-"stainless" means no stain of thought or, you know, thought or words. If you describe it, that is the stain, you know-to put limitation to the truth, you know. So it means you stain the truth. You put some mark on the, you know, truth. So if it is pure, white, and stainless, that is clear. And that is, you know, how [what] the "true source" means, you know. So true source is pure, white, and stainless"-ketsu is-seiketsu[5] means, you know-seiketsu, you know-you should keep your room seiketsu. Seiketsu means "well cleaned up" is seiketsu.

Ko is "white." This [pointing to ko] is "white." And this [pointing to -tari?] is "sound." Give [poetic or spoken?] sound to the character-"the white"- "the pure white"-and "stainless and clear." But this two characters [kokettari?] is very interesting, you know. I will explain later.

Because he said reigen-"source," you know-he-it is to say "branch stream" is some rhetorical way of putting words, you know. When- Because here [pointing to reigen] is source, here [pointing to shiha] is stream, you know. To make this-those two line of the poem beautiful,

he says "shiha." "The branch stream is"-an is also. It means "dark."  
"Dark." This [pointing to myo] is clear. This [pointing to an] is dark. And  
ruchu is "flow" or "pour in," you know. "Flow over"-not "over"-  
"flow in." Ru-chu. This [pointing to ru] is "flow." This [pointing to chu] is "pour."

So the source is, you know, pure and stainless, but this [pointing to reigen] is more noumenal word. This [pointing to shiha] is more phenomenal words. If I say, you know. But phenomenal or noumenal is not right [laughs], but tentatively I have to say so. But- So that is why I said it is better to remember this word-technical term, ri [noumenal]. And another important technical term is ri-ji [corrects ri to ji, phenomenal][writing on blackboard]. Those two technical terms is a term which you [should] remember.

Ji is, you know, something which you can see, which you can hear, or which you can smell or taste, you know, and it include object of thinking, or ideas-is ji. Whatever it is, you know, which can be introduced into your consciousness is ri-ji [corrects ri to ji ]. And this is something which is beyond our conscious world is ri.

So here, you know, this five characters [Reigen myoni kottari] means ri, which is beyond words, something which is stainless. In Prajñaparamita Sutra, [it says] "no taste, no," you know, "no eyes, no," you know, "ears, no nose," you know. That is actually this one [the character ri].

And, Shiha anni ruchusu. Shiha [anni ruchusu] is "branch stream naturally or," you know, "by itself flow or pour in everywhere like water." Now water, even though you don't think there is no water, there is water, you know. Water will be inside of our physical body, or even in plants there is water. So even though we don't know, you know, there is water all over. So the pure source is all over, you know. So each being is itself, you know, pure source. And pure source is nothing but each being. If you want to know what is pure source, each being is the pure source. If you want to know what is each being, you know, pure source is each being. So even though- If, you know- There is no two things. There is no difference between ri and ji-pure source and its stream. Stream itself is pure source, and pure source is stream.

[Line 5] Reigen myoni kokettari.

[Line 6] Shiha anni ruchusu.

Even though you don't know, you know, there is reigen, the pure source. A pure source is flowing all over. Stainless. Pure source is all over. Even though you don't know-that is "dark" [an]. And this "don't know" is very important, and this "clearness" [myoni?] is also important, but I have to explain it later.

And here-so to stick to various idea, various being, or to stick to some idea of something, you know, even though [it is] Buddha's teaching, you

know. And if you think you understood it, you know, [saying] "Buddha's teaching is something like this," you know, then it mean you stick to ji. To stick to shu is to-shusuru is-

[Line 7] Ji wo shusuru mo moto kore mayoi

-you say. Ji is "being." This [shu] means "to stick to." To stick to being or thought is originally or of course [moto], is delusion. Ji wo shusuru mo- Ji wo shusuru mo moto kore mayoi. This [mayoi] is "delusion." And kore is "itself is delusion"- "nothing but delusion," you know, "itself is delusion." Or "nothing but delusion." Moto-"of course," you know-"nothing but delusion." To stick to things is delusion, you know. To stick to some idea is delusion.

[Line 8] Ri ni kano mo mata satori ni ara zu.

This [satori] is "enlightenment," and this [ara zu] is "no, not enlightenment." Mo mata is "also." This [character] is ri, the- This is ri. It's better not to say [laughs] anything, you know. It's better not to say in English, you know [laughs, laughter]. Ri ni [laughs]- If you translate- If I translate it [into] English it can be this [pointing to ji [6]], you know [laughs] already. So-

If you, you know, think-recognize, you know. This [pointing to kano] is "recognize," you know, [as in] kai-San-do-kai. Kai. The point- If you, you know, make some point about ri [it] is not enlightenment, you know. Enlightenment is not something you can experience, actually. Enlightenment is beyond our experience. At the same time, you know, if you think enlightenment is beyond our experience, something which you cannot experience-"That is enlightenment." So if someone says, "I attained enlightenment," he is wrong.

If you say so [laughs], it means that you stick to [laughs] the explanation of enlightenment, you know. That is, you know, if you say so you are-you stick to words. That is delusion if you say so.

So you cannot say there is no enlightenment or there is enlightenment. Enlightenment is not something, you know, which you can say "there is" or "there isn't." And at the same time, enlightenment is something, you know, which you can experience is enlightenment too. If you understand really those two sentences-

At Sekito's time, there were big dispute about, you know, sudden enlightenment and gradual practice or enlightenment. Katakū Jinne denounced the Jinshu's[7] way very badly. And Jinshu's way is gradual attainment, while Sixth Patriarch's way is sudden enlightenment. So in the Sutra of Sixth Patriarch, "just to sit" is not true practice. That kind of sentence is, you know, you can see everywhere [in the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch] denouncing the, you know, Jinshu's way. But maybe that is not Sixth Patriarch's idea [laughs]-that was not Sixth Patriarch

idea.

There is not much difference between Jinshu and the Sixth Patriarch's way. Later, maybe fifty years later, there was this kind of words was added by Katakū Jinne. Right after Katakū Jinne passed away, maybe his disciple [added them]. Katakū Jinne was very good. On the other hand, he was very active and he was very critical with Jinshu's zazen. But he is not so, you know, hasty so he wouldn't say something like that.

But right after the Katakū Jinne, which was great, you know, Zen master, disciple of Sixth Patriarch, you know, this kind of , you know, things was added on the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, which was written right after the Sixth Patriarch's death. So [in] seven fourteen [714 C.E.] it was compiled.

And, you know, compiling and maybe many of his disciple had it, you know-the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. But Katakū Jinne's disciple made some, you know, correction or [laughs] changed some part, or added something, you know, like, you know, poem: "There is no bodhi tree ...." [laughs] or "There is no mirror ...," you know. "There is mirror, or there is no stand for the mirror. There is nothing," you know. "How is it possible to wipe the mirror?" That kind of poem, you know. Many people criticize that kind-that poem because it is not so good, you know [laughs, laughter]. So many people thinks this cannot be the Sixth Patriarch's poem, you know. This kind of, you know, useless, you know, things was added.

And it was the, you know, a kind of pride or honor to own the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. So, "Do you have this book," you know? "Yes I have." But the books they have is not same. There are many books-many kinds of the-entitled "The Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch." Many kinds. So the oldest one is, you know, do not include that kind of, you know, denouncing [laughs] critical words to the-for the Jinshu school.

So to, you know- The purpose of Sandokai is to make it clear this kind of wrong understanding of which is right, or which-Jinshu, who stick-who looks like stick to rituals and understanding or scholarly work. All the scholarly works belongs to ji, you know. Scholarly study belongs to ji. The ri is something, you know, which you can experience by practice is ri. You see, this is- Maybe you, you think scholarly work is ri [laughs]-you may think so-but for us it is not so. Scholarly work is ji. To stick to scholarly work is to stick to things. Things include our scholarly study.

To follow, or to realize, or to have complete understanding of ri-to accept ri is our practice. But even though you practice zazen and you think that is ri-attainment of ri, or realization of ri, but that is not always so [laughs]-that is, you know, according to the Sekito it is so. And this is the, you know, the intention of writing this poem. So this is, you know, this is the backbone of the whole Sandokai. So if you understand

this much, you understood-you already understood Sandokai-whole Sandokai.

So this is very important part. The first part was introduction:

[Line 1] Chikudo daisen no shin,

[Line 2] tozai mitsuni aifusu.

[Line 3] Ninkon ni ridon ari,

[Line 4] do ni namboku no so nashi.

This is introduction, you know. And then this is the first, or this is the main point of whole sutra. So, maybe, tentatively, I translate it like this:

[Line 1] The true mind of the great sage of India

[Line 2] handed down closely from west to east.

Tozai mitsuni aifusu. Chikudo daisen no shin is already understood, you know. Chikudo- Chikudo is "India." Daisen is "great sage." Sen means "hermit," you know. At that time-at Sekito's time, there were many Taoist and there were many hermits who had some supernatural power, who were proud of various supernatural power and seeking for some medicine to, you know, to live long-to keep long life, you know, maybe, you know, finding out some medicine is also Taoist way.

But they-as I explained, they do not-they were not so much interested in practice-Buddhist practice-and they don't, you know, find out-they couldn't understand why we must practice zazen-why practice is so necessary. That was also true with Dogen-zenji [laughs]: "If," you know, "we have-all of us have buddha nature, why is it necessary to practice?" He, you know, suffered a lot about this point. He- Not only he couldn't understand it intellect- [partial word]-solve this problem, you know, by study-intellectual study-but also he couldn't accept this point.

This is very important, you know-why we should- When you really know yourself, you know, you will realize how important it is to practice zazen. Before you know what you are doing, actually, you know, you don't know why we practice zazen. You know, you think you are quite free-whatever you do, that is your choice [laughs], you say, but actually you are creating karma for yourself and for others [laughing]. And still you don't know what you are doing, so you don't think there is no need to practice zazen. But, you know-

So, we have to, you know, to pay our debt by [laughs] ourselves. No one can pay for your debt, you know. That is why it is necessary to practice, you know. To fulfill our responsibility, we practice zazen. And we have to. If we don't, you know, you will-you don't feel so good, first



of all [laughs], and, you know, you will create, you know, some karma for others too. And without knowing, you say "Why is it necessary to practice Zen?" Moreover, when you say, you know, "We have buddha nature," you think buddha nature is something, you know, something, something like diamond which is in your sleeve, you know. The true buddha nature is not something like this [pointing to the character for ji][8]. It is ri-it is not ji. Even diamond, it is ji, not ri. [Sentence completed. Tape changed.] [So we are always involved in this][9] world only without knowing ri.

The other day, when I explained about human potentiality- And I think I will ex- [partial word]- This is very im- [partial word]- For the- In this sutra, this point is not so important. The more important thing is- In this sutra it says:

[Line 3] Ninkon ni ridon ari.

This is just, you know, rhetorical, because-just because [of] rhetorical need, he put [in] this sentence. But we must ha- [partial word]- It is interesting to, you know, to understand what is human potentiality in Buddhism.

Kikon[10]/rikon[11]/donkon[12], you know, we-

[Line 3] Ninkon ni ridon ari.

Nin is "human." Kon is "root." And it [ninkon] means "potentiality-human potentiality." Ridon [rikon?] is someone who has advantage, or [and someone] who has some disadvantage is don. And one is ri [rikon], the [other] one is don [donkon].

And rikon and donkon is, you know- There is, you know- Ki-kikon-ki. Here we have no- Ki-ki means [refers to] kikon. Kikon, you know [is] classified into rikon and donkon. And why I start to-started to talk about this is because I want to explain, you know, what kind of- I want to explain what kind of understanding or practice we have, you know, and why it is necessary to practice zazen. And we- Buddhists classified, you know, various people-human being in various way. So one of the classification is, you know, rikon and donkon.

Ki [13] means "potentiality." Ki. We have potentiality to be Buddha-to be a buddha, you know, in its true sense. So it is like a bow and arrow, you know. Arrow, you know, has potentiality to-potentiality to fly, you know. Because bow and arrow has potentiality, if you use it, you know, the arrow will go. But if someone doesn't use, you know, bow and arrow it wouldn't go. So bow and arrow has potentiality. So does we human being, you know. We are ready to be a buddha, but if you don't practice zazen, or if Buddha doesn't help you, you cannot be a buddha even though you have potentiality.

So ki means potentiality, and rikon is-means people who have good potentiality. And donkon means who have not much, you know, potentiality.

And so far, Buddhists classified, you know, in various way. One class- [partial word]-one interpretation-or you can translate, you know, ki like "potentiality." Potentiality, you know, means- One means two. One is possibility. Possibility. Potentiality, you know, is also possibility. The other is- If you, you know, talk about its nature, it is, you know, possibility-I have possibility to be a buddha. But if you observe me in term of time, you know, when, you know, in future, you know, even though I have, you know, potentiality to be a buddha, you know, if, you know, someone doesn't help me I cannot be a buddha. You see? Or if I have a chance to be a buddha by practice, we cannot be a buddha.

So from the viewpoint of nature, you know, it is possibility, you know-I have possibility. And from viewpoint of time, it is, you know-I don't know what to say in English, you know. Do you- Do you find out some good word? Future possibility [laughs], maybe. Future possibility. Future possibility will be- You know, it include the idea of time. When you don't include idea of time, it is possibility. Potentiality is possibil- [partial word]-equal possibility.

And when you have-you ask me when, it means future possibility: when, you know. Today or tomorrow. So when we think, you know, when we understand the word "potentiality" in term of nature, we should be very kind and very generous to everyone, you know, because everyone has potential-possibility to be a buddha, even though they are not buddha right now. Because right-because he has, you know, possibility to be a buddha.

So we should not, you know-we should respect him, and we should be very generous to people. But when we think about the possibility in term of "when," you know, sometime you should be very strict with someone. Do you understand? If you miss this time, you know, if you do not [make a] good effort in one week or in one year, you, you know, you will not have chance to attain enlightenment. If you say always "tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow" [laughs], you know, even though you have possibility [laughing], you cannot attain enlightenment. So when we think when, you know, time, we should be very strict with people.

It is same thing with your practice, you know. When you don't think, you know, about time-when-you know, you can be very generous with everyone, you know. You will be-you can treat people very well. Always. But if we, you know, think-if we have to think about time, you know-"today" or "tomorrow" [laughing]-we cannot be so generous because we will lose time. So "You should finish this" and "I'll finish this" and "You should help him," you know, and "I will help some other person." In this way, you know, we should be very strict with ourselves.

So that is why we, you know, analyze potentiality in various way. One is possibility, and the other is future possibility. So possibility, ki, means-ki, means "possibility" and "future possibility." When we understand potentiality in this way, you can, you know, work-you can practice very well-sometime very generous way and sometime very strict way. We have to have, you know, two side in our practice, or in our understanding of ki-chance, or, you know, possibility. This is the first one [interpretation of ki].

And second one is interrelation. Ki means "interrelation." It is relationship between, you know, buddha and good people, and buddha who has-who is good nature-and who has bad nature [laughs]. I am sorry to say "bad nature" [laughs] but tentatively I have to say so. So for the people who has good nature, you know, we should give-we should encourage them, giving some, you know, joy-joy of practice. We should enjoy our practice with good person. When we practice with someone, even though tentatively, you know, while [for] a while, who is not so good [laughs], you know, we should, you know, suffer with him. That is another understanding.

So ki means sometime "interrelationship between buddha and someone who helps, and someone who is helped." So in the relationship between good person and you, there is-that relationship will be to encourage, to give joy of practice is ki-actual meaning of ki. And for the person who has-who is suffering, you should suffer with him, you know. That is so-called-it jihi.[14]

When we say "love" in our term, jihi. Jihi is usually translated "love," you know, but love means-love has two sides. One is to give joy, yoraku, and the other is bakku. Bakku is to eliminate [suffering[15]]-to suffer with them. To eliminate [suffering]-to make their-his suffering less, you know, we suffer with him. We share their suffering. That is love. So love has two side: to give joy, to give something, you know. If he is very good, you know, we can enjoy joy of practice with him by giving good cushion, good zendo, you know, and something like this.

But actually, who is suffering? Zendo doesn't mean anything [laughs]. It doesn't mean anything. Whatever you give him, he will not accept it. "No, I don't need. I suffer a lot. I don't know why. Right now, you know, to get out of suffering is most important point. Nothing can help me. You cannot help me," he may say. When you hear that, like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, you should be someone-you should be like someone who is suffering, and you should suffer as he suffers. Actually, you will feel in that way, you know. You-if you see someone who is in suffer[ing], you will suffer too. That is because of your love, you know [tapping chest], your innate love, your instinct of love, you share the suffering. That is love in its true sense. So ki may mean not only "possibility" or "potentiality," but also "relationship." This is second interpretation of ki.

And third one is "good means," or "adequateness," you know. Like, you know, pots and cover [laughs], you know. You cannot put big cover, you know, like in Japan we have bathtub, you know. You may know what is Japanese bathtub. It is wooden barrel, you know, big barrel, which has its cover. After finishing bath we cover the bath with the big wooden cover. But that cover cannot be used for the pan [laughs]. It is too big. So bath must have, you know, cover for itself.

So ki means, you know, "adequateness." So here it says also, if you see person who is suffering because of ignorance, because of what he is- because he doesn't know what he is doing, you must, you know, give tear-you must suffer with him. That is, you know, to-to have good relationship. When you see someone who enjoy his true nature, you should give ji-ji. Ji means, you know, compassion-not compassion-to-to encourage him.

And here, you know, this is what-this is extra [laughs]. And next thing is what I am very much interested in it. You know there is-there is Buddhist understand this way: Buddhism will not last forever, you know. It will perish, you know, after thousand year from Buddha's death. But that thousand year in some other sutra it say some other way, but anyway, we have this kind of understanding.

When Buddha-first five hundred years-this is not exactly-cannot be exactly so-but the first five hundred years, when Buddha's direct disciple or grandson of-grand-disciple-anyway, the first five hundred [years] will have good sages like something like Buddha. And next, you know, hundred years-so it means after-one thousand years after his death-we will have, you know, people who practice zazen and who study, you know, Buddhism. That is the people after the first five hundred to one thousand. The last time [laughs]-this is interesting-last time, which is after one thousand year [laughs], they will not observe precepts [laughs, laughter]. It is exactly so [laughs, laughter]. They will not observe precepts. But they will read sutras [laughing] and they will chant sutras. They will not [be] interested in zazen so much. And those people we had in the first thousand years-people like arhat or people who practice zazen or people who understood his teaching-difficult to find out, or no one can be like that. And the people will be involved in just, you know, idea of emptiness or, you know, somethingness [laughing]-somethingness or emptiness.

You know, we talk about emptiness, you know, and you think you understand emptiness, but if you understand emptiness, you know, even though you explain pretty well what is emptiness, but it is [laughs] this one [pointing to the character for ji ], not that one [pointing to the character for ri ]. Real emptiness will be ex- [partial word]-not experienced, you know-will be realized by good practice.

So here it says after-people after thousand year after Buddha will have, you know, idea of emptiness or idea of somethingness [laughs]. But

they will not understand what [is] really meant by emptiness or somethingness. So purpose of Sandokai is, you know, to make this point clear: what is, you know, emptiness, what is somethingness, what is darkness, what is clearness, what is true source of the teaching, what is various being which, you know, is supported by true source of the teaching is the purpose of his-his intention of writing-making this poem of Sandokai.

I borrowed, you know, a book from-from-from Gary [Snyder]'s wife, you know-Mas-Masa-Masa-and about Sangai-kyo, you know, a small Vajra school of Japan: Sangai-kyo. And in that book, you know, it said-it says, the people in the last-in after one thousand year after Buddha's death-they will [laughs]-people will-may be classified in two [laughing]. Very appropriate, you know. You know, it explains what we are doing here and what they are doing here in Japan [laughs]. Good contrast. And, you know, it is explain very well, you know. Anyway, we do not observe precepts [laughs, laughter]. In Japan, you know, we eat fish, we kill animals, and in America too, you know. In its strict sense we don't observe-that is very true.

And, you know, one is very innocent [laughs], because, you know, you don't know about what you are actually doing [when] you violate precepts. But in Japan, even though they know what they are doing, you know, they still do it because they are shameless [laughs, laughter]. They have no idea of shame, you know. I thought "You have no idea of shame," but if I think more, you know, they do not-knowing that what they should do, you know, to do not observe is real shameless, you know. You know, innocent people looks like shameless, but it is not, you know, real shameless [laughs]. So I was very interested in the description of the people in our time. And anyway, we will just-we will be involved in, you know, this idea-ji-only.

So you may ask, you know, "What is real teaching of Buddha?" you know. If you don't, you know, understand it you will keep asking someone, you know, "What is it? What is it? What does it mean?" You are just seeking for something which you can understand. That is mistake, you know.

Dogen-zenji says, "There is no bird who flies after the limit of the sky," you know. "There is no fish who swim after knowing the end of the ocean." [Laughs.] We don't exist in that way. We exist in limitless world. And sentient being is, you know, numberless, and our desire is limitless, but still, you know, we have to, you know, try-we have to continue to make our effort like fish flies [laughs]-swims-like bird swim [flies]. So Dogen-zenji says, "Bird fly like a bird; fish swims like a fish." That is bodhisattva's way, and that is how, you know, we observe our practice. When we understand in this way, according to Dogen, we are not people in the, you know, we are not people in mappo. Mappo is last period.

Shobo/zobo/mappo. Shobo is Buddha's time. Zobo is imitation-dharma

imitation-imitation-dharma time. And mappo is last period. But still, you know, in some way, in some way, Buddhism exist [laughs]. But if we understand, really, you know, what he meant, that is-it means that we are in Buddha's time. As Dogen-zenji said, "Buddha is always here." You should not be involved in time or space, you know. Our practice should not be disturbed by some framework of time or space.

Oh! [Sees the lateness of the hour.] Oh, my. I am sorry.

[Tape ends. No Question/Answer session.]

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican (6/5/00).

[1] The comment in these brackets is from the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[2] u: existence; the opposite of non-existence (mu) or relativity, void, nothingness (ku).

[3] mu: nothing; naught; nil.

[4] uken: heterodox view that dharmas have a real or permanent existence.

[5] seiketsu (na) (Jap.): (adj.) clean.

[6] From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[7] Daitso Jinshu and Daikan Eno were both disciples of the Fifth Patriarch Daiman Konin. According to one tradition, when the Fifth Ancestor wanted to find his successor, he asked the monks to write a poem to express their understanding. Jinshu, the head monk, wrote the following poem on a wall in the middle of the night:

Our body is the bodhi tree,

our mind a mirror bright.

Carefully wipe them hour by hour,

and let no dust alight.

When Eno saw this the next day, he asked a monk to write down the following poem for him:

There is no bodhi tree,

nor stand of a mirror bright.

Since all is void,

where can the dust alight?

When Konin saw this, he knew the author had the understanding he was looking for and recognized Eno as his dharma heir and thus the Sixth Ancestor.

[8] From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[9] From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby (her notes during tape change).

[10] Kikon: "The capacity of the common people to understand the teachings of Buddhism" -Daito Shuppansha, Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary (1971), p. 174.

[11] Rikon: "People with keen minds who are capable of understanding the subtle teachings of the Buddha"-ibid., p. 234.

[12] Donkon: "A man of inferior spiritual capacity"-Hisao Inagaki, A Glossary of Zen Terms, 1991, p. 52

[13] Ki: "The mind which is capable of responding to a particular spiritual impulse"-op. cit., p. 173.

[14] Jihi: friendliness and compassion. Ji and hi are two of the four boundless thoughts (shimuryoshin): (1) ji (friendliness, maitri), (2) hi (compassion, karuna), (3) ki (rejoicing over the happiness of others, mudita), and (4) sha (equanimity, upeksha).

[15] One definition of bakku is "to take away suffering"-Daito Shuppansha, Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary (1971).

## **2 - Sandokai Lecture #4**

Wednesday, June 03, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #4

Tassajara

[Lecture starts 3/4 of the way through Side B of the original tape.]

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 9 Mommon issai no kyo,

Line 10 ego to fuego to.

Line 11 Eshite sarani aiwataru.

Line 12 Shikara zare ba kurai ni yotte jusu.

Line 9 The five sense gates and the five sense objects

Line 10 are interdependent and absolutely independent.

Line 11 Interrelated endlessly,

Line 12 yet each stays in its own position.]

Tape operator: The beginning of the lecture, given on June third.

Suzuki-roshi: Last night [lecture?], I explained ri and ji. And usual person stick to ji. That is quite, you know, usual. And characteristic of Buddhist-Buddha's teaching is, you know, to go beyond things. "Things" means the various being and various idea we have and we think. Even though we say "truth," truth usually means something we figure out, [something] we think. That is truth. But this truth as a-something which we can figure out or think about is also ji in Buddhism. When we go beyond subjective and objective world, which is ji, we come to the understanding-oneness of everything, oneness of subjective-subjectivity and objectivity, oneness of inside and outside.

For an instance, if you sit zazen you are not thinking anything. You are not watching anything. Your focus is, you know, four feet-four, five feet ahead, but actually we are not watching anything. Just focus is there, but we don't watch anything. Even though many ideas come, we do not think, you know. It comes in and goes out, that's all. We do not entertain various idea, you know. We do not serve [laughs] food or anything, you know. If they come in, okay, and if they go out, okay [laughs]. That's all [laughs]. That is zazen, you know. When we, in that condition-in this kind of mind-when we have this kind of mind, our mind actually, you know, include everything. Even though you do not try to include, you know, everything, actually everything is in your mind.

And another thing I must tell you is we do not talk about, you know, things which have no relationship with ourselves, you know. We do not think, you know-we do not [get] concerned about-we-we do not accept-expect something which may exist, you know, beyond our reach. Whatever we talk about, you know, it is, you know-the moment we talk about, it is within our mind.

[Side A of original tape starts here, repeating the following 1-1/2 sentences.[1]]

... we-we do not accept-expect something which may exist, you know, beyond our reach. Whatever we talk about, you know, it is, you know-



the moment we talk about, it is within our mind.

So everything, you know, all the thing is in our mind. But usually, you know, you think there is many things, and we are thinking about this and this and this. In cosmic world, there may be many and many stars. But the stars we can, you know, reach is right now only moon. In few years we will reach some other stars. So eventually we will reach to some other constellation [laughs]. But, you know, we do not think in that way.

We think our mind pervade everywhere. So-our mind is, you know, not our mind. Our mind is something greater than the mind which we think is our mind. This is Buddhist thought. So in Buddhism, mind and being are one, not different. So there is no limit in cosmic being, so is our mind, you know. Our mind-there is no limit in our mind. Our mind will reach, you know, everywhere. And our mind and outward being is one. So if you think, "This is mind," you know, "That is mind," if you think, "This is some other being," that is very much so. But actually when we say "this," you know-when Buddhists say "this" or "that" or "I," that "I," or "this" or "that" include everything.

So we must, you know, listen to the sound of it, you know. The other day I explain what is sound [laughs].[2] Sound is different from noise. Sound is, you know, something, you know, which comes out more real, and which comes out from your practice is sound. Noise is more-something more objective [laughs], you know, something, you know, which will bother you, you know. The noise is more objective being. The sound is both objective and subjective. So, you know, if you hit drum, the sound is-you make is, you know, sound of your own subjective practice, and it is also the sound which encourage, you know, all of us. So sound is subjective and objective.

So sound, you know, is-we say hibiki. Hibiki means, you know, "something which goes back and forth." Hibiki. Like echo, you know. If I say something, I will have feedback, you know, back and forth. That is sound.

Buddhists understand everything, every noise, as a sound which we make, you know. You may say, "The bird is singing there-over there." But we think, you know-bird-when we hear the bird, bird is "me," you know, already. I-actually I am not listening to [laughs] bird. Bird is here, you know, in my mind already, and I am singing with the bird. "Peep-peep-peep." [Laughs.] If you think, when you are reading something, if you think, "Bird is there," you know, "bluejay is over my roof" [laughs]-"bluejay is singing, but their voice is not so good," you know [laughs, laughter]. When you think in that way, that is noise, you know. When you are not disturbed by the bluejay, you know, the bluejay will come right into your heart, and you will be a bluejay, and bluejay will [be] reading something [laughs]. Then the bluejay doesn't disturb your reading. Because-because you think, "Bluejay is there.

Bluejay should not be over my roof, "you know. When you think in that way, that is more primitive understanding of being.

Why we understand things in that way is because of our want of practice, you know. When you practice zazen more, you can accept things as your own, whatever it is, you know. That is actually the teaching of, you know, famous teaching of Kegon-jiji-muge.[3] Jiji-muge means "being has no," you know, "no barrier, no disturbance." It-it, you know-interrelated closely. And it is difficult to say, "This is bird, and this is me," because it is interrelated very closely. So it is difficult to separate bluejay from me. That is jiji-muge.

And this jiji-muge or interdependency of being is-here [Line 10] we have ego.

[Line 10 ego to fuego to.]

E-go. And here [Line 10] we have fuego. Fu is, you know- Ego is very special technical term of Buddhism or Zen. Ego. Go is, you know, character, you know, going this way, you know-[draws character for go on the board].[4]

Interrelated, you know [laughs]. Two things, you know-two line, two, you know, figure is interrelated. You see? Like this [continues to draw characters on the board] and like this. This is go.

E means "to go round"-round and round and round. This is e.

This part of the character [points to left part of character for e] is "to go round" or "to meet":

And this part [points to right part of character for e] is "to go"-also "to go round."

So this is e-go.

And fu is "not":

[Therefore fuego means] "not ego." "Not ego."

[The entire Line 10 reads as follows (ego to fuego to):][5]

Although it is, you know-things are interrelated, you know, or because things are closely interrelated, you know, everyone, every being, each being can be a boss, you know [laughs]. Because, you know-each one of us can be a boss because we are so closely related. You know, if you say "Suzuki," you know-"I-I'm very much closely related to you, so I can be president of, you know, Zen Center." [6] So if you s- [partial word-"say"?]-I say "Mel," Mel already is not just Mel [laughs], you know. [7] He is one of the Zen Center students, and to see Mel is to see Zen Center. If you see Mel, people understand what is Zen Center [laughs]. So, you know-but if you think, "Oh, he is Mel" [laughs], then your understanding is not good enough. You don't know who is Mel. So if you have-if you have good understanding of things, that, you know-things will-by things you will understand whole world.

So it is, you know-because each one of us is the boss of whole world, so not-if you understand this way, it is not, you know, interrelated. It is independent. We are independent. Each one of us [is] completely independent, absolutely independent. There is nothing to compare with you. You are you, just you. You see?

We have to understand things from both way. One is, you know, interrelated-to understand things [as] interrelated being. The other way of understanding is to understand ourselves quite independent from everything. You know, when we include everything, you know, we are completely independent because nothing to compare to you [laughs].

Do you understand? If there is only one thing, how can you compare, you know, things to you, because there is nothing to compare to you. This is, you know, "inter-" [partial word]-this is "absolute independency": in Chinese, fuego-not interrelated, but [and?] absolutely independent.

This first sentence-

[Line 9] Mommon issai no kyo,

-this is rhetorical, you know, words. Mommon means "gates." "Gates" means our eyes, or nose, or ears-the-all those sense organs-six-five sense organs are gates, you know. And for the gates, there are sense object, you know. For eyes, something color to see; for the ear something to hear-some voice to hear; some smell to smell for the nose; something to taste, you know, for the-our tongue. In this way, six sense organs has-five sense organs have five sense object. This is, you know, our, you know-Buddhist common sense, you know.

The purpose of, you know, referring to this-to those things is just to say "everything," you know. Instead of saying "everything," we say Mommon issai no kyo. Mommon is "gates." There is many gates, and to the gates there is many sense objects, you know. All those things-things, you know-all those things are interrelated, and at the same time they are independent, you know. Mommon issai no kyo. Flowers and-it is same thing to say flowers and trees and bird and stars, you know, but instead of saying stream and mountain, we say Mommon issai no kyo.

So various being which we see, which we hear, is the things which is interrelated, and, at the same time, they are-each being is absolutely independent and [has] its own value. I said "value" right now. That "value" means ri, you know, ri. Ri is, you know-something which make something, you know, meaningful is ri, you know-which is not theory or anything.

Mmm. This is rather difficult to understand, you know. Ri. It may take time [laughs, laughter] before you understand ri-ri, you know.

When you-even though you don't attain enlightenment, you have attained-you have enlightenment, we say. That enlightenment means ri. That something exist here means something, you know, has already some reason why he-it exist here. And because of that reason, it makes sense-some sense [laughs]. I don't know [laughs] what sense. No one knows, but there must be some reason. And, you know, everything must have some virtue for itself.

And-and it is, you know, very strange that everything has-no things are same, you know [laughs]. One is different from other. So ea- [partial word: each?]-there is nothing to compare, you know, with you. So you have your own value, and that value, you know, is-is not-is not

comparative value or exchange value. It is that value something more than that. So just-when you are just on the cushion, you have your own value. And that value-because that value is related to everything, so that value is also absolute value.

Ahh. Maybe better not to say [laughs] too much. Ahh.

[Line 9] Mommon issai no kyo.

Mommon-"sense gates," you know, "sense organs and its objects"-it means everything-"is related-interrelated." And, on the other hand, it is absolute. It-everything has absolute value for itself.

And here again:

[Line 11] Eshite sarani aiwataru.

E means "here" [writing on board], you know: [8]

E is "interrelationship" or "interrelated." So everything is interrelated. And aiwataru is "going on and on"-ai-[9]-to, you know, "to hike," you know, "on and on and on," you know. "Everywhere" means wataru. Or, you know, birds, you know, comes from north in springtime, you know, come to south. And go back to the north, you know, crossing various mountains and rivers and sometime ocean. That is wataru.

This is [pointing to the left part of the character for wataru], you know, "water":

This [pointing to the right part of the character for wataru] is "walk":

So [laughs], to cross many things-water and mountain, by foot or by boat-this [pointing to the entire character for wataru] is wataru:

So things, you know, [are] interrelated endlessly, you know, going everywhere.

And: [Line 12] Shikara zare ba [kurai ni yotte jusu].

"Or else," you know, "or else it stand, it dwell, or it stay in its own position." This [kurai] is "position." "According to the pos- [partial word]-this [yotte] is "rely on" or "according to." "According to the position they stay." So it means if the bird stay at some place, you know, at some lake, for an instance, his home is not only lake, but also whole world is his home. That is how a bird flies and live in the-in their world.

So everythi- [partial word]-things are interrelated. But, on the other hand, or else, or on the other hand, they are stay in their own position. And they are independent.

In Zen story sometime we say, "Nin nin koko heku ryu bankin," you know. "Each one of us is," you know, "steep like a cliff." [Laughs.] No one can climb up on you [laughs]. You are completely independent. So no one can climb up. You are like a steep, you know, rock. No one climb up on you. Absolutely you are-you are absolutely independent, and yet you are interrelated. This is, you know, right understanding.

So you-when we say you are absolutely related, you know. So-but when you hear me say so, you should understand, you know, the other side too. That is hibiki, you know. If you understand [laughs] one side of the truth only, you don't hear the, you know-my voice. Hibiki, you know. We say kotoba no hibiki. Kotoba no hibiki means "the other side of the words." We say, "If you do not understand Zen words"-mmm-there must be some-mmm-yeah, I thought there was-you have some good words for that. "If you do not understand Zen colloquial" [colloquially? colloquy?],[10] you know, "you don't understand Zen." You are not Zen student, you know.

We have-our word is different from usual word. It has double meaning. We say, "double-edged sword" [laughs]. Double edge. Edge is here, this side, and the other side too. It cut both way [laughs], you know. You may say, you know-you may think I am cutting this way [laughs], but, you know, actually, I am cutting [laughing] something that way. You think you are-I am cutting something here, but actually I am cutting here, you know, something here-shhht. [Laughing; sounds like he is imitating the sound of a sword cutting through the air.] Do you understand?

If you-I am, you know-sometime I am scolding my st- [partial word]-my

disciple. No! [Laughs.] But the other student may think, "Oh, he is scolded" [laughs]. But it is not actually so. Because I cannot, you know, scold people from outside [laughs], so I have to scold my student who is near me, you know. Raaa! [Loud mockingly threatening sound. Laughing.] But most people think, "Oh, he is-poor guy, he is scolded. Oh." [Laughs, laughter.] If you think in that way, you know, he is not-you are not Zen student. If one is scolded, you should listen to it, you know. You should be alert enough [laughing] to know who is scolded. We have always-we are trained in that way.

When I was a quite young disciple, I went-we went out and came back pretty late. There are many, you know, venomous small snakes like rattlesnake in Japan too. And my-my teacher[11] said, "You are wearing tabi,[12] so you should go ahead, you know. I'm not wearing tabi, so I may bit by-I may be bit by-snake will bite me, so you go ahead," he said [laughing]. And [we said] "Okay!" And we, you know, walked ahead of him. And when we reached-as soon as we reached to the temple, he said to us: "You-all of you must sit here. Sit here." We didn't know what is happening-what has happened-but I-we all sit in front of him [laughing]. "What a silly guys you are," he said. "When I am not wearing tabi, you know, why, you know, you are wearing tabi? It is not fair." [Laughs.] "Moreover, you know, I am your teacher. So it is all right with me to wear tabi when you don't wear tabi"-socks, you know. "So," he said, "I-" "So I said," you know, "I give some warning to you: 'I am not wearing tabi.'" [Laughs.] If I say so, you should notice, 'Oh-I shouldn't'-you shouldn't-you should notice that: 'Oh! We disciples should not wear tabi because my teacher is not wearing tabi.' So if you put off, you know-you should put-put off your tabi. But you [laughs], you know-without any idea of that, you go-you walked ahead of us. What a silly boys you are!" [Laughs, taps on table or lectern.]

[Side A ends here. Lecture resumes at start of Side B,

a few minutes from the head of the tape.]

... just what he said, that's all. But we should, you know, realize something more than [what] he said.

When I was at Eihei-ji, I opened, you know, right-hand-right-side door-fusuma-shoji[13]-it-because it is a kind of rule to open this side. But I was scolded, you know: "Don't open that side!" he[14] said. So next morning [laughing] I opened this side. I was scolded again: "Why do you open that way-that side?!" I didn't know what to do. Yesterday when I opened this side, he scolded me, so I opened this side and I was scolded again. I couldn't figure out why. And I-at last I noticed that yesterday guest was [sitting on] this side [laughs], and this morning guest was [sitting on] the other side. So I opened, you know, where there is the side where the guest was. And this morning again I opened [laughs] where-I opened the side where guest was-is, you know. That was-that is why I was scolded. They never tell us why, but just scold-

scold us. It is, you know-the words they use is double-edged [laughs].

Those are also double-edged words. This is [pointing to ego?] interdependency. This is [pointing to fuego?] absolute independency. This [side of the?] sentence is interdependency, and this side is absolute interde- [partial word]-absolute depe- [partial word]-in-independency. So every thing which we hear, which we see, is interdependent and absolutely independent. And each things-this interdependency goes on and on to everywhere, and yet things are situated in its own place. Things stays in its own place. That is the main point of Sandokai.

[Line 9] Mommon issai no kyo.

Mommon is "sense gates." Issai no kyo: Issai means "all-each or all." Each-kyo means "objective world." Our sense-our five senses and its objective world is independent-is interdependent and independent. And this interdependency goes everywhere. And each things stays [in] its own place. This is, you know, what it means.

[Line 1] Chikudo daisen no shin.

The great mind of the great sage in India

flow unseen from east to west.

There are alert-there are alert fellow and

dull fellow in sentient being,

but there is no Patriarch of South or North.

[Line 3] Ninkon ni ridon ari.

Ninkon is, you know-nin is "man"; kon is "root." Root means, you know, "sense organs." So sense organs-human being which has sense organs. There is- Someone is alert, someone is not so alert . But there is no Patriarch of South or North. Buddha's teaching is same.

[Line 5] Reigen myoni kokettari.

Reigen is-

Source of the teaching is pure and stainless.

But its stream is unt- [partial word]-the source, you know, pervades everywhere. Ruchu is "to flow." Ruchu is "pour," like water pour into various place. And the reigen-the source of the teaching is not, you know, so clear to every- [partial word]-to us because the source of the teaching is not the teaching of right or wrong or this or that.



To stick to things is delusion,  
and yet to recognize is not always  
-is not enlightenment also.

[Line 7] Ji wo shusuru mo moto kore mayoi.

Ji-ji is "being" or "fact" or "event."

To stick to event or fact or things are delusion.

Mayoi is "delusion." Ri is, you know- Ri is ri [laughs].

To recognize ri is not enlightenment also.

[Line 9] Mommon issai no kyo.

Mommon means various being and its various sense organs and its objects. So it means "everything."

[Line 10] ego to fuego to.

Ego is "interdependency." Fuego is "dependency."

[Line 11] Eshite sarani aiwataru.

This interdependen- [partial word]-dependency goes on and on. And everything stays [in] its own place. This is independency.

Okay. Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A [David Chadwick]: You said that Reigen myoni kokettari-that means, "The source of the teaching is clear."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Chadwick: Now, Shiha anni ruchusu. Does that mean that the branches of the stream-of the source of the teaching [?] flow in the darkness? Or what does that mean-how does it fit in the sentence?

Suzuki-roshi: An-an-okay. An, you know-an means-I must explain an more later. But right now, you can understand in this way: The source, you know, stream of the source or maybe like a spring, you know-pure spring-will, you know, as it flows down, like Tassajara Creek or, you know, it will vanish into somewhere-fade into somewhere.

But it does not mean source [of the] water vanished or anything. Water may be everywhere-moistened all over. An means, you know-

an-"darkness." Darkness means opposite of brightness. In bright light like this [laughs], you know, you can count your hair even [laughing]. If it is dark, you know, you cannot see anything. But even though you don't see anything, it does not mean no one is here-no one is here. You know, all of us is here. All of us are here, but it is bec- [partial word]-only because it is dark. So, you know, reigen-the pure source of the teaching is always there, but sometime we can see it, and sometime we don't see it. When we see it, you know, it means that we count everything. It is ji. When we don't see it, it is ri, you know.

Chadwick: Is reigen "ri" and shiha "ji"?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Chadwick: Is reigen "ri" and shiha "ji"?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Shiha is "ji." Hai.

Student B: Is ego mean "the bird is the whole world," and fuego means "the bird is just the bird?"

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Bird is just bird. Shiki, you know, in Prajñāparamita-hridaya [Heart] Sutra we say, Shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki, you know. [15] That is-Shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki is ego. And Shiki-ze shiki-ku soku-ku is fuego. [Knocks on table with stick.] This is fuego [laughs]. You cannot say, you know-it is difficult to say what it is. [Knocks again. Laughs.] Hai.

Student C: Is there any particular reason that we strike the bell on the word mon?

Suzuki-roshi: When?

Student C: Mommon issai no kyo? [16]

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: That's when we hit the bell.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Mommon-

Student C: Is there a reason for this?

Suzuki-roshi: To hit bell?

Student C: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: To hit bell means to produce, you know, independent buddha one after another. Gong. Buddha. One independent buddha appear. Gong. Next buddha appear. When next buddha appears

[laughs], no-the buddha, you know, last buddha disappear. So each, one by one, striking one after another, you produce, you know [laughs], buddha, one after another. That is our practice. Hai.

Student D [Reb Anderson]: You said that it's like a cliff-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: -one side is like a cliff-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: -and the other side is that everything is interdependent.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: Is the reason why each of us is a cliff is because we die, and we never know each other because of this cliff-because as people we just die?

Suzuki-roshi: Cliff? Yeah, it means, you know-it is just parable, you know. It doesn't mean anything, you know, special, you know.

Reb: I mean, why-

Suzuki-roshi: [It means] to cut off, you know, various entanglement, in one word. When you do so, you are actually independent. And at the same time, you are closely related. [Laughs.] This is, you know, very interesting. Usually, you know, when you become independent, you know, you are independent, and you have not much-you are not-usually you are not supported by people. But if you [are] really independent, you know, then people may support you.

So, you know-to be independent from everyone means to be supported by everyone, to be related to everyone-closely related to everyone. When you are closely related to everyone, you are independent. So to be independent [interdependent?]-and to be independent means same thing, you know. So if you really [are] involved in your everyday activity, you are independent. If you really follow our schedule, you are independent [laughs]. Because you think, "Oh, it is too-too much," you know. "Maybe so far as I am here I will observe the rules, but really I don't want to do it. But it can't be helped, " you know. If you feel in that way, you know, you are not independent. And sometime you may think, "I am-I must be-I must have freedom from everything. I must have my own way," you know. But that-your own way is not related. If your own way is not is not related to anyone [laughs], it doesn't mean anything, you know. When your way is related to everyone's way, you know, and when you have confidence in your activity, then you are independent. But, you know, [you are] dependent on various people-you are supported by various people. Do you understand?

Student E: At Tassajara, sometimes we try, as a community, to be independent.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm

Student E: Is this Buddha's way?

Suzuki-roshi: Independent?

Student E: Mm-hmm-not to depend-

Suzuki-roshi: How?

Student E: -not to depend on other people for food, or for clothing, or for our needs. Is this Buddha's way?

Suzuki-roshi: Dep- [partial word]-independent from what?

Student E: To try to be independent from the community-the larger community-from [1-2 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: No, that is not possible [laughs]. It is dream-daydream [laughs, laughter]. That-that kind of, you know, independency doesn't mean anything. You will be lost, you know, if you stick to that kind of idea, because that is, you know, very primitive, you know, naïve understanding of human being, you know. Nin-this is human being, you know [drawing the character for "human"-two lines leaning on each other[17]]:

-supported, you know, with [by] each other. This is Chinese character. This is "human being." [Laughs.]

Student E: Is that like [1-2 words unclear]?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] We are originally like this, you know. If this is man-"Oh, I am strong enough," you know, "so I don't need my wife" [laughs, laughter]. Your wife may say, you know: "I'm already supporting you! Without me you cannot live. Sometime you should take care of yourself. So for one week I will make trip." [Laughing so hard he is almost unable to speak.] Then one week-[laughs, laughter].

It is not so, you know, it is not so agreeable to be like this always to supporting, you know, your husband always. You may feel in that way, but that is, you know, her nature [laughs]. So if-without this-something to support, you know, wife cannot exist. That is human being. And I think that is very true. But when you are [makes gesture-sounds like putting hands together] like this, both are independent. This is

independent and this is independent and this is too.

Student E: Is that why Buddha's practice was to beg [?]? Is that part of Buddha's way?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is Buddhist way. We-our practice, you know, is not always one-sided practice, you know. "Middle Way" means, you know-not between two extreme is not Middle Way. To be quite independent and dependent is Middle Way. You know, "Middle Way"-if I say "Middle"-you s- [partial word]-I say "Middle Way," you may understand, "This is Middle Way." It is not so, actually. To be [laughs] like this [gestures] is Middle Way, you know. To be myself is my Middle Way. So that I can be just myself, you know, I must support someone, you know. And at the same time I must be supported by various people. That is why I can be like this, you know, I can be independent.

Student F: Roshi, today someone was saying, or I think he was saying, "No students, no teacher. No teacher, no students." That the two-well, somebody was saying, "Well, what makes the roshi the roshi?" And someone else said, "Because he has students."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

Student F: You see? You can't be the roshi without students.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student F: Students can't be students without the roshi.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: So they are both independent but both-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student F: -together.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Together. Without student, no teacher. Yeah. So that is very true, you know. And student encourage teacher [laughs]. It is very much so. If-usually, if I have, you know-I know that if I have no student, I may goof off every day [laughs, laughter]. Because I have [laughing] so many students watching me, you know, I must be doing something. I must study so that I can give you some lecture, you know. If there is no lecture, I will not study. But at the same time, you know, I shall be very much ashamed of myself if I, you know, study just to give lecture, you know. That is very, you know, very, you know- To study is just for myself-should be. So usually, when I start to prepare for my lecture, I u- [partial word]- always got to another direction, leaving something to study aside. "Oh, this is interesting." [Laughs, laughter.] And, you know, most of the time I don't study for the lecture, but still,

you know, if I don't study I don't feel so good. Because, you know, I feel I have to prepare for the lecture, I start to study. But as soon as I start to study I start my own study [laughs]-not for giving lecture. And in this way, you know, things is going on and on, endlessly, and it is good, you know.

Someday what I study will help students. I don't know when [laughs, laughter]. Just to feel good we study, and just to feel better we practice zazen. No one knows, you know, what will happen to us after sitting, you know, one, two, or ten years. No one knows. No one knows is right. Just to feel good we sit zazen, actually. Eventually that kind of practice, you know-practice of purposeless practice-eventually [will] help you in its true sense.

Again! [Perhaps referring to the lateness of the hour.]

---

—

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby and City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (10/16/00).

[1] This overlap suggests that the end of Side B was dubbed from another tape after the lecture.

[2] At the end of the last zazen period of the day, the large drum at the back of the zendo is hit. The night before this lecture was given, Suzuki-roshi stopped the student hitting the drum and, while everyone continued zazen, explained that hitting the drum should be sound, not noise. [Note from Wind Bell, Summer 1976, p. 46.]

[3] Jiji-muge (also jiji-muge hokkai, Ch. shih-shih wu-ai fa-chieh), is usually translated as "mutual interpenetration"-one of the central concepts of the Kegon, Flower Garland, or Huayen school of Buddhism (Wind Bell, Summer 1976, p. 46). Jiji-muge is also defined as meaning "all forms of phenomenal existence in the world blend with each other without impediment"-Daito Shuppansha, Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary (1971), p. 135. Ruth Fuller Sasaki defined it as "the realization of the realm of the completely harmonious and unobstructed interpenetration and interconvertibility of all things with each other" (Zen: A Religion, New York: The First Zen Institute of America, 1958, p. 14).

[4] For the Chinese characters see: Wind Bell, Summer 1976, p. 42; the unpublished MS by David Chadwick, Sandokai Study, Line 10 explication; Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness, p. 22; or the Sino-Japanese Buddhist canon: Takakusu Junjiro and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., Taisho shinshu daizokyo, (Tokyo: Taisho Issaikyo Kankokai, 1924-

1932).

[5] Suzuki-roshi did not cite the entire line at this point, although it was probably on the blackboard. It was added here only for reference. The character an in Line 10 (ego to fuego to) is the Japanese word for "and," which is added to the Chinese characters in the line.

[6] According to an early transcript, Suzuki-roshi was probably speaking to Silas Hoadley, the present of Zen Center.

[7] Mel Weitsman was a student, at the time, sitting directly in front of Suzuki-roshi [per Wind Bell, Summer 1976, p. 46.]

[8] The same character for "e" as in the previous line.

[9] The prefix ai means "together or mutually," as in Line 2 (aifusu). When he mentions "hike" here, Suzuki-roshi is referring to wataru.

[10] The Derby transcript shows "words" written in later by hand, but Suzuki-roshi clearly said something like "colloquial"-i.e., spoken language or terms.

[11] Gyokujun So-on.

[12] Tabi are a kind of slipper, usually white, worn on formal occasions. The students were probably returning from performing a Buddhist ceremony, and they had not yet removed their tabi.

[13] fusuma: sliding wood-frame door with an opaque (often patterned) cover over the panes; traditionally used as an interior door or room divider. shoji: sliding wood-frame door or window covered in translucent rice paper. Both terms would not be used together. It is possible that fusuma is correct, and that Suzuki-roshi changed to the more familiar term shoji for his American students.

[14] Kishizawa Ian-zenji (1865-1955), whom Suzuki-roshi attended when Kishizawa was seido (distinguished visiting priest in residence) and Suzuki-roshi a novice at Eihei-ji. This incident probably took place in 1930, when Kishizawa was 65 (Crooked Cucumber, p. 69). See also Wind Bell, Summer 1976, p. 44.

[15] "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form."

[16] During the chanting of the Sandokai, the keisu or gong is struck at specified places in the text.

[17] See also SR-70-06-06, p. 5.

### **3 - Sandokai Lecture #5**

Saturday, June 06, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #5

Lecture to Professor Weller's Visiting Class

Tassajara

[Note. This lecture was given-as a general introduction-to Prof. Jack Weller's visiting philosophy class following Lecture IV in Suzuki-roshi's series of lectures on the Sandokai.]

Purpose of study of Buddhism is to have perfect understanding of things, and subjectively to understand ourselves, and especially what we are doing in our everyday life-what kind of activity we are involved in, [to] know why we suffer, [and why] we have such a conflict in our society or in our, you know, family, or within ourselves. So to understand with good understanding of subjective world and objective world and what is going on in objective world and in within ourselves.

If we, you know, realize- If we see things-as-it-is, and if we know-[are] aware of what we are doing actually, with good understanding of those things, we will, you know, know what we should do. And this is, you know, intellectual understanding of-study of Buddhism. And this intellectual study include dualistic study and non-dualistic study. There are two ways of studying Buddhism. And then what you should do is to have real experience of Buddhist way. So study and our practice is different, you know. Even though you have good understanding, you know, if you do not follow the way-follow your understanding, it will not help you.

We are now studying a kind of scripture, which was written by Chinese great Zen master, entitled Sandokai. And last night I explained, you know, what do we mean by "darkness" and what do we mean by "brightness," you know. Darkness means, you know, something which we cannot, you know, see or think about, you know. It is something which is beyond our intellectual, you know, understanding. That is darkness. Darkness does not mean, you know, something-some dark, you know [laughs], place which you do not know. Of course, we do not know what is going on at the darkness. But you will [be] afraid of it. You have a kind of fear if you are in dark place. But what we mean by utter darkness means, you know, something which is beyond our understanding, you know. This, you know, room is pretty dark right now, you know, but still you can see, you know, things in this room. If there is no lighting, in utter darkness you cannot see anything. But it does not mean there is nothing. There is many things, but you cannot see, that's all.

So utter darkness means, you know, something which is beyond our understanding. And brightness means something you can understand in term of good and bad, or square or round, or red or white. So



brightness means "various things," and darkness means "one whole being" in which many things exist, you know-something which include everything. Even though there are many things, but the thing which include everything-moon and stars and everything, you

know-is so big so [laughs] we are, you know, just a tiny speck of big being.

So, you know, when we, you know, we think-we say, "That is darkness," [1] darkness means something which include everything. You cannot get out of it, you know. If there is some place where you can go, that place is also included in darkness. That kind of big, big being is utter darkness where anything can be acknowledged, you know, because everything is so small. But it does not mean there is nothing. Various thing exist in one whole big big great being.

Our study, you know, usually, whatever the study may be, is always, you know, going in realm of brightness. So we discriminate things: "This is good," or "This is bad." "Agreeable or disagreeable." "Right or wrong," you know. "Big or small." "Round or square." In this way, we, you know, study things and we live in this world saying, "This is good," or "This is bad."

Now whatever it is, you know, you-things which is-which you deal with is, you know, things which is in brightness, things which is in duality-dualistic world. So it is-but it is necessary for us to know, you know, utter darkness of the being where there is, you know, nothing to see or nothing to think about. This kind of experience will be experienced only in zazen practice. But in your thinking or listening to lecture, or talking about teaching, we cannot study what is actually darkness. And now I am talking about, of course, not-I cannot talk about darkness [laughs]. But I can talk about something which we can understand and which-by which you will be encouraged to practice zazen, which will lead you [to] the experience of darkness.

Darkness, you know, sometime we call it "nothingness" or "emptiness," you know, in comparison to "somethingness." Sometime we say, "no mind." No mind means utter darkness. No mind. You don't think there.

I feel I went too far [laughs]. I feel I went too far, so I have to [laughs] go back to something, some bright room [laughs]. It is too dark [laughs, laughter] to see your [laughs] face, you know, one by one. It's too dark. But I will try to see each one of you and what kind of problem you have [laughs]. I think I must, you know, go back to everyday problem.

While I was talking with some student, some student said-I was talking about, you know, my relationship to my wife [laughs, laughter]. I have many complaints [laughs, laughter] about her, but I cannot, you know, I don't think I can live without her [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, to tell the truth [laughs], what I really feel [laughs, laughter]. Since I

came to Tassajara I learned many, you

know-a kind of proverb [laughs]: "hen-pecked" [laughs, laughter]. It is very interesting word. Hen-pecked husband. Oh, it's- There is no time for him to raise his head. Always pecked by hen [laughs]. Still, you know [laughs], he needs, you know, hen [laughs, laughter]. He feel as if, you know, it is impossible to live with her, you know. "Maybe better to get divorced from her" [laughs]. Sometime he may think in that way. But sometime he may think, "Oh, but I cannot live without her. So I cannot live with her-with it-and but I cannot live without her." [Laughs.] I cannot live with her, and I cannot live without-nor can I live without her. With her? No. Without her? No. [Laughs, laughter.] What should we do? [Laughter.]

That is the actual problem we have [laughs], you know, we have in the relative world of brightness. Where lamp is, you know- When lamp is bright, we can see myself and wife. When there is no lamp, there is no problem [laughs]. But we don't, you know, think about utter darkness of the room. We always, you know, suffer from the life which we can see by our eyes or which we can hear by our ears. That is what we are doing. So in this world of brightness, you know, it is difficult to live, you know, without things. Of course difficult. Impossible. With things it is also difficult [laughs]. That is the problem we have. What shall we do? With things it is too much; without things, you know, we have no means-no purpose of living in this world. In this way, you know, we have many problem. But, you know, if you [have] even [the] slightest idea of utter darkness, which is the other side of the brightness, then you can, you know, you will find out the way how to live in the brightness of the world.

In brightness of the world, you know, you will see something good and something bad, a man and woman, or something right and something wrong. This, you know, world of differentiation-different things exist in different form and color. At the same time, you know, in this world of various forms and color, at the same time, we can find equality, you know, on [of] everything. You know, only chance for us to be equal-to be on equal-on an equality-is to have its-to, you know, to be aware of or to realize its-his own form and color and to respect its own form and color. Only when you respect yourself as a man or as a woman, as a learned or as a[n] ignorant, then, you know, we-each one of us has equal value. This is only way to be on an equality. Equal mean-looks like, you know, to share something, you know, equally [laughs] with everyone. But we don't think that is possible, you know. Actually that is a kind of dream. You cannot share things equally. Even though we share things equally, some-if-for an instance, if we share our food equally, someone may like it. Someone [laughs] may not like it, you know. It is impossible for us to share things equally.

And to have same, you know, right, or responsibility, or duty, or commitment is not possible. But only when we realize our own capacity,

our own physical, you know, strength, or nature of man and woman, then, you know, and respect our nature or characteristic, then we will have, you know, each one of us will be in an equality.

This equality [is] a little bit different from usual equality. You know, here is a cup and in which I have some water. Water and cup is not equal, you know. Water is water, and cup is cup. But, you know, if water want to be a cup, that is not possible [tapping on cup]. And it is true with cup. Cup cannot be water, you know. Cup should be a cup, and water should be water. So when water is in a cup, you know, water serve its own purpose, and cup will serve its own purpose. Then, cup without water means nothing [laughs], you see? Water without cup means nothing to us. When water is water and cup is cup, you know, and cup and water, you know, on the other hand, take some activity or relationship with each other, or interdependence-become interdependent-then, you know, water will have its own value and cup will have its own value. In this case, we say cup and water is on an equality.

"Freedom" we say, freedom-there is, you know, no-if you think freedom is just to be-to ignore rules and to act as he want, without thinking anything, that is, maybe, a freedom, you may say. But that kind of freedom does not exist actually. That is, you know, a kind of dream. We say, that kind of, you know, dream is delusion, you know-something which does not actually exist but sometime we care for it. But actually it doesn't exist. So we shouldn't be involved in vain effort to try to catch, you know, cloud, you know. You cannot catch a cloud or a mist.

So how, you know, to be out of, you know, the difficulty-how to get out of the difficulty is, you know, to have good understanding of [laughs]-good understanding of ourselves, you know, and to know what we are doing, and to know what is possible and what is not possible. And we should be very realistic, you know, or else whatever you do, it will not work. If you enjoy your daydream, that is another matter [laughs, laughter]. Sometime it is good to think something, you know, which is impossible [laughs]. You know, dreaming about, you know, something which is wonderful, you know. That is good, because, you know, purpose of daydream is just to enjoy it like you see movie, you know. And you feel as if you became a movie star [laughs]. That is good, but that cannot be our final goal of life, you know [laughs]. So we should know what is delusion and what is reality. And when we [are] sincerely involved in good practice, you know, we should not dream of something which is impossible. We should work on which is-something possible to attain, to realize.

So equality, you know-another side of, you know, differentiation is equality. Because things are different there is equality. Things are on equality. When you understand equality of man and woman in its true sense, you know, we have no more that kind of problem. "I cannot live without her." [Laughs.] When you feel in that way, you know, you are,

you know-you don't know who is her and who is you. When we realize that she is, you know, she is important because she is in that way because she is, you know, taking care of me. Sometime it may be too much [laughs]. But, you know, that is her nature.

And nature of man is something different from that, you know. He is thinking about something, you know- He is usually more idealistic, you know [laughs], and thinking about something which looks like almost impossible, not so realistic, and he is trying to go on and on, you know, without thinking about what will happen to him if he do it, you know. So, you know, the wife may say, "Oh, don't do that. It is too soon. Wait. Wait." [Laughs, laughter.] If she say so you think, "Oh, I must do it right now," you know. You will feel in that way. So you say, "I cannot live with her." [Laughs.] That is her nature, you know.

So careless, you know, hasty man wants careful, you know [laughs], more conservative, emotional, you know [laughs], woman. So sometimes she may be very angry with her husband, but that is also her nature, you know. Because of her nature he is important. So, you know, you may say, "I cannot live without her." So that you say, "I cannot live with her" is wrong. Something is missing in your understanding when you think you cannot live with her. "I cannot live without her" is right, you know.

The other day I said the Chinese character of man [is] like this, you know [draws Chinese character of "person" in the air with his finger: two lines leaning on each other]: [2]

Supporting with each other, man and woman may be one, and man and woman-or maybe teacher and disciple [laughs], you know. If there is no disciple, no teacher [laughs]. [Draws the following with his finger in the air.][3]

If there is no teacher, there is no disciple, you know. So teacher and disciple-when they exist, you know, like this (supporting with each other) [draws Chinese character for "person" with his finger in the air]: [4]

-there is, you know, monastery. If, you know- Everything exist in that way. That is, you know, our understanding. So that we cannot exist without her or without it is right. And there is, you know- Many difficulties, you know, will be created when you lack this kind of true understanding of the other side of the meaning of-meaning of the other side of each event or fact or things. The good- Another side of good will be bad. And another side- The other side of the bad will be good. That is, you know, reality.

So dark side of the bright side- The other side of the darkness is brightness, you know. You may say, "This room is dark," you know, but it is brighter than, you know, basement where there is no light. And even basement is brighter than, you know, brighter than hall of a morgue [laughs]. So bright- You cannot say "bright" or "dark" actually. Bright or dark is only in your mind; there is no bright or no dark in reality. But sometime we have to have some standard, or some rules, or some means of communication, so we have-we say good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable, but that is just words. We should not be caught by word. We shouldn't stick to words. That is, you know- But usually we stick to words, you know. When your girlfriend [says], "I don't like you!" you know [laughs], if she say so, you, you know, take that word literally [laughs]. But she didn't mean so, you know. Maybe opposite. Because she likes you so much, you know, sometimes she feels, "I don't like you. I hate you," [laughs], but it is not actually so. If- so if we stick to words, without observing things from both side, you will, you know, [not?] know what to do about things.

Excuse me but, you know, our eyes unfortunately, you know, open towards, you know, outside [laughs] so we cannot see, you know, inside of ourselves. It means that we are liable to be, you know, concerned about some other's, you know, practice or some other's life, and you will be very critical with others. And even though you start to think about what kind of practice we-I should have, which way we should-I-we should take, you know, but still in that way you cannot find out your own way, because still your eyes, you know, and your thinking is directed to outside: "Which way I should take?"-you know, when you say so "way" is there and "I" is here [thumps chest], and "I" is not realized, you know. You don't know what is "I" and what you think about the way you should go-this way or that way. And you are completely ignorant about yourself.

So you criticize yourself as if you criticize others. That is a terrible thing [laughs], you know. So you cannot exist, you know, in this world because of your sharp criticism. It is easy to criticize others, you know, and so is [also] to criticize yourself too-it is easy-quite easy-but it may be a little bit difficult because you don't feel so good [laughs]. But even though you don't feel so good you will criticize yourself anyway. And you

will suffer. That is what we are doing, you know, every day. Why we suffer is because, you know, something is missing in your understanding of what you are doing.

So Buddhist, you know, understands things, you know, which look like exist outside is actually exist inside of yourself. When you think, "He is not good," it means that, you know, you-he is, you know, actually [criticizing someone] within yourself. It is picture of yourself. "He is not good." When you say so, you are, you know, criticizing someone within yourself. No one exist- Nothing exist outside of yourself. This understanding is, you know, understanding which include everything: understanding of Big Mind, which include everything. So things happened only within yourself.

So things, you know-it is, you know, activity of your life, you know, within yourself, like your, you know, stomach is, you know, digesting things. But by Thinking Mind, you know, by Thinking Mind, here is, you know [thumps on chest], heart, and here is [pats stomach] tummy, you know. You understand in that way. And there is not much relationship, you know, in your-according to your understanding, there is not much relationship between tummy and heart. So by big surgery or by operation, you can [laughs] take-cut off your tummy, you know. You understand, in that way, our physical activity. But it is not actually so. It is closely related with each other. So if you make your tummy strong, the heart be also stronger. So there is no need-it is not always necessary to, you know, to have big operation on your heart.

When we understand ourselves in that way, you know, things ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.] [are closely related, as our tummy and heart are closely related]. [5] So there is no need to say "tummy" or "heart" any more. So when you don't know what is going [on], you know, in your physical body, you are in complete health. So when you don't talk about, you know, "he" or "she" or "me," you know, then your life is pretty sound and good.

How you obtain this kind of complete harmonious life within yourself is by practice. To talk about things is to, you know, to arrange your food on your dish, you know [laughs]. Every morning, you know, my student arrange food beautifully, you know, on each dish. But, you know, fortunately or unfortunately, if I eat and chew it [laughs], all mixed up, you know, in our mouth, and I just taste-I have just taste of food, and no color, or no beauty, or no goma-sesame seed or no brown rice in our mouth. So even more so, when it reach to my tummy, I don't know even what it is in my tummy.

When things, you know, in full activity, you know, there is no idea of good or bad, you know, this or that. But it is good, you know, to see things in different dishes, you know, and different way and in different color. It is good, but so is to think about, you know, food, your life, or nature of man and woman, is good. But, you know, to-even though you

think about it, you know, it doesn't, you know, mean much unless you, you know, really have a taste of it-a taste of our life. Unless you chew it up and mix them together and [laughs] swallow it in your tummy, it doesn't make much sense.

So why I didn't talk about this [laughs, laughter]? I'm sorry [laughs]. But indirectly I was talking about this. Why we study this kind of thing is, you know, to study Buddhist study like this is just to, you know, arrange our food in different dishes and appreciate, you know, the color and form of it. But eventually, you know, we must eat it, you know. If you eat it, there is no such teaching at all. That is darkness of the teaching. No teaching whatsoever. No teacher or no disciple. No Buddha or no Christ, you know, when we eat it, you know, actually eat it.

How to eat it is practice. Actual practice is how to eat things, or how to chew it up, or how to mix it together. And we are fortunate, you know, even though we mixed up together, we know how to, you know, how to analyze things in various way to know what we have been doing, you know. This is important: To analyze your psychology, to analyze your practice. This is important, but this is, you know, actually shadow of your practice, not actual practice.

So our practice will go on and on in this way, arranging carefully, you know, and mixing together, and chewing it up, and analyzing our practice again to see what is going on-what am I doing, you know. In this way, you know, our practice goes on and on. Tomorrow we will arrange things, and mix it, and chew it, and digest it, and again and again our practice will go on and on.

So at end of the Sandokai, Sekito-zenji says: "If you go in this way step by step," you know, "there is not matter of one-thousand-miles trip or a one-miles trip." If you go, when you start to go on and on, you know, in this way, arranging things, mixing things, and analyzing things, you know-analyzing things in bright light, mixing things in dark room, you know-our practice goes on and on endlessly. Then there is no, you know, enlightenment or no fool-no ignorance, because we are going on and on and on, and we are always on the path of the Buddha.

But if you stick to, you know, if you stop working and stick to the idea, you know, of good or bad, then you will have difficulty of big river or high mountain, because you create river for yourself, and you create mountain for yourself. But-which doesn't exist. When you analyze, when you criticize yourself, you know, you think you are like that. It is, you know-you have some special concept or understanding of yourself in term of good or bad, but it is not actually so. But you create some difficulty for yourself. That is what we are doing.

Mmm. I have some more time. Maybe, you know, I have-I think better not to continue this kind of [laughs] talk any more. Do you have some question so far? Could you hear me?

Students: Very well.

Ah. Good. Thank you. Ah. Do you have some question?

Question/Answer Session

Student A [David Chadwick]: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

David Chadwick: When- You said zazen was darkness, but listening to lecture was bright. If one listens to lecture with a good understanding, then that's zazen, right?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. "About zazen"? Or no?

David Chadwick: I- I-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh-"good understanding." You have good understanding, yeah. When, you know, when you understand, you know, as Sandokai says, "Even though you recognize truth, that is not enlightenment," you know? That is not enlightenment, but it will encourage you, you know, your practice, and you will know why you practice zazen. You see? I am- you are arranging things, you know, by my recipe, you know, by Buddhist recipe, and you are cooking something here [laughs, laughter]. Now, you know, here is, you know, some dishes to eat. So we should eat it. How you eat it is to practice zazen. This food-our recipe is, you know, prepared for people who practice zazen. So if you eat it, you know, it will help your practice.

David Chadwick: Roshi, you said that zazen was darkness, and lecture was bright, and things are bright, and maybe also you talked about ri being "this" and ji being "that." But what I wanted to know is can you really separate them?

Suzuki-roshi: No. It is not possible to separate. That is good point. You know, we are separating, you know, tentatively [something] which is not possible to separate. So even though it is like two side of a coin, you know: This side is brightness and the other side is darkness. So I am talking about this [bright] side, you know [holds up a book]. [6] And by your practice you will see the other side. And you will see whole picture of this book. That is reality. So if-even

though-if you think, you know, by your practice, you will understand something which is completely different from this [bright] side, that is big mistake, you know.

David Chadwick: Roshi, is the reason that- I was wondering why you talk about one side or the other. Is it impossible to speak about both



sides together?

Suzuki-roshi: Both side together is not possible, because, you know, if you talk about it, it is bright side [laughs, laughter]. Only when, you know-what I can say is about the other side of the bright side. This side is not possible to talk about. But, you know, to talk about this side, because I have some experience or understanding of the other side, I can talk about this side. If I have no idea of this side, what I am talking about is just, you know, means nothing. It will be poisoned for you, maybe [laughs]. How beautifully I may describe it, you know, this side-it is poison, actually. It is something which is quite different from the other side and which is not possible to mix, you know, to put together [puts hands together]. So something poisonous is something which you cannot-which does not agree with the other side-is poisonous thing, poisonous teaching, you know. Even though-something poisonous looks like very beautiful, you know [laughs], but if the other side is not-is ignored, you know, that teaching is opium or drug [laughs]. It doesn't accord with the other side of the life [light?].

Okay? Is that what you are asking? Maybe my answer is little bit, you know, doesn't fit exactly.

David Chadwick: Well, we chant, "an unsurpassed penetrating and perfect dharma" before (or after, I forget) the lecture, and I'm just wondering how the lecture enters into darkness. Or what-I'm wondering how is this lecture teaching? How is it something besides brightness?

Suzuki-roshi: "How-"? Excuse me?

David Chadwick: I was wondering how is the lecture zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: "How can I talk about zazen"? [Trying to clarify David's question.]

David Chadwick: No, no.

Suzuki-roshi: "How-"? "What is-"?

David Chadwick: I just wondered what is teisho?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Teisho. Teisho is little bit different from, you know- Teisho is to give encouragement, you know, not just talk about it, but to give some suggestion, you know, and to help people to have good understanding of our practice is teisho. It is- It should not be dead words. The words must come from actual experience of-ohh, I don't want to say it [laughs], but-actual experience of enlightenment. This is big words [laughs].

You know, actual experience of reality is teisho-should be, you know, should not be dead words. Should not be some words, you know, which

we study-which we read in some book. That is, you know, the difference between teisho and lecture. Maybe- Strictly speaking, lecture is, you know, to give some knowledge of something is lecture. Teisho includes, or most part of the teisho is to give, to help people's actual practice and enlightenment.

So, yeah, as you say, there is a little difference between. So actually, we are pushing people towards real practice. That is teisho. To, you know-tei means "here is" [holds up a book],[7] you know, something which you must have, you know, as a Buddhist. "Look" is teisho, you know. So without something, you know, something real, we cannot talk about it, you know.

If you read my book, this book, you know, after memorizing it, that is not teisho. So teisho is something which comes out from inside, from bottom of heart. That is teisho. So actually, you know, it- because I must use words, so I must follow logic, you know, and philosophical special technical terms. But sometime, ignoring those, you know, special terms, we can directly speak about it. That is teisho. Sometime it may not be words. [Knocks on table. Laughs.] This is teisho, you know. Something to talk about which is not possible to talk about is teisho. Excuse me, I cannot explain [laughs] so well. Hai.

Student B [Roovane ben Yumin]: Your lecture on the Sandokai is supposed to give us understanding, you say. Then you say that we can't understand this bright side unless we understand the dark side, unless we have good zazen.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Roovane ben Yumin: Is lecture just skillful means? I mean, just because we talk a lot, we talk-

Suzuki-roshi: Why I say so, you know, you will stick to my words, you know. So I, after giving you some lecture, I [laughs], you know, take it [laughs] from you. That is, you know, just intellectual things. So you should forget what I said, but you should, you know, sense what the real meaning of my words [is], you know.

Roovane ben Yumin: Is this Buddhist skillful means-talking to the students?

Suzuki-roshi: "Skillful-" It should be in that way, you know, whether we are Buddhist or not. But Buddhist knows that if we stick to words, we will not-we will be enslaved by words, and we will understand just a little, you know, part of it. So, you know, it is better, after suggesting something, it is better to, you know, cut off his finger-my finger, you know. After pointing at something, when you are interested in something, it may be better to [laughs] to cut off my finger so that you will not be attached to this finger anymore. And then you will be

interested in something which I pointed out. That is words, you know.

You explain, you know, how to cook something, you know, by book, but actually, what you do is to cut vegetables, and to put salt in it, and boil it. That is actually what you do. When you forget all about our cookbook, you know, you will be a good cook [laughs]. As long as you are watching cookbook, if you try to understand, you know, what is written in it, it may take time. It is better to, you know, to study it, you know, by seeing someone who is actually doing it. That is best way. Teisho is something, you know, to give something directly.

But usually, you know, your attitude of listening to it, to, you know, to [laughs], you know, to think about it, and whether it is good or bad [laughs], you know, and wondering, "What is he speaking about?" or wondering whether it is acceptable for you or not, you know. And, "If it is good I will accept it. If it is not good I will not accept it." You know, that is extra. You don't need to be, you know, so careful [laughs]. If you just to listen to it, and you don't need to try to understand it even, you know. If you don't understand it, it's okay. If you understand it, it is better [laughs]. That's all. So there should be no special intention of listening to it-just to listen to it. That is how you listen to teisho. It is different from-to study something. As you are, you know, very logical [laughs], your mind works very logically, I have to follow some logic, that's all [laughs, laughter]. Because you are logical, I have to be logical, that's all [laughs]. If you are not logical, you know, I can say whatever I like. I can sing a song even [laughs, laughter].

Roovane ben Yumin: Could you try that some time? Not singing a song, but being a little bit not logical.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeaah. [Sounding skeptical.] Do you think I'm too logical? [Laughter.]

Student C [Craig]: I'd like to hear you sing a song. [Suzuki-roshi laughs, then students laugh.]

Suzuki-roshi: Okay. [Laughter.] I wish I could do it. [Sounding reluctant.]

David Chadwick: Roshi? I've got a nice song. It goes, "Negawakuwa ... ." [8]

Suzuki-roshi: Okay! [Loud laughter.] Let's do it. Right now. [Bell sounds. Suzuki-roshi laughs. All chant the following Universal Eko.]

Negawakuwa kono kudoku o motte,

Amaneku issai ni oyoboshi,

Warera to shujo to,

Minatomo ni Butsudo o jo sen koto o. [9]

Shujo muhen seigando.

Bonno mujin seigandan.

Homon muryo seigangaku.

Butsudo mujo seiganjo. [10]

Sentient beings are numberless; I vow to save them.

Desires are inexhaustible; I vow to put an end to them.

The dharmas are boundless; I vow to master them.

The Buddha's way is unsurpassable; I vow to attain it.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous typescript by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (2/12/01).

[1] In the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby, "That is darkness" was replaced by "That is brightness."

[2] From Marian Derby transcript.

[3] Ibid. shows "(FALLING DOWN)" [not in quotes] written by hand next to the character or fragment shown here, which was scanned from the Derby transcript, p. 8. In this transcriber's opinion, Suzuki-roshi was not sketching the kanji character for "falling down," which looks quite different from that shown here. Rather, he appears to have been sketching what would happen if the character for "person" no longer was mutually supportive-i.e., it would fall down.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Text in brackets is from Marian Derby transcript. Not recorded on tape.

[6] From Marian Derby transcript.

[7] From Marian Derby transcript.

[8] According to the Marian Derby transcript, David Chadwick was the

kokyo (attendant who leads chants) for that lecture, and Suzuki-roshi had spoken twenty minutes longer than his usual lecture time. The present transcriber (BR) checked with David on 9 December 1998. The latter confirmed his sincere desire to urge people out the door. But he also recalled that Suzuki-roshi may have been feeling a bit uncomfortable, and David wanted to change the subject quickly.

[9] Literally: "May it be that with this merit, universally pervading all, together (may we) attain the Buddha's way" (translation by David Chadwick). As chanted in English: "May our intention equally penetrate every being and place with the true merit of Buddha's way."

[10] These four lines are the Japanese version of the following four lines in English, which have been translated with slight variations through the years.

#### **4 - Sandokai Lecture #6**

Wednesday, June 10, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #6  
Tassajara

[This lecture is concerned with the following lines of the Sandokai:

Shiki moto shitsuzo wo kotonishi,

sho moto rakku wo kotonisu.

An wa jochu no koto ni kanai,

mei wa seidaku no ku wo wakatsu.

Things have various natures, various forms.

There is good and bad, taste, sound, and feeling.

In darkness, superior and inferior cannot be distinguished;

in brightness, the duality of pure and impure is apparent.]

In my last lecture, although I did not literally explain about those sentences, but I almost explained about it.

Shiki moto shitsuzo wo kotonishi. Shiki moto shitsuzo wo kotonishi. Shiki is, you know, in Prajñāparamita Sutra. Shiki soku zeku. Shiki. Same character as shiki. Shiki moto shitsuzo wo kotonishi. Shiki means, you know, "form and color." It has two meanings: form and color. Things which-form and color. Shitsuzo wo kotonishi, sho moto rakku: Sho [is] in Prajñāparamita Sutra. We have many [of] this character-sho,

voice, which is the object of, you know, ears. Sho moto-shitsuzo wo kotonishi-rakku wo kotonisu: means that whatever you see, you know-shitsuzô-shitsu means "quality" or "nature." "Quality" or "nature" is shitsu, like human nature or buddha nature or good nature, evil nature. Nature is shitsu. Zo means "figure."

So in things there is various- Things has various nature and various figure, various forms. And voice- When you hear voice, voice has-some voice is good and some voice is not good: agreeable or disagreeable. Rakku means- Something which you care for is raku.[1] Ku[2] is something which will create some bitter feeling or, you know, some-not-"suffering" is too big word, but, some, you know- It will create suffering. This is just- He is now talking about just form and voice, but same thing is true with taste, or sound, or know [no?]-or his feeling or taste. There is good taste and bad taste, and good sound and bad sound, and good feeling and bad feeling-something agreeable idea or disagreeable idea. There are many things.

And we suffer from it, you know. When you hear something good you will enjoy it, but when you hear something bad you will be annoyed or you will be disturbed by it. Although, you know, for usual person, you know, things happens in that way. But if you understand the reality completely, you know, you will not be bothered by it, because-and here is the reason is here.

We understand things in two ways. One way is, you know, as I told you in last lecture, to understand things in darkness. And the other understanding is to observe things in term of good or bad. That is- There are two ways of understanding. And we know that- We- Things themselves has no good or bad, you know. It is- Things are not good or bad. It is we people who discriminate things [as] good or bad. So things are not- There is no good or bad in things themselves. But we create- We discriminate things in term of good or bad.

So if we know that, you know, we will not suffer so much: "Oh, that is," you know, "what I am doing. Not things itself has no good or bad nature. To understand in this way is to understand things in utter darkness. You do not, you know, involved in dualistic understanding of good or bad.

So An, or An wa jochu no koto ni kanai. An is "darkness." Darkness include, you know, include good and bad. In the dark, superior or inferior cannot be distinguished. Here this word, jo-jo is, you know, "superior," and chu is "middle," but [laughs] actually it means-jochu-superior, middle, and inferior. So jochu means, actually, "superior and inferior," not "middle," you know. It is not so usual to say "superior or middle," you know [laughs]. When we say "superior," it is more natural to say "inferior," but as this is a kind of poem, and so sound-jo-it is better sound to say, you know, jochu rather than to say joge,[3] you know. Jochu -if we say jochu, means you feel, you know, better. Joge is

too much discrimination, so he says-he used chu instead of ge. Jochu no koto ni kanai.

Koto is "words." This [pointing to ku character on the blackboard][4] is also "words." Utter darkness-superior-good words and bad words will be-will not make-will not disturb you. It means that it will not make much sense, you know, or you will not be bothered by it, you know. You will not be affect[ed] by good words or bad words.

This [kanai] means "to include," or "to fit," you know, together. Mei wa seidaku no ku wo wakatsu. Mei is "brightness." Brightness will- In the brightness only duality of pure or impure is apparent. In the brightness-sei is "pure," and this [daku] is "impure." Pure word- There is pure word and mud-muddy [laughs]-muddy word [laughs]. Pure word and, you know, nasty word [laughs]. In brightness we have dualistic, you know, words. Duality of the pure and impure.

This is- Here [pointing to mei], same words but this means "to make it clear" or "to become apparent." [Waka is the same character as mei, but as a verb it means "to make clear" or "to become apparent."][5] This two words [koto and ku] is "words." This [koto] is "words." This [koto] is more short-one words, maybe. And this [ku] is longer "words."

Anyway, in brightness there is only-there is dualistic words become apparent. In this way, we should, you know, understand things.

"Positive way" and, you know, "negative way," we say. Positive way-and positive way is to acknowledge, you know, things in term of good or bad, beautiful or ugly, good student or bad student. If you make, you know, good effort you will be a good student. To acknowledge the effort is, you know, positive way. Negative way is [laughs], you know, "Whatever you say, you will get thirty blow" [laughs]. "We do not accept anything." That is negative way. Positive way and negative way is, you know-should be, you know-sometime positive, sometime negative. We must have that kind of, you know, means of treating things.

But, you know, actually, you know, even though we [are] mad at someone, it does not mean, you know, he do not acknowledge. Because he knows him so well, so [laughs] sometime he will be angry with him. When you know he is very good, but sometime he will be very lazy [laughs]. Then, you know, [the teacher] will hit him. Sometime we will, you know, praise him or we will encourage him, but, you know, it does not mean we are using different quite method or quite different attitude. The understanding is the same, but the ways of, you know, treating him is different. For someone who sees things only, you know, [in a] negative way and become always-who is always, you know, pessimistic, you know, we will encourage him. But if he is too good [laughs] or too bright, then a teacher will be always scold him [laughs]. That is sometime our way. But originally it does not- Our way is- Our understanding is not different. But usually we [are] very much attached

to bright side of things and dark side of things.

Do you know famous koan? A monk asked a master, "It is very hot. It is very hot. Is it possible to," you know, "to feel better?" And the master said, "Why don't you go to somewhere where there is no cold weather or hot weather? Why don't you go there?" [Laughs.] The disciple said, "Is there somewhere," you know, "where there is no cold or no hot?" The master said, "When it is cold you should be a cold Buddha. When it is hot you should be a hot Buddha." [Laughs.] That was the answer.

You think, you know, there is somewhere-if you practice zazen-you will attain, you know, some stage where there is no cold or no hot, or no pleasure or no suffering. You may think. So you ask him, yeah, "If we practice zazen, is it possible to attain that kind of," you know, "attainment?" But, you know, the true teacher may say, "When you suffer you should suffer. [Laughs.] When you feel good you should feel good." You should, you know, be a suffering Buddha. Sometimes you should be a crying Buddha sometime. Or you should be a very happy Buddha sometime.

But, you know, at the same time, the happiness, you know, in its true sense is not exactly the same happiness which usual people have. There is some difference, little bit difference, and that little bit makes a great difference [laughs]. Little bit different. He knows. Because he knows both side of the reality, you know, he has that kind of composure. He will not be disturbed by something bad, and he will not be extremely, you know- He will not be ecstatic, you know, about things. And he will have true joy, which will always [be] with him. And basic, you know, tone of life is same. And on it there is some, you know, good melody or sad melody. That is, you know, more-or-less, something enlightened people may have. That is the feeling some enlightened people may have. And how- It does not mean, you know- It means that, at the same time, when it is hot, you know, or when you are sad, you should be completely involved in sadness without care for something happy. When you are happy, you should just enjoy the happiness. But [laughs], you know, the- We are- Why we can do so is because we are always prepared for everything. Even though the circumstances changes all of a sudden, you know, you don't mind. Today you may be very happy, and next day we don't know what will happen to us. But we should be- When we are ready for things which will happen tomorrow, then, you know, we can enjoy today completely.

Actually how you can do it is not by, you know, [studying a] lecture [laughs] like this, you know, but your practice. So this is Sekito's words, but later, you know, in- Sekito Kisen Daiocho, Yakusan Igen Daiocho, Ungan Donjo Daiocho, Tozan Ryokai Daiocho. Tozan is fourth generation from Sekito, and [in] Tozan's time people stick to this kind of game, you know: brightness or darkness. And they were very much interested in talking about, you know, bright side and dark side and middle way. And they lost the point-how to, you know, obtain this kind of freedom from



things.

So later, you know, Dogen-zenji did not use this kind of words so much. Dogen-zenji rather put emphasis on to get out of those words. How to get out of those words is to appreciate things moment after moment. That is more Dogen's way. So he rather put emphasis on- You know, he is more interested in the koan like: "When it is cold, you should be a cold Buddha. When it is hot, you should be a hot Buddha." That's all. Just hot. [?] To be completely, you know, involved in what you are doing is more Dogen's way-without, you know, thinking about those things-and because this kind of, you know, attainment will be obtained by actual practice, not by those words.

But this kind of words will help, you know, your understanding of things. When you are very much dualistic, when you are get into confusion, it may help you. But sometime, you know, you may be interested in talking about those things, you know, then we will lose our way. We should be interested in actual zazen, not in those words. And we should not [be] interested in to talk about those things-rather to be involved-rather we should practice actual zazen.

So Dogen-zenji's way is to, you know, to find the meaning in each being-like a grain of rice, you know, or a cup of water. A cup of water, you may say, is things, you know, which you see in brightness. But if-when you respect, when you pay full respect to the grain of rice, you know, it means actually when you respect it, as you respect it as you respect Buddha himself, that is, you know, you understand a grain of rice as a, you know, as absolute. Only when you do so-when you live in a dualistic, you know, world-completely involved in it-then you have-at that time you have absolute world at the same time in its true sense. When you practice zazen, you know, without seeking for any enlightenment or anything, then there is true enlightenment. That is more like Dogen-zenji's way.

If you have questions, please ask me. Hai.

#### Question/Answer Session

Student A: When something happens and I feel pain from it, part of me feels it, and part of me is trying to understand it at the same time. And I don't know whether that's because I am afraid of just letting go and feeling just pain, or whether that's wise understanding, you know. It's always- It's half and half. Like, it's not just pain, and it's- It is dualistic and I don't understand it. It's divided, I think.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. Do you know why? [Laughs.] That is the point. When your, you know, feeling is divided, sometime you try to understand it, and sometime you, you know, feel. You, you know, make yourself feel, you know, whatever it is. But sometime you try to understand, you know, what is this feeling. What is the other side of the

feeling, or something. Is that what you mean?

Student A: Yeah. Lots of the times it goes together, though, at the same time. I mean, like-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. How? Will you explain it more?

Student A: Well, actually I can explain it better in pleasure than I can in pain. Like when I'm enjoying something, or when something gives me pleasure, and I want to- Like, it gives me such pleasure that part of me is saying, "Now, don't forget," you know, "everything dies." And my words are there, but also the understanding is also there. It's like half and half of me- Sometimes-and it's at different times-sometimes I completely just try to feel. I just let it in as much as it will come. Other times, I try to understand it. But most of the time, it's like half-and-half in the same experience. Like, part of me is opening to just let whatever's happening happen, and then part of me is saying. "Now, don't forget," you know, "this is the way things are, that [snaps fingers] like that, and it's gone." I feel like you've sort of already explained it when you said, you know, it's not just words, and if your base is really there, then the top of it can just move around, and it doesn't make so much difference what you do. Perhaps you've already answered me.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. You know, it is- You have that kind of problem, you know, because you are involved in just personal, you know, problem-problem just for yourself. So you have that kind of problem, you know. It is, you know- As long as it means that- As long as you are involved in personal problem, you know, it is whatever understanding you may have, that is just, you know- That understanding is, you know, only in bright side in its worst sense [laughs]. It doesn't, you know- The other side of it is not bright side or darkness- absolute. It is so, but because you are involved in personal practice, you know, you have no chance to realize the other side of it.

We are talking, you know- When we talk about this, you know, we are talking-I am talking as if I am an enlightened person, and you are listening to it as if you are enlightened person [laughs]. In other words, you know, all of us are bodhisattva, and as a bodhisattva we are discussing, you know, this kind of problem. But when you apply this kind of talking just for intellectual understanding or just [to] your problem only, that is-you have no chance to understand this [thumps something-perhaps book]-the other side of it. That is why you have that problem. It is good, you know. If you [are] really practicing bodhisattva way, whichever side it may be, it is okay, you know. When you criticize yourself, it is okay. When you do what you want to do, that is also okay. You are not doing two different things. According to the situation, you are doing something good always. But because, you know- Why you don't have the confidence in your, you know, in your activity or in your life is because you are-your practice is involved in selfish practice. Okay?

Student A: I- That's something I don't understand. I really don't understand where the boundaries of selfishness are.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: I don't understand where selfishness begins and ends, you know. Like- I feel- Well, like, my whole life I was taught that if you can't help somebody, then don't do anything, you know?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: And I wouldn't- I couldn't understand, you know, how you could help anybody-how, you know- How are you going to help anybody? How would you possibly know what if [when] something is helpful to another person? And the only thing that I've ever come up with is to feel myself as a person, whatever bounds that may have-to be whoever I am and to just be human. And that is- I don't know how far that extends. I don't know what Margaret Crowley [?] is or how far she goes or how little she is.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: But I feel like the only way that I can possibly understand what human life is is to be human-to feel what it is to be human. And I don't understand when you say that that is selfish-to just experience everyday life.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: I don't understand that.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Don't understand, yeah. Because you don't, you know- You have- Your confidence is not big enough, strong enough. You say, you know, "I don't understand. I don't understand." That is what you are saying, you know. "I don't understand." What does it mean? If you don't understand, that is okay. Anyway, as long as you are here, you should do what you should do. You see?

Student A: But what is it that I should do? I-

Suzuki-roshi: To follow our schedule, practice zazen, and chant sutra. That is what you should do here. So you are very well protected here. In city life, it is not so simple, you know. When you are in city, you are-our practice cannot be so simple. So it is difficult to criticize people, as [Grahame] Petchey[6] said, you know, who is in city, who is involved in family life, or, you know-it is very difficult. So here you are completely protected, and in this well-protected Tassajara, you should practice our way. You see? You want to, you know- You are trying too much, you know. Tassajara practice and city practice, and you want to attain

everything in one place, you know. So that is why you are mixed up. "Human." What does it mean, you know? There is no human life except zazen or eating. [Tape turned.] ... city life. So there is no problem, even though you go to city life. Even though you have more complicated life than this. Okay. Same. You are still trying to, you know, feel something which is impossible for you to feel right now. As Dogen-zenji said, "There is no bird which fly," you know, "after you know what it is," you know [laughs]. Only way is just- This is, you know, our-should be our way: "Just fly." [Laughs, laughter.] Okay?

Student A: I don't understand that last statement you made.

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. You are, you know, I think you are fighting with something. You don't- You- Why don't you fly just like this? You are making yourself, you know, feel bad. That's all. "You don't understand." Because you try to understand, you don't understand. If you just [are] involved in our practice day-by-day, you know, when you get up, you should get up. Just get up. Okay? "What shall I do? I am very tired," you know [laughs]. So that is why you have, you know- Then you may think next time, "To become tired is some- I have some reason why I am tired. And when, maybe, when it is tired, you know, to stay in bed is human nature [laughs]. Why is it bad to stay in bed?" Something like that. There is no, you know, limit.

Oh, there is very, you know, interesting story. In China, in war period when the six powerful countries who were fighting-and king of the Sei, you know, wanted to invade the kingdom of Gi. But there were very good minister, and, you know, he wanted to persuade his king not to invade another country. So he talked about- He started to talk about the wonderful dog. And it was a good hunting dog. His master, you know- The dog's master set the hunting dog after-to catch a hare. Both, you know, both hare and hunting dog were very good. So even though the hunting dog was good, he couldn't catch him, you know. So at last, both hunting dog and hare tired out and dead [laughs]. And who gets, you know? No one gets any benefit [laughs] by setting a hunting dog after a hare. Except the, you know- If someone picked, you know, dead hare and dead dog up, he may be the only one who gets some benefit [laughs]. He talked about that kind of famous hunting dog. But he did not, you know, his master did not stop invading the neighboring country, you know. There is famous story.

We are something, you know, doing something like that. There is no end in chasing after: What will be the true way? What is human nature? Too much, you know- Our effort should not be directed in that way, or in this way, you know. Those things. Although I am explaining it, but we should not be- We shouldn't- Just try to understand or- It will help, you know. But you-we shouldn't think this is only way, this is the best way to understand Buddhism. So maybe because I am explaining this, so I am maybe-I am encouraging you to think about [laughs] your problem. But it is not so, actually. Okay? [Laughs.]

Student A: No [she laughs].

Suzuki-roshi: "No." That is what you want, you know, spirit of real practice. Okay? If you come here, you should practice hard. Just practice. Practice is first, okay? Forget all about human nature [laughs, laughter]. Human nature is in your practice. There is nowhere [else?]. Okay? Hai.

Student B: When I am fully awake I have, maybe, a little control over my desires, but in the mornings [laughs, laughter]-

Suzuki-roshi: That is what I am saying. In the morning you have trouble. I know that [laughs, laughter]. So that is why I say, "Get up!" [Pats on table four times.]

Student B: And how do you do that?

Suzuki-roshi: How you do that? Just do it. Or else someone will go and hit you. [Picks up stick. Makes a sort of humorous growl. Laughs, laughter.] Okay? [Laughter.] Great-

Student B: I "just got up" I think a couple of times, you know-

Suzuki-roshi: That is good.

Student B: -jumped out of bed. But it was really- It was such a big thing that- [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is big thing [laughter]. So if you can get up, you know, pretty well, I think your practice is almost okay [laughs]. That is very good chance to practice our zazen, you know. Just get up. Okay? That is the most important thing.

Student B: It's like I hear the bell, and as soon as I hear it there's this big thing-

Suzuki-roshi: I don't hear anything from it. [Laughter.]

Student B: -and I just-I don't want to move. [Laughter.] Then I should get up before I hear the bell. [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Okay? I am very strict [laughter] on that point. Hai.

Student C [David Chadwick]: Roshi. You've made several comments on-concerning attitude toward the words behind you. [Presumably on the blackboard.] Does this- Does what you have said apply also, say, to the Heart Sutra and to all sutras?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

David Chadwick: Okay. You're not making any comment-any particular comment on the Sandokai.

Suzuki-roshi: No.

David Chadwick: Okay.

Suzuki-roshi: No particular comment. Same thing. Hai.

Student D: I was only sitting zazen for some years, and then a student here- People sometimes ask me questions about our practice, and about my practice, and why I am doing what I'm doing.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D [Gerry --]: For example, someone may say to me, "How long have you been sitting zazen? How long have you been practicing?" And, at such a time, I may think, "Well, Gerry, you could say you've been practicing from beginningless beginning. And perhaps from my experience and from my intellectual understanding at the present time, I might expound on beginningless beginning. Or I might say, "Oh, three years or four years." I wonder, in such circumstance, if I say one thing or the other, there will be some communication and some information exchanged about one thing or another. But if I say, "Two or three years," it's very straightforward.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: It's quite to the point, and it's true, and it's perhaps more honest. If I say "beginningless beginning" and speak about such a thing, it may be that I know quite well something intellectually about that. But to truly understand that requires considerable confidence. And if I don't have the confidence at the particular time the question is asked, how shall I answer such a question?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. It's up to you [laughs]. Yeah. It is, you know- If someone who want to understand intellectually what is our practice, maybe we have to answer more intellectual way, even though it will not help completely. Intellectual understanding is important, but sometime, you know, you are okay, you know. You hesitate to give some intellectual understanding, so that is okay. But if you become proud of, you know, your intellectual understanding, it may be big mistake, I think. So how you answer for such question is very difficult. But if you understand the intention of making question for you, maybe, I can-you can answer in some appropriate way, I think. Hai.

Student E: Roshi, when you study a book, what does the book give you? You.

Suzuki-roshi: Give me?

Student E: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Mostly, you know, if you- I study various teachers' way. Now, for me it is necessary to know about various Zen masters. For you, maybe, it is not so important. But for me, I must have some clear picture of what I'm talking about. Or else we-I cannot say anything [laughs], you see? That is why I study before lecture. And my teacher always told me, "Even though it doesn't help," you know, "before lecture you should study." [Laughs, laughter.] Hai.

Student F: Could you speak a little on the nature of sound and of noise?

Suzuki-roshi: Sound and noise [laughs]? Some sound, you know- When you, you know, listen to it, you know, when you listen to it in zazen, you can distinguish sound from noise, you know. If you want to- Why I discriminate your sound or noise, you know, is because I want to, you know, I want to encourage your practice as a teacher. But, you know, sometime I don't- I just practice zazen. Just practice zazen with you, forgetting all about teacher or disciple [laughs]. Sometime. Sometime, you know, I feel I have to help you, so I, you know, discriminate your practice. Sometime I correct your posture, you know. But sometime I don't, because I want to sit, maybe, you know, with you. I think if I sit with you, you know, anyway, I am helping you, I am quite sure. But sometime I think it is necessary to correct your posture and to listen to you [hit] mokugyo or drum or bell.

It is not so easy- It is quite easy to tell, you know. You know, it is like to hand sutra cards for people. When you receive it, you know, the feeling you have, you know, is sometime, you know, maybe, you know- Sometime it is because of your, you know, disturbed mind, you may not feel so good. But if it is handed to you, you know, with some good feeling, you will naturally feel good. The way of talk, you know, everything is said. So, you know- In Japan, the- In bus station or in, you know, in train station they are clipping our ticket, you know. Someone, you know, will give you very good feeling just, you know, clip: "Hai. Hai. Hai." You know [laughs]. There is big difference in the way they clip our ticket. [Laughs.] I am talking about that kind of thing.

Oh. [Apparently discovers how late it is.]

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript (checked against tape) by Bill Redican 6/1/00.

[1] Raku (Jap.) = comfort; pleasure; relief.

[2] Ku (Jap.) = agony; pain; anxiety; worry.

[3] Ge (Jap.) = lower in quality or position; inferior.

[4] From contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby. Ku is in the next line.

[5] From original transcript.

[6] Grahame Petchey was a student of Suzuki-roshi and the first president of San Francisco Zen Center.

## **5 - Sandokai Lecture #7**

Saturday, June 13, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #7

Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 17 Shidai no sho onozukara fukusu,

Line 18 ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi.

Line 19 Hi wa nesshi kaze wa doyo,

Line 20 mizu wa uruoi chi wa kengo.

Line 17 The four elements resume their nature

Line 18 as a child has its mother.

Line 19 Fire is hot, wind blows,

Line 20 water wets, and earth is solid.]

Next-as we have big blackboard, I want to explain those characters. This is-those characters are, of course, Chinese characters, and-but Japanese people read those characters in-in Japanese, you know, without changing the order of characters. How we read those characters is-this is one word, shidai:

Shidai-Shidai no. We put here no.[1] Shidai no sho onozukara fukusu.



[Writing on blackboard.]

Shidai no sho onozukara-we write here, you know, in kana-fukusu:

Ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi. We read in this way, you know.

In Chinese:

[Line 17] Shi dai sho ji fuku

[Line 18] nyo shi toku go bo.

[Line 19] Ka net su do yo,

[Line 20] sui su shi ken go.

This is, you know, Chinese way of reading. But we-Japanese people read Chinese sentences like this:

[Line 17] Shidai no sho onozukara fukusu,

[Line 18] ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi.

[Line 19] Hi wa nesshi kaze wa doyo,

[Line 20] mizu wa uruoi chi wa kengo.

And we put Shidai no-Shidai no sho: "Nature of," you know, "of-of" is no. "Nature of four elements." Onozukara, "naturally." Fukusu or "resume."

And this [gotoshi] is "like." And this [ko] is a "child." This [uru]is "have" or "obtain." And "this" [sono] is that or his "mother" [haha].

[Line 18] ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi.

The order of words is different from-Japanese order of words different from Chinese order of words, which is like-something like, you know, English. So, you know-so we call those words tenyoha [okurigana][2] which is peculiar to Japanese language.

This [no] means, you know, "of." Shidai no sho. This [sho, "nature"] is, you know, subject and this [no, "of"] makes, you know, this word [shidai, "four elements"] adjective of this noun [sho, "nature"]. Shidai no sho. "Nature of four elements." Onozukara [fukusu]: "naturally resumed." Ko no-ko no-"like a child"-[uru] "get"-[sono]his-[haha] mother."

And fire heat, the wind blow; and water wet, and earth is solid [taps something like the tatami with his hand].

So we read Chinese scripture in two ways: sometime in Japanese, you know, this kind of scripture we read in two ways. Sometime in Japanese like this, you know. Our eyes should go [laughs]-go back and forth like this-Shidai no sho onozukara fukusu, ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi-we read. Up and down. Sometime, you know, this kind of-this word may be two [or] three lines ahead. So we-after reading two-three lines we have to come back [to] this [character]. Rather complicated, but we have been doing-we have been reading in that way when we read Chinese language and Chinese books.

Tonight I must explain from here [the blackboard]. Shidai is "four elements." Buddhists, you know, understand-Buddhists have the idea of elements. Elements of various being. We count four elements, you know, like fire, water, and wind, and earth. Wind, fire, water, [and earth]. So those four elements-nature, you know, this elements has its own nature. We shouldn't say so, but tentatively we think those four elements has its-their nature.

Fire-nature of fire is to make things, you know, perfect, you know, to-like you boil something, you know, by heating things, things will be more, you know, mixed up [blended?] or something-more perfect, anyway, we say "perfection."

And wind brings things mature, you know, wind. I don't know why, but [laughs] wind nature, you know, encourage things to be more mature. Little bit different from this, you know [compares characters for fire and wind].[3] This [air][4] is more organic, you know, activity. This [fire][5] has more chemical, you know, activity.

[FIRE WIND WATER EARTH]

And this-water-nature of water is to contain things in it, you know. In water we [laughs]-wherever you go, there is water. So we rather think opposite way: Water contains everything, you know. Instead of saying tree has, you know, in the bark of the tree there is water, we may say, but the water contains bark of the tree-leaves and everything. So water is something great, big being in which everything exist. We exist in water.

And nature of earth is to-solid nature is the element of earth. Earth does not mean "land"-but some solid nature of the material is earth.

So things, you know-we-if you-according to Buddhists, you know, things will be-if you divide things, you know, [into] smallest piece imaginable, you know, like-I don't know English term for that. Do you see? Yeah.

Student: Atomic?

SR: Yeah. Something like that.

Student: Molecule.

Yeah. More- Yeah, "atom," maybe. But, you know, that is not final, you know, final piece. That final piece [is] called gokumi. Gokumi is the smallest piece imaginable, you know. That final being is-consists of-has four-those four natures. So we say final atom is consists of those four elements. So this is-it is something like, you know, modern physics, you know. I-I ca- [partial word]-I don't know how to explain it, you know, because I don't know the proper words for that. Plus and minus and, you know, how final atom is consist of is plus [positive valence] and minus [negative valence]. And those are, you know, something like that.

And we-the str- [partial word]-it is strange enough to say-they have same idea, you know-you-modern physics, you know, thinks final being is-has no weight or no size, you know. It is just current.

We-we Buddhists think in that way. Those-although final being is consist of those-has those four natures, and accordingly we can say it con- [partial word]-final piece is-consists of-consist of four elements, but-but that is-that is not something solid being. When we reach to this, you know, nature of being, that is just, you know, emptiness, we say.

So, you know, when we come to this idea, we come to the idea of emptiness. It is not-those elements is not something which exist actually [as a] materialistic being. It is something, you know, which is not material, which is just energy. So we call it ku [gokumi?].

So this is four elements [points to fire, water, wind, and earth], but we [Buddhists] add one more. And we say five elements. Five [Four] elements has, you know, add one more which is empty-empty nature. [Writes on board: [6]

Line 19 Hi wa nesshi kaze wa doyo,

Line 20 mizu wa uruoi chi wa kengo.]

So that is empty-all empty [laughs].

Even though it is empty, you know, from emptiness those nature will be appear, you know, will come into being. And as soon as those four na- [partial word]-be- [partial word]-nature come into being, we form idea of elements or final piece. And the material is consist of those elements. That is Buddhistic understanding of being. So-

It looks like we are explaining-talking about some material, but when we come to this, you know, idea of elements, that element is not just material. It is both spiritual and material. And when thinking, you know, mind is also-when we come to this element, thinking mind is included. So we say it is empty.

So when we say "emptiness"-emptiness-the idea of emptiness include both material and spiritual. Or material and-mind and objects. Subjective world and objective world. And emptiness is final being to which we-our thinking mind cannot reach.

So, Shidai no sho-nature of-nature-those [four] nature-"nature of four elements naturally," you know, "in itself"-you can say "[are] empty" [writes on board], but here he[7] says "resume to its own nature," you know. It means "come to emptiness."

[Line 18] Just like a children has his mother.

When, you know, there is children, there must be his mother, you know. Without children [laughs], there is no-without mother there is no children. That children is here means mother is here. That emptiness is here means four nature is here, you know. If four nature-even though four nature is there, that is nothing but tentative formation of the final emptiness. That is same thing as "a child has its-his own mother."

All those, you know, four sentence[8]-finally, you know, what does it mean is, you know, talking about, you know, independency of being. Although there is many, you know, elements, those elements originally-naturally co- [partial word]-resume to its nature. So although there is-there are many things, they are-each one of them are independent. And a child is independent, even though they have-he has his own mother. And fire is independent with its nature of heat; and wind is independent with its nature of moving; and water is independent with its nature of

moisture; the earth is independent with its nature of solidness. So everything is independent, you know, it means. And this four sentences introduce, you know-follow the ten sentences which is talking about truth of independen- [partial word]-independency.

In this Sandokai, you know, Sekito-zenji-Sekito-zenji-Sekito explained the reality in two ways. Now he is explaining reality from the viewpoint of dependency. Four elements are independent, although it has its own source. A child is independent, although he has his mother. Fire is independent with its nature of heat. Water is independent with its nature of moisture. And earth is independent with its nature of solidness.

Here translation goes-I don't know whose translation it is: [9]

[Line 17] The characteristic of the four elements drew together.

Drew together. Characteristics of the four elements resume its self. "Resume its original nature," maybe, which is emptiness. And:

[Line 18] Like a child returning to its mother.

This is [laughs] rather poor, you know, translation maybe. "Like a child has its mother" is more accurate. That there is child means that there is mother, you know. That is what it means.

The heat of fire, the moving wind, the water wet, and the solid earth. It is better to put period here [Line 20, after "solid earth"[10]] and maybe "Like a child has its mother" [Line 18]. And heat-fire-element of fire has its nature of heat. The element of wind has its nature of moving. Or having fire-what [laughs]-I don't know how to say-the heat of fire, the moving wind-or "element of fire with its nature of heat, the element of wind with its nature of moving, the element of water with its nature of wet, the element of earth with its nature of solidness-are all independent," maybe. If you put period here [after "solid earth"] and- mis- [partial word]-[add to Line 17] "has its own nature," then maybe, you know, it is-it makes clear sense.

[Line 21] Eyes to see, sound to hear-

This is for next day, but I will repeat-I will read it-the connection, you know, so that you can understand this sentence better.

[Line 21] Eyes to see, sound to hear, and smells-

[Line 22] The sour and salty taste on the tongue.

[Line 23] But in each related things,

[Line 24] As leaves grow from roots,

[Line 25] End and beginning returns to the source.

[Line 26] "High" and "low" are used respectively:

And all those, you know [colons] [taps several times], better to put period here [after "respectively" etc.].

And-one, two, three, four, five, six-[Lines 21-26] those six sentences means the idea of, you know, understanding of independency. Things-things exist in two ways: one is independency, and the other is dependency or interrelated[ness]. But although they are interrelated, they are independent, you know. You-each one of you are independent, but you are related with each other. That is, you know- Even though you are related with each other, you are independent. So you can say both ways.

So this-all those sentences are expressing the idea of reality from the side of dependence-independence [corrected self]. Mmm.

So, you know-mmm-do you understand [laughs] what he means? Usually, you know, when we say "independent," you know [laughs], you have no idea of dependency. That is non-Buddhistic understanding. Buddhists, you know, always, think, you know-understand reality, you know. We know reality, you know, we understand things completely so we will not be mixed up. We will not be confused by saying "independency" or "dependency." If someone said, "Everything is independent," [we say], "Okay, yeah, that is so." And if some other person may say, "That is-things are interrelated," [we say], "Oh, that is okay." Both is okay. We just-we understand both side, so whatever you say, that is okay.

But if someone stick to some i- [partial word], you know, one-sided idea, you know, we may say "No!" [Laughs.] If you say everything is independent, "No!" If you stick to the idea [of] independency of the being, only, you know, stick to the idea of independency, I will say to him, "No! You are wrong." And if he stick to-if someone else stick to the idea of independency, you know, then we will say, "No! You are wrong."

There is many koans like this. "If the final karma," you know, "fire burned everything up, at that time whether buddha-nature [laughs] [will] still [be] there or not?"[11] That is question. And sometime he [the teacher] said, "Yes, it exist." Some other time, some monk came and asked him, "When the karma fire burned everything up, then what will become of the buddha-nature?" "It will not exist." [Laughs.] Both is true. People may ask him, you know, "Before you-then why did you say it will not-it will exist?" you know. Then he will get a big slap. "What are you talking about? Don't you understand what I mean?" you know. "'Buddha-nature will not exist' is right; 'will exist' is right." From the, you know, viewpoint of independency, you know, everything exist with

its buddha-nature-even whatever happen to this world.

But even so, you know, nothing exist when we see from the viewpoint of utter darkness or absolute. Then nothing exist. That which exist is nothingness or darkness, in which maybe things will exist, but what you see or what you say about it is nothing. There is no way to explain things individually.

This is, you know, this is just intellectual, you know, explanation. But here we must have actual feeling. What kind of feeling you will have about things you see, you know-what kind of difference you have between, you know, from the understanding of usual person of just understanding of being, should be, you know, discussed more.

If we see things, you know, which happened in that-at that time, when we see, you will appreciate things which you see, and you will appreciate one by one everything. There you have pure gratitude. Even though you are seeing-observing one piece of flower-one-just one flower, that one flower include everything. It is not just flower; it is the absolute itself; it is Buddha himself. We see in that way. But at the same time, at that time we have, you know-that which exist is just flower, and no one to see or no-nothing to be seen. That which exist is just flower.

That is the feeling we have in our practice and in our everyday activity. Wherever you work, you have that kind of feeling: a continuity of that kind of refreshed, pure gratitude. So to see, you know, to treat things is to treat Buddha's equipment for us. We understand in this way. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

But when we memorize something, when we think about something, you know, in term of duality, we observe things, you know, intellectually and understand things intellectually. Even though we understand intellectually, we do not stick to the idea. That understanding should be improved, you know, day by day by our pure thinking. And we do not stick to old, you know, old stump [laughs], you know, stump of the tree. We do not sit on the same stump [laughs] always.[12]

We say, "You cannot catch fish in the same place." Today [laughs] fortunately you could catch a big fish at some certain place, but tomorrow you should, you know, fish [in] some other place. Or, you know, we say, or we say, you know, "to cut [notch]-to cut a boat to remember, you know, where we are" [laughs, laughter]. We are, you know-boat is actually going, so even though you cut, you know, a boat to remember a place-something beautiful. "Oh! There was something beautiful. This-and we should remember that beautiful thing-flower." Even though you cut the boat, edge of the-what do you call the-

Several students: Channel. Railing.

Suzuki-roshi: Rail? -maybe railing of the boat, you know, it doesn't help, because boat is going [laughs]. But we, you know, we usually do so, you know: "Oh! That was very good." And we cut the railing of the boat to remember something [laughs].

This kind of teaching suggest, you know, this kind of foolish, you know-our foolishness and what is actual Buddhist life. We should not wait here, you know, sitting [laughs] on the same stump all day. They will not come to the same place, with a gun, sitting on the stump [laughs]. It's very foolish [laughs]. Good example of, you know, thinking mind. Even though, you know-even [if] it is so, we should appreciate what you see right now. "Oh! That beautiful flower." You know, we should appreciate. We should have full appreciation of it, but we should not cut the rail-railing of the boat.

Or we should not wait, you know, maybe, for her coming, sitting [laughs], standing at the same place. She may come by this time of the day, but [laughs] sometimes she may come, but sometimes she doesn't come. I have something like this experience. I would stand up, you know-I would wait for her coming [laughs], sitting [laughs]. Sometime she may come; sometime, you know, she may not. So, you know, if she come, we are lucky. If she doesn't, that's okay [laughs, laughter]. If she come, you know, you are lucky. If she doesn't [laughs], you shouldn't complain [laughs, laughter].

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A [Reb Anderson]: Last week you said that if we understand our closeness, our dependence with other things, then we are independent.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: Are we independent even if we don't understand this?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, it is so, but for you I don't know. You know, if you-even though you don't understand it, but if you admit this truth, you know, it is so. So you cannot-you will not stick to some idea-one-only one idea. Or you will not be so arrogant, you know. Independent and interdependent. So, if you, you know, if you don't have actual close feeling to others, but if you know this fact, even intellectually, you know, you will not make-you will not make so big mistake, I don't think.

It is so-actually it is so, but the point is you don't feel so, you know, you don't understand in that way. So we-here there is something which we-which is very important [holding up or pointing to something?]. This kind of, you know-when we talk about this way, it means that we talk about things as if I am completely enlightened person [laughs]. For enlightened person, this is very true, but for the people who is not enlightened, this is just talk, you know.



So when our practice follow this kind of understanding, that is true, you know, Buddhism. It should not be just intellectual understanding. But even, you know, [if] you practice hard, without this kind of understanding, your practice may be very, you know-it doesn't make much sense. Your practice is still involved in the idea of somethingness. Hai.

Student B: What's missing? You said that for an enlightened person that's very true-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -and for an unenlightened person it's just talk.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: What's missing-

Suzuki-roshi: [Speaking simultaneously with student.] What is missing?

Student B: -for an unenlightened person?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. The practice is missing. Practice is missing. So only when you practice zazen hard, this is true. And even though, at the same time, even though you practice hard, you know, your practice will not be always complete, you know. So at that time, there is big gap between the truth and your actual understanding-understand- [partial word]-actually experience. It doesn't, you know, go together. Your intellectual understanding is high, but your practice may be low.

So just intellectual-to have intellectual understanding is easy, we say, but actual practice-emotional-and more emotional practice is difficult. To feel in that way is difficult. So we say intellectual-and to have-to destroy the understanding-intellectual understanding of something is easy, you know. Or to have understanding of nothingness is easy. Intellectually it is easy. But emotionally it is not so difficult [easy?]. We easily stick to something. So, you know, it is-we say to-it is-emotional, you know, difficulty is as hard as to split a lotus in two, you know. Even though you split in two, the strings [roots?] [laughs]-long string will follow and you cannot get rid of it. Still string is here.

But thinking, you know, difficulties-intellectual difficulty is as easy as break a stone in two. [Makes whacking noise.] Nothing left, you know.

Student C [Bill Shurtleff?]: Does that mean that if a person sees one person doing something to another person that's hurting the other person-let's say that I see someone doing something that's hurting another person.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: And I feel emotionally upset by that hurting [?]-that actually I'm not seeing clearly and I'm not understanding what's happening.

Suzuki-roshi: Actually, what is the point of the question?

Student C: The question is: The only reason that I'm upset when I see someone doing something that looks like it's hurting another person is that-

Suzuki-roshi: You-when you doing helping something or someone else?

Student C: I see a situation in which it looks to me as if one person is hurting another person. And I become upset in that situation.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I see.

Student C: The question is: Is that-I'm becoming upset because I'm not seeing the situation as it actually is, and that if I were seeing it as it actually is, I wouldn't be emotionally upset. That's my question.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I see. But that is very difficult question to answer, you know, because, you know, it is difficult to know whether one is helping the other with-in some appropriate way or not, you know? So if it is not appropriate, you will be upset, you know. At least you will worry, you know. When one is helping appropriate, you know, when you upset-sometimes that happens, you know. If, you know, you-if someone is helping your girlfriend in proper way [laughs], you may be-anyway you will be upset, you know. [Laughs, laughter.] That kind of thing happens pretty often, so it is very difficult [laughs, laughter] to answer.

Student C: Roshi, my question is more that a person who really sees things clearly-is there no situation that would upset him emotionally?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't think so, you know, emotionally, you know. But "upset" I say, or you say, but that feeling-there is big difference, you know, in that feeling too. Maybe Buddha will be upset, you know, easily- quite easily. But when he is upset, you know, even though he's upset he's not upset because-just because of him or because of his attachment or anything like that. And sometime he will be very angry [laughs], you know. Anger is al- [partial word]-allowed when that is Buddha's anger, you know, when he is angry when he should be angry. But that anger is not exactly the same anger we will have, usually. You know, that is, you know-if he is not upset when he should be upset, you know, that is also violence [violation] of the precepts. When he should be angry, he should be angry. He must be angry. That is how the difference between Mahayana precepts and more, you know-that's a characteristic of Mahayana way of observing precepts.

We say it is-sometime anger may be like a sunset, you know. It is

beautiful. Red. [Laughs.] It is-anyway, it-although it is red and, you know, bright and red, but, you know, even though it looks like anger, but it is actually a beauty. So there is, you know, that kind of difference. But so how-you know, if-if anger comes, you know, from purity like a lotus, it is good, I think. From pure mind. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, I've observed that many times our emotions seem to be independent of our minds-of our intellectual understanding-and have a life of their own, a life outside that has nothing to do with the life of what you know or understand or in your mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: What is the source of emotion in the body or in our understanding? Where does that emotion-

Suzuki-roshi: Emotion-

Student D: -come from?

Suzuki-roshi: -you know, more-it is maybe mostly it comes from, you know, physical, you know, source, physical part of maybe, you know, physiological thing. And thinking is, you know, some mind which ignore, you know, those physical things-more universal, you know, river. We think-when we think, we think [as a] more universal river, ignoring each conditions and conditions-various conditions-or else we cannot think, you know. We-if we count various condition, you know, five, ten, or twenty, or more-one hundred conditions [laughs]-it is not possible to think.

So the characteristic of thinking mind is to ignore all the conditions and to follow the, you know, track of the thinking mind. So, you know, it doesn't fit. Thinking mind doesn't fit to the each, you know, case we meet-we face. So, you know, tendency of man is just to think and go on: Whatever it happens doesn't matter. [Makes humorous grunting noise, laughs.] "What are you talking about? We should do this!" you know. That is man's, you know, way. But women stick to various conditions and carefully observe various conditions and figure out what we should do one by one.

That is also true with our thinking mind and emotional feeling. So how to adjust is, you know, when we p- [partial word]-our actual practice is more physiological practice, not thinking mind. You know, ignoring all the conditions, just to sit on black cushion [taps cushion] is the practice.

So there is similarity, you know, in thinking mind and emotional practice. When you practice zazen, we ignore almost all the conditions we have. Our-when we practice zazen, our emotional situation is-already emotionally we ignore things. Just like you think. So in zazen practice there is-it is easier to, you know, to practice emotional practice

and thinking practice.

Student D: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student D: What happens when the flame goes out?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Flames?

Student D: Yeah. You said the heat is independent and dependent and interdependent all at the same time. But sometimes it goes out completely.

Suzuki-roshi: Goes-?

Student D: Turn it out-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student D: -like on that lamp. And there's no flame at all. You know, it's none of these things, is it?

Suzuki-roshi: But, yeah. That is [taps stick], you know, interesting questions-question-and they explain various way, you know. Heat-it does not mean just heat, you know. It is some element which exist in each piece of, you know, atom.

Student D: Can the flame go out in that little "each piece?"

Suzuki-roshi: Flame nature, maybe, you may say. You know, flame nature fall and [laughs]-some people, you know, some people say, "In each gokumi-gokumi is last element or last piece of the material. In last piece of the material, which is the-which you cannot divide any more, you know, last piece. In that last piece, four, you know, elements is in it. Last element is-consist of four elements in same, you know, in same quantity. And when, you know, fire element, you know, becomes strong, by some chance, you know, it will be a fire, you know. But if fire nature is-become weak, and water nature become strong, then it-that will be something water[y], you know. They explain in that way. So, even though four elements are equally, you know, exist in the last piece, you know, according to the situation, some element will become strong. That is one explanation.

And the other is, you know, according to the material, you know, in last piece, some piece will have stronger, you know, or more fire element-maybe 99 percent of fire element-then that will be fire, you know. Some school explain how fire exist and why-how fire, you know-why fire, you know, exist-why does it exist when we extinguish it?

Student D: That last little piece, then, will always have fire? It can never go away?

Suzuki-roshi: No, not that-not all-that piece is not completely fire, but, you know, it include some other element but not strong enough, sometime, or not much enough. They explain each things in that way-why water is water, you know. Water does not mean this water [taps his cup], you know. Water nature. Some element [laughs]. Some water-like element. It is not exactly water we see. Do you understand?

Student D: I think I do. Water has a nature to flow, so it's more than just that [1-2 words inaudible].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, but what they are talking about as water is not this water [tapping his cup of water]. Some, you know, some nature which exist in the last piece of element of things.

Student D: You can't lose that piece of water.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: You can't lose that water.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughs.]

Student E: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student E [Bill Shurtleff?]: Could I explain a little bit about how Western physics would say the same thing?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

That as a parti- [partial word]-as you get to the smallest particle, you can't tell when it turns into energy. There's a point at which it's no longer a particle, but it's also no longer energy. At the same time, you can't tell when it behaves like a wave and when it behaves like a particle. It behaves-sometimes if you think of it as a wave, it behaves like a wave. But if you think of it as a particle, it behaves like a particle. And the same thing is true with a charge-we say "an electrical charge." It has charge and yet it doesn't have charge, like an atom has positively charged protons, negatively charged electrons, and neutrons. But these conditions are continually changing, mostly depending on your point of view. That might be something like that understanding.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Hai.

Student F: Roshi, I have some difficulty in listening to the lecture. For example, when I chant[ed] the Sandokai when I knew nothing about

what it meant, I was able to concentrate on my breathing and my voice coming from my hara. But now I start thinking of san meaning "many," and do meaning something else. [Suzuki-roshi and several students are laughing.] And I lose touch with my activity. And now I find myself thinking, when you were holding your cup, "It has four elements." [Laughter.]

And it creates difficulty. I know it's because I get attached to what you say-to the words and to the ideas that they are. And the dark, the ri side, is becoming-is, you know, the ji side and the ri side. The ji now, when I chant the Sandokai, the intellectual, the bright side, is strong, and I don't enjoy chanting that sutra any more. [Laughter.]

Student G [David Chadwick]: He lost his ri.

Student F: Could you-could you maybe give me some advice on how to avoid these kinds of difficulties?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, you cannot avoid it. [Laughter.]

Student F: -or else maybe enjoy them?

Suzuki-roshi: That is, you know, why I am telling you. You know, you have to polish your, you know, understanding.

Student F: Is it understanding? You know, when we get up in the morning-and we talked about it the other day, that we should just-you say, "Get up! Just get up! [Suzuki-roshi laughs.] So this morning, when I woke up, I usually just get up. But then I heard-[loud laughter]-I started to think. I didn't get up right away. I waited until the [wake-up] bell came back across. It came once and then it came back, and then I started to think about what was said in the lecture, and I just gave up.

Suzuki-roshi: That is not because of lecture, but-[laughing]. That is not my fault.

Student F: It's-my question is-it's sort of a question really-can we-is our practice to have subjective understanding with-can we have subjective understanding of our practice without having some kind of objective or right understanding, or do we have to balance them, have both of them? Can we practice Buddha's way without knowing Buddha's way intellectually?

Suzuki-roshi: If you can, you are very lucky [laughs]. But, unfortunately, we cannot practice without intellectual understanding, I think. Yeah.

Student F: If we sit zazen and we have correct posture and we follow our breathing, do we have to have these kinds of concepts or ideas about Buddhism like the four elements and-

Suzuki-roshi: No, no. At that time we should forget.

Student F: I mean, do we have to understand the ideas of Buddhism when we practice?

Suzuki-roshi: You have to, you know, because you tend to think [about] things in that way. So we have to, you know, back and forth, we should polish up our understanding so that we cannot be intellectually mixed up. That is important, I think.

Oh! [Sees how late the time is. Laughter.] When I saw it last time it was-I had fifteen minutes. Your question was too good. [Laughs.]

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby and City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/12/00).

[1] shi (Jap.) "four" + dai (Jap.) "great." Japanese adds "no" as a possessive article ("of") to the Chinese characters.

[2] Phonetically, S.R. said tenyoha. Derby MS gives okurigana.

[3] Derby, p. 3.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Derby, p. 4, added these two lines. Suzuki-roshi was writing on the board, but there did not seem enough time to write out both lines fully.

[7] Possibly Blyth ("the four elements return to their nature") or Masunaga ("end and beginning return to the source")-Line 17.

[8] As used here, "lines."

[9] It appears to have been Reiho Masunaga's translation, but in this transcript the text is presented verbatim as recited by Suzuki-roshi (i.e., often slightly modified from the Masunaga version). From Reiho Masunaga, *The Soto Approach to Zen*, Tokyo: Layman Buddhist Society Press, 1958, pp. 185-187.

[10] Derby, p. 6. Masunaga has a semicolon after "solid earth." Suzuki-roshi prefers a full period.

[11] From Blue Cliff Record, Case 29.

[12] Referring to an ancient Chinese story of a hunter who sees a rabbit run into a tree stump one day. Foolishly, he comes back the next day and waits for another rabbit to run into the same stump.

## **6 - Sandokai Lecture #8**

Wednesday, June 17, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #8

Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 21 Manako wa iro, mimi wa onjo,

Line 22 hana wa ka, shita wa kanso.

Line 23 Shikamo ichi-ichi no ho ni oite,

Line 24 ne ni yotte ha bumpusu.

Line 25 Hommatsu subekaraku shu ni kisu beshi.

Line 26 Sompī sono go wo mochiu.

Line 21 For eyes there is color and form, for ears there is sound,

Line 22 for the nose there is smell, and for the tongue there is taste;

Line 23 Each being comes out from the root

Line 24 as branches and leaves come out from the trunk.

Line 25 But both root and end should return to their original nature.

Line 26 The words we use are different--good and bad, respectful and

mean-but through these words we should understand the absolute being or source of the teaching.]

In last lecture I explained the everything-independency of everything. "Independency of everything" means-of course, things are interdependent with each other, but at the same time, each being is independent because each being include the other being-the rest of the being. So when each being include whole world, then each being is actually independent. But at the same time, you know, each being, you know, looks like- When each being understood, you know, in term of big or small, black or white, heavy or light, man or nature-



[Aside.] It is working?

Student: It doesn't sound like it.

Hmm? Oh. And that is the sound. Can you hear me? No. Huh? Oh. I must make-okay.

Student [to other students]: Perhaps you could move forward to make two rows.

Will you come nearer to me?

Student [to other students]: Come forward.

Sit one more row between. Okay. Yeah. Please come nearer as much as possible. [Sounds of movement.]

In Sandokai, you know, actually, [Sekito is] talking about reality and the people, you know, forgetting all about this point, involved in some, you know, getting to discrimination which school of Zen is right-right or wrong, you know. Southern school or Northern school. This kind of dispute were all over. So that is why Sekito-zenji-

Can you hear me now [laughs]? No?

That is why Sekito-zenji wrote this poem. And here he discuss from the viewpoint-he is talking about reality from viewpoint of independency, you know. So when we talk about, you know, independency, the Southern school is independent, you know. Northern school is independent. But there is no reason why we should compare two. Northern school represent, you know, all Buddhism. And Southern school include all the Buddhism. When, you know, both school is expressing whole Buddhism in their own way, you know, there is no reason why we should compare.

Rinzai school, you know, has its-has their own approach to reality, and Soto school has our own approach to the reality, you know. When they have-when there is-when approach is different, there is no reason why we should compare. That is the point, you know.

Sekito-zenji is pointing at this point, talking about what is reality. He actually do not talk about Northern school-dispute of Northern school or Southern school. But actually, talking about what is reality and what is Buddha's teaching in its true sense. He is, you know, pointing out at the mistake, you know, of the two schools at that-at his time.

Anyway, tonight-those three [couplets] we explained-I explained already four sentences-four clause-clauses. And now tonight I want to

explain six more clause [lines] which denote the reality from the viewpoint of independency-independency. Here he says: "Eyes-

[Line 21] Manako wa iro, mimi wa onjo,

is "eyes." "Eye-eyes to see, ear to hear sound." For eyes there is color or form. This shiki [iro?][1] means "color and form."

[Line 21] For eyes there is color; for ears there is sound and voice.

[Line 22] And for nose there is smell; for tongue there is taste of salt or sour.

This, you know, means-it looks like, you know, he is talking about duality or dependency-dependency of dharma of eyes and its object. But actually, when, you know, we-even though you see something, you know, if you see things in its true sense, there is nothing to be seen or no one to see, you know, actually. But when you analyze, there someone who is seeing something and something which is seen by us-by eyes. This is only one activity-only one, you know, activity could be understand in two ways. I see something. But actually when I see something really, you know, there is no one who is seeing it and who-nothing to be seen, actually. Both is true, and he is talking about oneness of the form and eyes here. That is how, you know, Buddhists observe things. But sometime we observe-we understand things in its dualistic sense, but we don't forget to-dualistic understanding of "I see" or "someone is seen by someone-something is seen by someone is some interpretation-something which our thinking mind produce. Subjective-subject and object. But subject and object is one. So subject and object is one and two. Or that is our understanding. One and many. One and two.

So he want to say is for eyes, there is form; for ears there is sound and voice. But actually, there is no two or-there is no form or no eyes. When you say "eyes," eyes include form. When you say "form," form include eyes. If there is no form, nothing to see, you know, eyes is not eyes anymore [laughs]. Because there is something to see, eyes become eyes. Same is true with ears and nose. Dogen-zenji says, "If there is no river," you know, "there is no ship." Even though there is ship, that is not ship [laughs]. That will be a house [laughs, laughter]. Because there is a river, a ship becomes ship. Same is true with our eyes.

Usually, you know, non-Buddhists why, you know, they become attached to objective world or something they see, is they understand only one way, you know. "Here is something very good," you know, "or sweet. I have to eat," you know. And we understand something exist here without, you know, us-whether we try to eat it or not, the cake exist. That is normal way of understanding. But cake is-become cake because we want to eat it. So we make cake, you know. There is no cake, actually, without us. When we understand in that way, we are not-

we are seeing cake, but we are not seeing cake [laughs]. That is how we keep our precepts, you know.

We, you know, we kill some animal. Maybe we may kill some animal or worm or insects or earwigs [laughs, laughter]. But when we think, you know, "I am killing earwigs are here," you know, "many. So this is very harmful one, so I have to kill this one," you know. When you understand in that way, you understand things only dualistic way. So- But, you know, actually earwig and human being is one-not different. Even it is impossible to kill, you know, earwigs. Even though we think we killed it, you know, actually we cannot. It is not possible, even though you smash it [thumps fist on floor or table, laughs], it is still alive. That tentative form of earwig may vanish, but actually whole world-as long as, you know, whole world, including us, is exist, we cannot kill it. When we come to this understanding, we can keep our precepts completely.

But even so [laughs], you know, we should not kill, you know, anything without any reason or with some convenient reason-making some reason why I should kill: "Because," you know, "earwig eats vegetables, so that is why I must kill them." And "It is nothing wrong to kill animals," you know, "so I am killing the earwig."

With this- With some reason, you know, you kill an animal, that is not our way. Actually, when you kill animal, you don't feel so good. That should be, you know- That is also included in your understanding. "Even though I don't feel good, I have to kill. Even though it is not possible," you know, "tentatively I am killing animal." In this way, whole world, you know-something is going in the big world.

So without sticking to any idea of killing or not killing, or without, you know, with some reason why we kill or why we don't kill-if you observe our precept in that way, that is not actual way of observing precepts. How you observe precepts is to have complete understanding of reality is how you don't kill. Do you understand? In other word, how you understand, you know, my lecture is how you don't kill [laughs]. How you practice zazen is how you do not kill animal. In other words, you should not, you know, live in the world of duality only.

We should observe our world in two ways: from-one is from dualistic, you know, way; the other is from the viewpoint of absolute. So, "It is not good to kill," is right. It is not impossible-and "Even though you think you kill, you didn't kill." That is another side. So, you know, even though you break your precepts, you are violent [have violated] your precepts-after doing it, if you feel very sorry, you know-"Oh, I am sorry" [laughs]. If you say "I am very sorry" to the wigs-earwigs, you know, then that is Buddhist way.

In this way, our practice will go on and on and on. You may think, you know, if you-if there is precepts we should observe it literally, or else we cannot be Buddhist. Or, you know, if you feel good when you observe

some precepts, that is not Buddhist way-our way. Our way is, you know, sometime we may kill animal. But to feel sorry, that is our way. To feel sorry is included in our precepts. That is how we observe precepts. And, you know, this kind of activity will go on and on and on. And everyone is, you know, involved in this kind of activity. Everything is doing this kind of thing. But way they do-the feeling they have may be-may not be same. One will be, you know- One has no idea of precepts or attainment. The other has trying to make themselves feel good [laughs] by some religion or precepts-observing precepts. That is not Buddhist way.

Buddhist way is, in one word, jiji. Jiji is to-to encourage, you know, to encourage people when they have good feeling and to get rid of their suffering. To help to get rid of their suffering. That is true love. It is not just to give something, or to receive something, or to observe precepts, or to attain something we do not practice our way. We practice our way as things, you know, naturally is-are going. And to follow people, and to suffer with them, and help to relieve their suffering, and to encourage people to go on and on and on. That is Buddhist way. That is how we observe precepts.

So, you know, we see something but we do not see something. We feel always oneness of the subjective world and objecting world. Oneness of eyes and form and color. The oneness of the taste and mouth. So we do not, you know, especially we don't have to attach to something especially. We don't have to feels especially good, you know, because of Buddhist practice. When we practice our way in this way, there-we are all independent. That is what he [Sekito] is talking about.

And:

[Line 23] Shikamo ichi-ichi no ho ni oite,

[Line 24] ne ni yotte ha bumpusu.

Ichi-ichi: "Each dharma." Dharma means eyes, nose, tongue, ears, or form, or taste, small or taste or sounds is-all those things are dharma. "Each being, each dharma has its own-is-has a root which is buddha nature, which is world of oneness," you know, "which is absolute, which is buddha nature. Each being comes out from-from the root like leaves, you know, comes out from the root or trunk."

So we-when we see many things, we should not, you know, just see things as it is, but we should know how each things exist. Because of the root, we exist. Because of the absolute Buddha nature, we exist. When we exist-understand things in this way, we have oneness, you know. When I am here, you are there. When there is man, there is woman, you know. But woman is independent and man is independent. So there is-when something happens, there is always oneness of the subjective world and objective world.

So:

[Line 25] Hommatsu subekaraku shu ni kisu beshi.

Hommatsu- Hom is "root," and matsu is-matsu is "end." "Root and end," we may say, but "both root and end should reduce to-should resume to the original nature."

[Line 26 Sompi sono go wo mochiu.]

"The words we use is different-good words and bad words, good words-respectful word and mean word-but through those words, we should understand-we should understand-the absolute being or source of the teaching." That is, you know, what is said here. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

[Aside:] Are you recording?

[Inaudible answer by tape operator.]

This is okay. Aha.

In one of the-in Bonmo-kyo-Bonmo-kyo is the important scripture of precepts. In Bonmo-kyo it says, "To see-to see is not to see [laughs], and not to see is to see [laughs]." Do you understand? "To see is not to see. And not to see is to see." You know, that is how we, you know, observe "don't act in unchaste," you know, act, you know.

To see a woman [laughs], you know, is not to see the woman [laughs]. To see the woman is not to see the woman. Not to see the woman is to see the woman [laughs]. Do you understand? To eat fish, you know, or meat-to eat meat is not to eat meat. And not to eat meat is not to eat meat [laughs]. To- You understand precepts only one way. "Not to see-not to eat meat" is how you observe precepts. But not to eat, you know, meat is to eat meat [laughs]. You are eating meat.

There is two monks, you know, once travelling together. And there were a big river, where there was no bridge to cross. So they were waiting on the one side of the bank. While they were waiting, a beautiful woman came [laughs]. So they were very much encouraged to cross the river with her. And, at last, one of them, you know, decided, you know, one of them carried her on his back and crossed the river. The other monk, after crossing the river and on the way to somewhere, the other monk became furious [laughs]. "You are," you know, "you are a monk! You violate precepts", you know, "not to see or-a woman. As a monk, it is not so good. Why did you do that?"

The monk who helped [laughs] the lady said, "You are still carrying [laughs] a woman. I forgot about her long long time ago. You are still

carrying-you are still violating the precepts" [laughs], he said, you know. Maybe to, you know, it is not completely right to help her, you know, as a monk. It may be, you know, it may not be perfectly right. Even so-even so, as a man-as a-as a-as all human being are our friend, we should help them, you know, even we violate Buddhist precepts we should help her. But if you think about it, you know, uselessly, you know, when there is no need to think about, to think about it, you know, is-is actually violating the precepts.

So to see-to see a woman is not to see the woman. To help her actually is not-actually he is not helping her, you know. When- Just because to help her if you cross [with] her on his back is-actually he is not, you know, helping her. Do you understand? He is not helping her. So not to help her, you know, is to help her in its true sense.

When you are involved in dualistic sense of violating precepts, or man and woman, or monk and layman, that is violating the precepts and [is a] poor understanding of Buddha's teaching. That is why-how we sit, you know. We just sit, without any idea of attain-any idea of attainment, without any idea of doing anything, just to sit is our way. To be involved-completely involved in sitting meditation is our zazen-without any idea of attainment, any idea of waste of time or meaningful, you know, practice. Just to sit is our way. And this is how you keep our precepts.

Sometime we will be angry, and sometime we will smile. Sometime we will [be] mad at people-your friend. Sometime you will give a kind words to them. But, you know, actually what we are doing [is] just to observe our way.

[Sighs.] Okay? [Laughs.] I cannot explain it so well, but I think you must have understood what I mean. Do you have some question? I have some more time. Hai.

Student A: [One-two words unclear] you were talking about just before. But I-I don't feel as though that Buddhism or talk about Buddhism or Sandokai-I don't feel how it's the same as my life or my practice. I feel some separation between what I do-sitting zazen or eating, and so on-and then some talk. And it seems just like maybe talk is about what I've been doing or haven't been doing. But-Somehow it seems like it's-it's like something else. It is way out there.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Way out, yeah. Yeah. Maybe so. I felt in that way [laughs] for pretty long time [laughs, laughter], you know. I think so-I agree [laughs]. You know, it is rather difficult to, you know, to give you actual feeling, you know, by lecture, you know. That is why, you know, the old masters, you know, twisted their [students'] noses or hit at [laughs]-hit at them. "Right here!" you know. "What are you thinking about?" That is- In short, that is the point. I am going round and round the point, you know, so I am using words. We say, "to scratch itchy

fingers [toes] on the shoes [with shoes on]" [laughs, laughter]. I am scratching itchy fingers on your shoes. How about it? It doesn't- It doesn't help you so much, maybe. Even so, I have to talk [laughs]. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, when you said that we can't-like when we kill an earwig or any insect or anything like that, when you said that we can't kill it because as long-

Suzuki-roshi: You cannot-

Student B: -as long as everything is here it can't die.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: Does that like say that each moment will always be-each thing will always be that thing, and it's like-

Suzuki-roshi: It is-

Student B: -this lecture will always be this lecture?

Suzuki-roshi: It is so, you know. It is so when you see things, you know, as-it-is, it is so.

Student B: But even- Even if, like, the body of the earwig dies, you're saying that- Well, what happens to the earwig's karma?

Suzuki-roshi: Karma [laughs]?

Student B: Where does the earwig go?

Suzuki-roshi: Earwigs go to the source of the reality [laughs, laughter]. They know where to go [laughs, laughter]. So when we speak in this way, what you will feel [laughs]-but it is something. Just talk, you know. But when you suffer a lot, you know, it will be a great relief to know that. Hai.

Student C: Roshi, what is the difference between you and me?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Ah. There is difference and no difference [laughs]. That will be the answer, you know. That is why, you know, we practice together. And because we are not different we practice. So if one side is missing, we cannot practice. If you are quite different from me, there is no reason why you should practice with me. Because we are same- If we are same, if we are truly same, there is no reason [laughs] why we practice together. Because we are different, we practice our way, and because we are same, originally same, we practice our way. So not different and different. This kind of thing is something which you do not know, you know.

Last-Oh- The teacher Trungpa[2] was referring to this point. Our traditional practice start from this, you know, source of the teaching which is nothing, which is absolute, which is non-duality.

But usually when you practice something, you are attracted [to] something, you know-eyes or nose, taste or form, you know, not by this [may have pointed to the character shu on the blackboard] original source of the teaching. The original source of the teaching is not something which could-can be told, so we say, "tongueless speech." "Tongueless speech." We are talking about something which it is impossible to talk. That is called teisho, you know, not lecture [laughs]. We can explain those words, but by those words we are explaining [that] which is empty. So we call the- words, "the finger pointing at the moon." If you understand what is moon, finger is not necessary anymore. So what you should understand is not-is not my words. But, you know, you should realize by your true experience what we-I mean. So you do n [partial word]- You have- You are blank [laughs], you know, you are blind in-on this point, so you feel I am talking about something, some words, you know, in some sophisticated way. So it looks like very, you know, so-called "Buddhistic way," you know. Buddhistic way is not those words but the thing which we really mean. Hai.

Student D: In killing the earwig, there is no words or memories or anything. There is just the experience of killing the earwig. Is that the teacher that leads to the source-that leads you the experience of the source?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student D: Is the experience of killing the earwig, not the talk about it, the teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You know, and at that time, you know, you shouldn't feel like Buddhist or good monk or sinful monk, you know [laughs], or violating your precepts. You should, you know-when you are working in the garden, you know, for some purpose you should be involved in that activity completely. Sometime you can-you may be mad at the earwigs [makes humorous growling noise, laughs], you know. But no one can blame you if you, you know-no one can say anything-criticize you. You should have that much confidence, you know. If you are expelled from Tassajara because you killed a-a lot of earwigs [laughs, laughter], you should go, "Okay. I will go." That's all. You-you must have, you know, not confidence-it is more than confidence, you know. You don't have to fight with anyone. If you have that much, you know, understanding in what you are doing, that is good. That is our way.

Student E: When we say that we don't harm sentient beings, or earwigs, or anything else, do we say that because it's impossible to harm them,



or because it's wrong to harm them, or both?

Suzuki-roshi: Both, yeah. We should know that is not possible, you know. Why it is not possible not to kill is because that is words. Words cannot reach so-that area. But only when you [are] caught by words, you know, you say "possible" or "impossible." That is how, actually, you live, you know, every day-killing something, sacrificing something. You just apply Buddha's teaching to give you some good excuse, that's all. And you feel good, you know: Very superficial understanding of Buddhism. So both is true, you know. You-We super [partial word]- Even though it is superficial understanding, we cannot help feeling bad when you kill something. You don't feel so good.

But even though you don't feel so good, that does not mean that you are doing something wrong-because you are not killing, actually. But if you, you know, say, "Because I am not killing anything, so it is okay to kill" [laughs], that is wrong because you stick to the words or precepts, which is just words. It is not true heart of Buddha's-true feeling of Buddha.

Student F: Roshi, every animal has a way of living, of eating, of raising its young, of relating to the world, that is in keeping with its particular dharma or the dao of its being. Does not man have a specific and particular way of living, and eating, and raising his young, and relating to each other that is in keeping with his dharma or his dao?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Not absolutely, but, you know, we have to make best effort to keep, you know, dharma. That is, you know, those words. Words is necessary. Even though it is necessary, you shouldn't think this is complete, you know. We should make constant effort to produce new dharma, one after another. Produce new dharma, new precepts.

We say, "this is human life," you may say. But that human life is for today, not for tomorrow. Tomorrow we must have more improved, better way to live. This kind of effort should be continued. That is why we have bad feeling, you know. If we have some bad feeling, it means something. So we should improve our way. And-but you should not expect any perfect dharma, you know, in term of "you should do" or "you shouldn't."

So there is-no one can insist [on] their own way, but we should appreciate their effort to improve our dharma. That is Buddhist way. Does it make some sense [laughs]? Hai.

Student G: Can the true dharma be passed on if the disciple does not surpass the teacher? You say that we must always, every day, improve our way, make the best effort. And I've heard you say, "For the true teaching to be passed on, the disciple must surpass the teacher." Can we carry on the dharma even if we don't surpass the teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Yeah. "Surpass" [laughs] is also dualistic word, so we shouldn't stick to [laughs], you know-our-I-there is no reason why I-if you surpass my, you know, me, there is no reason why I don't feel so bad or so good, you know. Actually, that-which is better is just words.

Student G: To have the same- I mean, to have the same understanding as the teacher's. The same understanding would be something that would be static or fixed. It wouldn't be something that we're changing. So if we were to have your understanding right now, tomorrow, that would be-what would that be?

Student off-mike: Impossible. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Not easy, so-even, you know, to create one page of the new dharma is very difficult. Even though you feel you sometime you invented something new [laughing], but Buddha is always waiting, you know: "Come here." But you feel you invented something new, you know. But Buddha is here: "Oh! You come here. Good boy." [Laughs.] " I have some more things for you. Come nearer to me," Buddha will say. So it is very hard to surpass his teaching. [Laughs, laughter.]

Ooo-kay. [Said in mock resignation.] [Laughs, laughter.]

That is more valuable than my talk. [Laughs, laughter.] [May have been speaking to the tape operator or tape recorder itself.] You are very good disciple.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/5/00.

[1] S.R. said shiki. Derby MS gives iro.

[2] Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-1987), a Trungpa tulku in the Kagyu lineage. According to an early transcript, he gave a talk at Tassajara the previous evening.

## **7 - Sandokai Lecture #9**

Saturday, June 20, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #9  
Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 27 Meichu ni atatte an ari,

Line 28 anso wo motte o koto nakare.

Line 29 Anchu ni atatte mei ari,

Line 30 meiso wo motte miru koto nakare.

Line 27 Within brightness actually there is utter darkness;

Line 28 but you should not meet someone just with darkness.

Line 29 Within darkness there is brightness

Line 30 but you should not see others only with the eyes of brightness.]

First I will explain the two terms mei and an, "brightness" and "darkness." Brightness means relative, dualistic world of term and words, you know-the thinking world or visible world in which we live. And darkness means, you know, absolute world where there is no exchange value or materialistic value or spiritual value even-the world our words does not reach-the world our thinking mind cannot reach. Beyond words, beyond thinking there is world. This is the world of absolute-the opposite to the world of relative or dualistic world.

And it is necessary for us who live in realm of-realm of duality to have good understanding of the absolute, which may be the idea of deity or god, usually. But in Buddhism, we do not, you know, have any idea about deity or about god because the absolute is the absolute because it is beyond our understanding or dualistic thinking. But we cannot deny this world of absolute, or a kind of idea of deity.

But as people may say, Buddhism is atheism. Maybe so, you know, because we have no particular idea of God. We know there is, but we don't want to know what it is, because we know that the absolute is absolute because our dualistic mind cannot reach. And we know that our-we know the limit of our thinking mind or intellectuality. Buddhists intellectualize our intellectuality, so we do not say anything about the absolute. But there is. That is what we mean by an. An is, you know, "darkness, utter darkness."

Mei is "sun and moon." Mei-the character mei is-means "sun and moon":

[mei]

This [ari] is-this word-"there is," you know-this is verb "is"-"there is":

[ari]

[Line 27 Meichu ni atatte an ari,

Line 28 anso wo motte o koto nakare.

Line 29 Anchu ni atatte mei ari,

Line 30 meiso wo motte miru koto nakare.]

"Within"-this [chu] is, at the same time, "middle." This is masani[1] [atatte?]-it means that-"actually." "Actually in-within-within brightness, mei, masani, actually, within brightness, mei-chu, and there is darkness, utter darkness." The brightness means relative world, and relative world-"within relative world there is utter darkness."

This is a literal translation. But it doesn't make sense [laughs]-literal translation doesn't make sense. "Within relative world there is-there is darkness." So we must-we must-we must understand the actual meaning of this character ari, "there is." "There is"-"There is"-you know, your-your-when you say "there is," you know, "there is something-there is something on the table, on the earth, or in Tassajara," "there is something in Tassajara or on something [or] in something."

But this-in this case, this ari is different character from another character of ari. This character means, you know, this is-this part of the character ari means, you know, "flesh" or "skin."

[ari, character [Root for [hada, character for "there is"] "flesh"] [2] for "skin, body"]

So already a part of it, you know, not just "there is something," but that the way it exist is closely related to, you know, "something."

So-mei, "brightness and darkness is not, you know, in-in brightness there is darkness. This is more dualistic understanding, but when we use this [ari] character, you know, closer relationship darkness and brightness. Like, you know, I have my skin [laughs]. I have my skin, you may say. You may say, "I have my hand." [Laughs.] Yet your hand is, you know, a part of you. Your skin is a part of you.

So actually, you know, there-it-it is not any more dualistic, you know. You yourself-skin is you yourself; your hands are your hands. But you say-I don't know why-"I have two hands." But hands may say [laughs]-I have-hands, you know, may feel very funny [laughs, laughter]. "Oh, I am, you know, a part of you, you know, and you say you have two hands. What does it mean? Do you mean you have four hands instead of me [two]?" you may say.

So, if possible, I think you must have another character for "have," you know. Chinese people has two characters. When we say, "There is a stone or book or the table," they use another character, zai:

[zai]

And when we say, "We have two hands," we use this character [ari]-[which means] "there is" too:

[ari]

We say "there is," actually, "two hands": nihon te ga arimasu-you know, "there is two hands"-anata ni wa-you know-"you-in you there is two hands," we say. In that case, the character we use is this [ari].

So it means, anyway, the very close relationship between brightness and darkness. And actually darkness itself is brightness, actually, you know. Dark or bright is within your mind, you know, because within your mind you have some standard or degree or measurement, you know, how bright this room is, you know. If it is, you know, usually-unusually bright we say this room is bright. If it is unusually dark, you know, you

say it is dark. But it is, you know-you can say this room is bright; at the same time, you c- [partial word-"can"]-someone may say, this room is very dark." Someone who came from San Francisco may say, "Oh, Tassajara is very dark." Someone from-came out of cave, may say, "This Tassajara is very bright, like a capital city." So bright or dark is not-is within ourselves-within. Because we have some standard we say bright or dark, but actually brightness is darkness and darkness is brightness.

So even though we say "utter darkness," it does not mean there is nothing in utter darkness. There is many things. But when you have bright light you will see many things, in term of, you know, Caucasian or Japanese, you know. That's all-man and woman, stone or lamp. This kind of thing exist in brightness.

But when we say da- [partial word] "utter darkness" or "world of absolute," which is beyond our thinking, you may think this is some world which is quite different from our actual human world, but this is also a mistake. If you understand in that way-if you understand darkness in that way, that darkness is not which [what] we mean by darkness.

You prepare, you know, various-you will-I think you are preparing some dishes for Ed-Ed's wedding, you know. You may, you know, dish out various, you know, food in separate, you know-this is dessert, this is salad, soup, you know, in different dishes. That is brightness. But actually, when you eat, [laughs] you know, in your mouth various food will be mixed up. There is no dessert or no soup or no bread. All mixed up in your tummy.

At that time it works, you know. When it is clearly dish out, it is not yet working. It is not actually food [laughs]. Food is, you know, brightness. And when it is in your tummy, you know, it is darkness. But even in darkness there is lettuce and soup and everything in your tummy [laughs, laughter]. Same thing-same thing, you know, changing its form, it start to work.

So utter darkness, actually-things happens in its true sense. In brightness, you know, you feel good and you feel as if you have a big dish, you know, but food is not serving its-their own purpose yet. That is brightness.

So when you don't know what you are doing, actually you are acting fully, with full mindedness-with full mind. When you are thinking, you are not yet, you know, start to work. You are not yet working on it. So actually when we, you know, start to work, there is bright side and dark side. Both dark side and bright side is there. When you are actually practicing Buddhist way, there is bright-bright side and dark side, and relationship between darkness and brightness is this [ari]relationship, like a relationship between skin and our body. You cannot actually say

this is skin and this is body.

So-

[Line 28] anso wo motte o koto nakare.

Nakare is "not"- "do not." Motte "with." Anso "dark side, dark outlook." "Do not"- This is o. O means "to meet" or sometime "to treat." "To meet and treat," you know. "To own [?] and treat." Or "to meet and treat," or "to meet and treat someone like your friend."

So you should not treat things just, you know-you should not treat or understand, maybe-O.

This character o-au, "to meet, to encounter," means like, you know, a mountain or like a cloud to meet a mountain. You know, o. Here is mountain, you know, Tassajara mountain. Here is cloud. And cloud from ocean will meet mountains. This kind of relationship is o.

With the understanding of brightness-darkness, you should not meet with things, you know. With understanding of brightness-darkness, you should not meet people. [Laughs.] If you, you know, meet people with blind-with your eyes shut, you know, ignoring your friend, you know-how old is he or how handsome he is [laughs], ignoring all the characteristic of your friend, you should not meet friend. It is because that is just one-sided understanding, because, you know, in the darkness there is brightness. In the darkness, even though you understand the intimacy-intimate relationship between you and your friend. But friend is friend; you are you, you know.

It is maybe one very close relationship, so maybe relationship will be one like husband and his wife. But husband is husband, and wife is wife. That is real relationship. So don't meet your friend without understanding of brightness of duality, you know. Close relationship is dark, you know, because if your relationship is very close, you know, one with him or her, very close, but you are you and your friend is your friend. So you should not meet with someone with the idea of darkness only. So you should not meet someone-someone is, you know, abbreviated [understood]. You should not meet someone with darkness. So means "characteristic" or "outlook."

And this is-and next one [line] is:

[Line 29] Anchu ni atatte mei ari.

This [Lines 29 and 30] is opposite [of Lines 27 and 28]. Masani-an-an is "darkness." Again, this third line [Line 29] repeating same thing in different way. Now "In the darkness there is brightness." Same thing, you know. In the darkness-in the darkness, even, you know, [when] we are in intimate relationship, there is, you know, man and woman, which

is brightness, duality of man and woman. So, you should not say, or you should not see the other-see others with the eyes of brightness only, because the other side of brightness is darkness. Darkness and brightness is two side of one coin.

We are liable to be caught by preconceived idea. If you, you know, have-if you experience something bad with somebody-"Oh, he is a bad person. He is always," you know, "mean with me. Always mean with me." That is to say, he, you know, see people with just brightness, you know: "He is always mean." But it cannot be so. You should know why he is so mean with you, because the relationship is so close, you know, so intimate [laughs]. So it is easy for him to be mean with you. It is easy to [be] mad at you, you know. If you are quite stranger, you know, you cannot-he cannot be so angry with you. Because your relationship is so close, so intimate, relationship is not-is more than relationship of the two persons. It is just one.

So when, you know, he is angry [laughs], you will be angry, that's all-because you are one. So when one is angry, the other will be angry. So you-if-when you understand in that way, you understand the other side of the brightness, which is darkness. "Oh! He is so angry with me because he is so close to me." If you understand in that way, even though you have become angry, you will not feel so bad. This is rather difficult, you know. When you think, "He is bad," it is difficult for us to change the idea of "He is bad." But it cannot be so. Sometime he was bad, but now we don't know whether he is good or bad. We should see.

So we should not cling to the idea of darkness or brightness. We should not cling to the idea of equality or idea of diversity or differentiation. But this is pretty difficult. It seems to be pretty difficult. Most people, once he has some grudge with someone, it is almost impossible to change their relationship. But if we are Buddhist, we should be able to switch our mind from bad to good and from good to bad. If you are able to do so, "bad" does not mean bad, "good" does not mean good anymore. But at the same time, good is good and bad is bad [laughs]. Do you understand? [Laughter.] In this way we should understand our thinking-our relationship between-between us.

The-there is some poem: [Tape turned over.]

The mother of blue mountain

and the son of-or children of white cloud.

All day long they live together,

and yet they do not know

who is mother and who is children, you know [laughs].



The mountain is mountain, and white cloud is white cloud floating back and forth, you know [laughs], around the mountain like a children. There is white [blue] mountain, and there is white-there is blue mountain and there is white clouds. There is, but they don't know that they are white cloud or blue mountain. Even though they don't know, they know well-so well that they don't know.

That is the experience you will have in your zazen practice. You will hear insects and stream. Actually you hear it. But you are sitting and stream is running. You are sitting and stream is running. But actually you are hearing it-you hear it. Even though you hear it, you have no idea of stream or no idea of zazen. You are just on the black cushion. You are just there like a blue mountain with white cloud.

Now this kind of relationship [is] fully explained in those four lines [27-30]. The translation goes: "Within-within-within brightness there is darkness. Don't be attached to the darkness," you know. "Within the darkness there is brightness. Don't see-" I forgot. "Don't see with-"

Student A (David Chadwick): Roshi, are you talking about Blyth's translation?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: He says the same thing-Blyth.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

David: "Don't be attached to the brightness."

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. That is Masunaga's translation. Translation cannot be, you know, perfect. It is difficult, you know [laughs]. You know, it is impossible, you know [laughs]. No words for this kind of expression or ari. Ari means "nothing." "There is" means "there is no." "Brightness" means "darkness." [Laughs.] Then, you know, "brightness" doesn't mean anything if it also means "darkness." [Laughs.] That is why I said "double-edged,"[3] you know. Brightness? Darkness? Which is it? What is it? But there is brightness and darkness.

There should not be any question [laughs] on this point, but if you have some question please ask me [laughter]-if you want to get hit! [Laughs, laughter.]

Student B: Roshi, what about focus?

Focus?

Yeah. Like you say, "The clouds don't know they are the children of the mountain," and vice-versa. But we humans, when we unwrap our oryoki bowls, we focus on doing that, not listening to the stream-a different

activity.

Suzuki-roshi: No. Same activity.

Student B: For me it's different.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] That is why you get stuck. [1 word inaudible-"sorry"?]

Student B: If I [1-2 words inaudible] deserve [?] it.

Suzuki-roshi: To you it is different [laughing], that's right.

Student B: I'm not focused, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: When you really focus on it, there is-brightness and darkness. When you are thinking, you know, about it, there are two side. Now you are asking question, you know. When you ask question you are thinking [laughs], so, you know, you know, it is hard for me to answer for your question. So I may be very angry with you. This is only way. [Laughs, laughter.] If you get hit, you will stop thinking about it.

Student B: Probably.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Probably.

Student C: Roshi, why do we shave our heads?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: Why do we shave our heads?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] So that you can, you know, your thinking mind can go as smoothly as like this [rubbing his shaved head with his hand][4] [laughs, laughter]. Very smooth. Bright, dark, you know, very smoothly-because, you know, [two words unclear; then makes shhh noise, imitating razor]. To get rid of ornament, you know-unnecessary, you know, we should not have anything which is not necessary [laughs, laughter-a student may have done something]. Some other questions?

Student D: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai. Oh.

Student D: In the Diamond Sutra it says that if you're suffering misfortunes in this life it is because of sins or mistakes you committed in past lives, and that by suffering these misfortunes now, you will work out these mistakes or make retribution for them, you know, atone-atone for these mistakes or sins and open the way for enlightenment. I don't-

it seemed like a very heavy load when I read it [laughs], you know. I didn't understand it. I didn't-it added a new dimension [laughs] to my problem [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: It will help, you know. Because, you know, that you suffer now means, you know, not because someone make you suffer or-but you caused your suffering. So that is why you suffer. If you understand in that way, you have no complaint. And at the same time, we say if you understand only in that way, it is-you understand things this way, you know-you understand your life just from the viewpoint of, you know, suffering or karma, you know, in that way-dualistic way why we suffer. "What should we do?"-like this [gestures?]. That is to be caught by the idea of karma.

Student D: Idea of calm or karma?

Suzuki-roshi: Karma. You are caught by some idea already if you think in that way. So we should be free from that kind of one-sided view, which is this side [gesturing?]. Even though we say "karma," you know, karma doesn't exist. Even is we say, you know, karma doesn't exist, then you may say whatever you do, it's all right, you may say. That is- That means that you are caught by the idea of darkness.

So the real way is like, you know-the other day I said-I told-I discussed-we discussed about earwig [laughs], you know-why we kill earwigs. We have to kill them, but, you know, but you shouldn't say it is all right to kill them, you know. It is not all right [laughs, laughter]. Both, you know. You have to kill it, but it is not all right to kill it. We should understand our activity from both sides. If you don't feel so good, you should make more effort. You should find out how to, you know, how not to disturb earwig [laughs] and protect your vegetables. Even so, you will, you know, you waste too much time. If you waste too much time, Tassajara student cannot eat anything [laughs, laughter]. So anyway, you have to continue, you know, to make-to find out some good idea one after another. That is our way. Hai.

Student E: Roshi, what is the difference between understanding things from both sides, or understanding our activities from both sides, and not understanding things at all-not understanding our activities at all?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh-not understanding at all is [laughs]-no need to talk about. But that is not true, you know. If you tell them-if you see-if you have chance to listen to lecture or listen to-read some books, you will un- [partial word]-we will understand. But to understand intellectually-intellectual understanding is understanding of-hmm-ah, this is difficult to translate- Understanding of- You know, truth-truth is truth. But when you understand truth by your mind, truth which you have in your mind is also true, you know. There is no two truths-only one truth is truth. But the truth which you have-which you understand with your mind is not true with your actual activity or actual feeling or actual life, because

our actual life does not go so easily as you understand. You know this is perfectly-this is perfect truth. But for us it is not true [laughs], you know. We cannot act in that way.

So there is two kinds of-way of understanding the truth. One is intellectual truth, which is called honbunjo. Honbunjo. Understanding of original [one word unclear] words-honbun-hon means "fundamental." Bunmeans "judgment"- "truth which is true-which is always true." Whether we understand it or not, truth is true, you know. "We understand," we say, but that understanding is just intellectual understanding. That understanding is right, whether we understand it or not, whether Buddha appear in this world or not, the truth is truth, you know.

But truth for us, actually, is-for Buddha it was true, but for us it is not true, you know. We cannot accept truth as it is, so for us it is not true. So that is truth in our practice. From viewpoint of practice, truth is not always true, so we should not mixed-mix up two truths: truth which is always true [and] truth which is true with Buddha or with some people but not true with beginners. Does it make sense? Hai.

Student F: Reverend Suzuki? Is that difference between- Buddha stressed the difference between samma-samadhi and samadhi. Is that the difference? Being-

Suzuki-roshi: Samadhi?

Student F: Samá ,[5] "equanimity," or "right samadhi"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: -and samadhi, which was-

Suzuki-roshi: I don't understand Sanskrit, so-

Student F: Hmm. Samadhi is "truth," and samá is "equanimity" or "right."

Suzuki-roshi: "Equal"?

Student F: Equanimity or rightfulness. And Buddha stressed in his time that many of the religions in his time had attained samadhi-many people had attained samadhi-but Buddha did not accept this samadhi and-until it was set round with equa- [partial word]-a univer- [partial word]-equanimity. Is that what you just said?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You know, to stress some picture is not our way, you know. We more- We put more emphasis on actual, you know, our actual life. That is practice. That is why we must practice even though we have-all of us have Buddha nature. That is true whether

Buddha said [it] or not. That is true. But unfortunately [laughs], you know, for most of us it is not true [laughs]. I don't know why, you know. Hai.

Student G: Roshi, when one comes to see the darkness in the light and the light in the darkness, do they finally become the same thing- darkness and light-or do they always remain separately darkness and light?

Suzuki-roshi: Darkness? No.

Student G: Do they become one-do they become the same thing?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Yes. Same thing-

Student G: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: -you know, but our lazy mind, you know, separate darkness from brightness, and we seek for darkness. But that is still lazy-to seek for, you know, the mind-to seek for darkness or absolute. So to plunge into the bright brightness, to find darkness in brightness, or to find out buddha-nature in our-in perfect zazen is our zazen. Anyway, whether you are sleepy or not, you know, good students [laughs] or bad students, you should sit. That is only way to have darkness in your bright brightness-dualistic practice.

Okay.

[Bell rings. Chant.]

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby and City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (10/16/00).

[1] Masani appears in Line 34; it is possible that Suzuki-roshi was skipping down to that line, per Japanese poetic practice.

[2] From Andrew N. Nelson, *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, 2nd edition, p. 738.

[3] See SR-70-06-03.

[4] From early transcript.

[5] The student may have been asking about Pali *samma* as well as Sanskrit *samā*. The Pali *samma* means "supreme," "perfect," or "right";

the corresponding term in Sanskrit is samyak. Samá means "equability," "equanimity," or "impeturbability" (Monier-Williams, p. 1152). Samma-samadhi, or "right concentration," is the last link of the Eightfold Path. Samma-samadhi has been defined as "concentration of mind associated with wholesome (kusala) consciousness, which eventually may reach the absorptions (jhana)"-Nyanatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines, 4th edition, Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1980, p. 109.

## **8 - Sandokai Lecture #10**

Thursday, June 25, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #10

Tassajara

[This lecture is concerned with the following lines of the Sandokai:

Meian ono-ono aitaishite,

hisuru ni zengo no ayumi no gotoshi.

(Transliteration by Kazuaki Tanahashi.)

Darkness and brightness stand with each other

like when one foot is forward and the other is behind in walking.

(Translation by Suzuki-roshi.)]

Now we are still talking about the reality from the light of independency. Even though we are discussing about independency, we always refer to the dependency-interdependency, so you may, you know, feel as if I am always [laughs] talking same thing. But actually it is not so. We are talking about, you know, independency now, not dependency.

"Dependency and independency," we say, but it is actually two side of the one coin. People say, you know, Japanese people [laughs] are very tough. People may say [so]. But that is the one side of the Japanese, you know, people. The other side is, you know, softness. Should be, but I don't know exactly [laughs]. I hope so [laughs]. But they are very kind. Some people, you know, who visited Japan may say Japanese people are very kind. But some people may say Japanese people are very tough. But for a long time, because of the Buddhistic training, they are trained in that way, you know. Even in children's song, we say, he is, you know, describing hero called Momotaro. Momotaro. Peach Boy. Peach Boy. Do you know Momotaro?

Momotaro was born when an old couple-old couple lived in the riverside. One day, old mother picked up a peach from the stream and came back [to] her home. And from the peach, you know, Momotaro was born.

Momotaro came out [laughs], and he was very strong but very gentle [laughs]-very kind and gentle. But he was very strong. Japanese children sing a song: Ki wa ya sa shi ku te-chi ka ra mo chi.[1] "He was very kind, but he was very strong." That was Momotaro. Not only he was strong, but he was very kind. It is Japanese idealistic character. What do you call? You must have some, you know, some-

Student: You'd call him a man you can ride the river with.

Oh. [Laughs.] No. What-

Students: Folk hero. Folk hero.

Huh?

Student: A folk hero.

Uh-huh. "Folk hero." Yeah. Folk hero.

That, you know, unless- Without soft mind, you cannot [be] really strong. That he is strong- Why he is so strong is he has soft mind. If he is just, you know, if he has the other side of the character, he cannot be really strong. Because he is very sympathetic with someone, so sometime, you know, because of sympathy, to help someone, you know, he will be very strong.

But strong person just for himself is not so strong, you know. Strong person who is, on the other hand, very kind will be supported [by] people, and could be a really folk hero, you know. Just strong is not really strong. When we have both soft side and strong side, he could be a really strong.

And, you know, it is easy to, you know, to fight and win, maybe, but it is not so easy to endure when he is defeated, you know, without crying, you know. Let your enemy-not enemy, but let your foe, you know, beat you. "Okay." You know, that is very difficult. Unless you can endure the bitterness of the defeat, you know, you cannot be really strong.

So to be strong means, you know, to be gentle and kind and meek, maybe. If you can be, you know, weak when you- If you are ready to be weak, you are very strong. We say: "Willow tree-willow tree, you know-cannot be broken by snow," we say. Yanagi ni yuki ore nashi.[2] Yuki ore is "snow break," or [laughs] weight of the snow will break, maybe, some strong tree, but tree like a willow cannot be. Even though weight of the snow will bend, will twist the branch, but even heavy snow like we had the year before-last year-you know, cannot break the willow branch. Yanagi ni yuki ore nashi. Bamboo, you know, bend quite easily. Looks like very weak, but no snow can break it. This is always true.

So Meian. Darkness and brightness is opposite. [Someone writes on

board.] Oh. [Laughter.] It is better to forget [laughs, laughter]. Better without [laughs]. Meian, you know. Mei is "brightness"; an is "darkness"-absolute and relative. The pair of opposite, you know, here [thumps once on table]. Meian-brightness and darkness.

Hisiru means "to face each other," to be a pair, you know, face [-to-face] with each. "With each other" is ai, and a "face with each other" or "stand with each other" is tai. And this is each and this is each other, and this is stand [presumably pointing to Chinese characters on the blackboard]. Ono-ono means "each other." Ai also "each other." Ai, you know.

Hisiru. Hisiru means "to stand against"-something like that, you know. To fall with [against] [laughs], you know, standing with each other. Hisiru ni. Hisiru ni is "like." Gotoshi is also "like." If you compare, you know, this is "compare." This is like the "foot forward and backward," and "forward and behind." Zen is "forward," go is "behind." "Foot behind and forward and behind"-this is walk, in walking.

This is very good, you know, parable-very good way of explaining oneness or, you know, actual function of the two pair of opposite. This is actually explaining our practice, how we apply, you know, the pair of opposite idea in our everyday life-like zazen and enlightenment, and reality and idea, good and bad, strong and weak-

Uh, can you hear me? Oh. You don't hear me. That's awful. Why don't you come between the two line? Here. [Pauses as students file in.]

The people, you know, when they feel they are strong, you know, they don't, you know, want to be weak, you know. The people who think he is-they are weak, you know, never try to be strong [laughs]. That is quite usual, you know. "I am very weak." [Laughs.] He remains always weak. And he cannot be strong. And people who is strong-who thinks, you know, who think he is strong, you know- For the people who thinks he is strong, it is difficult for them to be weak, you know. But sometime we should be strong and sometime we should be weak, you know. Just if you remain always weak, or if you always want to be strong, then they cannot be strong in its true sense.

When you learn something, you know, you should be able to, you know, teach people. You should, you know, [apply] same effort to teach something. And if you want to teach, you should be, you know, you should be humble enough to learn something. Then you can teach them. Just because you know something-if you try to teach something to others, you cannot teach anything. When you are, you know, ready to be taught by someone, if necessary, then you can teach people in its true sense. So to learn is to teach, and to teach is to learn. If you think you are always a student [laughs], you cannot learn anything. Why you learn is because you have to, you know, teach others after you learn something, you know.



So to observe some morality, you know- Actually, there is no actual moral code, you know, moral standard, but how you find out the actual moral code is when you think, you know, how to teach someone-you will find out the moral code for yourself [laughs]. The moral code is for others, and when you find out some moral code for others, you will have actual moral code for yourself. After Japan was defeated completely [laughs], you know, absolutely surrendered, and before Japan was completely defeated, they thought Japanese people had some, you know, teaching or moral code which they should, you know, observe, and if they only observed that kind of moral code, they will not make any mistake. And their moral code is absolutely right and straight. They thought in that way. But that is-that moral code, unfortunately, [was] something which was written up or, you know, set up in Meiji-first part of Meiji period.

So after losing, you know, the war, after they lost the confidence in their morality, they didn't know what to do, what kind of kind of morals they should observe. They didn't know what to do. But there is- It was not so actually it should-it couldn't be so difficult to find out the moral code. If you- I always said, "You have your children. If you think of your children and how to raise your children, then you will naturally know the moral code for yourself." When you think moral code is just for yourself, that is one-sided understanding. Moral code is rather for others, to help others. And naturally that will-the moral code you will find out, to help others, or how to be kind to others, then that moral code is also for yourself.

So we say, to go heading to east one hundred miles is to go heading to the west one hundred miles. When the moon is high, you know, the moon in the water will be high. But usually people, you know, observe the moon above the water, and they do not see the moon in the water. So when you see the moon deep into the water, you should know that this moon is very high, you know. That moon is deep means that the moon is high. We should have this kind of understanding. So, you know, the moon in the water is independent, you know, but-and also the moon over the, high up on the water, is also independent. But, you know, the moon on the water is the moon in the water too. We should understand in that way. So the moon in the water is independent. The moon over the water is also independent. When you are strong, you should be strong. You should be very tough. But that toughness comes from your gentle kindness, you know. When you are kind you should be just kind, but it does not mean you are not strong.

So ladies are weak, you know, physically weak [laughs]. Because ladies are physically weak, they are strong. Sometime, you know, they are stronger than [laughs] boys are. That is true. We don't know which is stronger. When they, you know, completely independent-they have completely independent nature, which is their own-they are, you know, they have same strength, equal strength, with everyone: absolutely equal strength. When you are comparing, you know, which is stronger,

you know-A or B, I or he, you know-then you don't have real strength. When you are completely independent, then-completely independent with your nature, you know-then it means that you are absolutely-absolute power in relative situation. So in relative situation, man and woman, you know, relative nature, there is absolute power. Do you understand? When, you know, woman is involved in competition, you know, with men, they are not so strong. When woman become completely [laughs] woman, they have absolute power. Do you understand this point?

Student: Mm-hmm.

[Laughs.]

So brightness and darkness, although it is pair of opposite, but, you know, it is al [incomplete word]-at the same time, they have equality. For an instance, like step before and forward and backwards-not backwards, forward and back. This is very good, you know, parable to explain- It, it- [Student coughs loudly.] Excuse me. Do you understand, you know, this parable? Absolute and relative is like a step forward and before and back. Step before and back. Step, you know, forward when you walk, you know. Step forward immediately becomes step behind [laughs]. Then, is this step-your right foot is which step [laughs]: before or step behind [laughs]? Which is it? We say "brightness and darkness." But which is darkness and which is brightness [laughs]? It is difficult to tell.

Student: Couldn't tell you the difference.

Mmm.

So step-what does it say here in this [R. H. Blyth's] translation? "Like the foot before and the foot behind in walking." "Like the foot before and the foot behind in walking." "Foot before and foot behind," we say. Foot before and foot behind. But when you're actually walking, you know, there is no step behind or no foot before. Actually walking. If you stop, you know, walking and think [laughs, laughter], right hand sometime maybe foot before and left hand maybe foot behind.

Ohh. Can you hear me? No? Difficult?

And it means that, at the same time, when, you know, when you are walking, it means that actual practice, you know, when you are actually practicing our way, there is no foot before or no foot behind. But if you think about it, you know, there is foot behind and foot before. So when you think, there is brightness and darkness. But when actually practice our way or when actually your foot is walking, there is no, you know, brightness or no darkness or no foot before or no foot behind.

And if I say so, you may think it is not necessary to think about zazen is

no good [laughs]. And you should just sit. If you say so [laughs], you are also, you know, caught by idea of this foot is foot before and the left foot is foot behind. Then you cannot walk [laughs] any more. If you forget all about, you know, left hand, left foot, or right foot, you can walk. Actually when you are walking, you have no idea of left foot or right foot [laughs]. If you are aware of right foot and left foot, you cannot walk, you cannot run.

As I said, you know, if you chew your food there is no rice, or no pickles, or no soup [laughs], you know, if you chew it up. And if you mix it. And when you mix it in your mouth, it will be, you know, digested and in your tummy, and food will serve their own purpose. Even so, we should eat, we should, you know, dish out one thing after another, one dish and after another. And dessert should come last. There is some order, you know. Even though there is some order, you should chew it and you should mix it, or else food does not serve its own purpose. It is necessary to think about it, to make recipe, but it is also necessary to mix everything up and chew it up.

[Someone writes on blackboard.]

Meian ono-ono aitaishite,

hisuru ni zengo no ayumi no gotoshi.

This is very good interpretation of the reality and good explanation of our practice-good suggestion. How we practice our way and what kind of activity is going [on] in our everyday life. With this line, the interpretation of the reality from the light of independency [is] finished.

Question/Answer Session

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A [Mel Weitsman]: Roshi, when you say "independency," I'm confused with whether you mean "independence" or "interdependency."

Suzuki-roshi: "Interdependency." Oh, no. "Independency." Excuse me. Interdependency is more dependency, you know [laughs].

Mel Weitsman: "Independence" is-

Suzuki-roshi: Independent-you know, idea of independency and dependency.

Student B: Roshi, in English we have no word "independency." We have the word "independence"-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh! "Independence." "Independence." Excuse me. "Independence" means [laughs] to me, you know, it is not fit, you

know, so well. "Independence" means, you know, may be noun, but more-what I mean is, you know, noun, but maybe same thing.

Student C: We have a noun "dependency" so we can have "independency."

Students in background: Right. Yeah.

Student C: We have the other. "Dependency" is a good English word.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm-mm. And you have no in-

Student C: No "independency." [Laughs, laughter.]

Student B: Now we have an "independency"!

Student D: You limp on one foot.

Suzuki-roshi: One foot. [Laughs.] "Independent" is so strong, you know. So there is no need to have [laughs] so delicate word. [Strikes the table with his stick.] If you are independent [strikes table again], that's all. [Laughs, laughter.] You don't care anything. [Laughs, laughter.] "Shut up!" [Laughs, laughter.] That is not what we mean. So, you know, independent, you know-when you are independent, you know, it is very, you know, vulnerable and weak situation-dangerous, at least.

Student E: Isn't this idea that people get of their own independence a delusion that they get? They don't realize that- [2-3 words inaudible].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Delusion, yeah, actually so. When, you know, when they think, you know, "I am independent," it is not true, you know. You are dependent on everything.

Student F: Roshi, if a woman competes with a man, she's vulnerable? Weak?

Suzuki-roshi: "Weak?" I cannot say "weak," but, you know-

Student F: I was trying to figure out how you can tell the difference between what a woman and what a man's supposed to be.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. More? Excuse me? [Students were talking among themselves. SR is apparently talking to one of them.]

Student G: I'm sorry [laughs].

Student F: You know, like, if a woman competes with a man-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: -then she's weak, but how do you know what the man and woman is supposed to be like in the beginning? Anyone?

Suzuki-roshi: Like- Weak, I don't say. If you compete, you know, man and woman, anyway, you know, and the comparing with each other by some standards, setting up some standards, you know, or-in some category you compete, you know. Sometime man will be stronger. And sometime the woman will be stronger. Anyway, you know, you cannot be always stronger-strong. But when you become absolutely, you know, woman, you know, you have always absolute value, because no one take over your position. So you are needed.

Student F: But that's not-that's my question. Is that just mean having children and keeping house?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] [Tape turned over.] [SR and students still laughing] ... big problem now. [Laughs, laughter.] My mistake, maybe. I'll talk with you some other time. [Loud laughter.]

Ahh. Do you have some question? More question? Please ask me something, you know [laughter]. Maybe you couldn't hear me so well [laughs].

Student G: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student G: Roshi, I have some trouble with just the relevancy of your lecture [nervous laughter]. I'd just like you to say one more thing about it; I don't know what. I can't quite see what it's all about. I know you're talking about opposites and things like that.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. [Laughs.] The re [partial word]- Hmm. I am, you know- Purpose of what I am saying is, you know, to open some quite different approach to the reality. You know, you are, you know, observing things just from one side or the other side. That's all. And you stick to some understanding just from one side. That is why I am talking in this way. This is necessary. As a Buddhist- Buddhist has no, you know, strictly speaking, no teaching we have. We don't have any teaching. We have no god or, you know, no deity. What we have is nothingness [laughs]. That's all. We don't have anything. So how can- How, you know, is it possible for Buddhists to be religious, you know? What kind of, you know, what kind of composure we have, you know? It will be the point. You will be- Will be your question. The answer is this kind of understanding of reality, not some special idea of God or deity, but the understanding of reality, you know, which we are always facing to. Where we are? What we are doing, you know? Who is he? Who is she, you know? That is, you know, our understanding of-

When we understand "she" or "he" in this way, we don't need to have

any special teaching or idea of God because, strictly speaking, everything is God for us. When we observe things, you know, in this way, everything can be a god for us. So we don't need any special God. Moment after moment we are facing to the God. And each one of us [is] also God or Buddha. So we don't need any special idea of God. That is, you know, maybe the point. Hai.

Student H: Roshi, that sounds very good to me, but then how come we take vows? Like when Ed and Meg got married-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: -you said that they should take refuge in the triple treasure and the, you know, the ten cardinal precepts. And things seemed [1-3 words inaudible].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah. We take vow or we observe precepts. We read sutra. But sutra or precepts-understanding of sutra or precepts should be right understanding like this. If we don't- Even though you read, you know, scriptures or observe precepts without right understanding, you know, that will be the precepts, which is brightness or darkness. So when you are caught by, or when you rely on precepts or scripture, it is not Buddhist scripture any more.

Student H: But then, if- I mean, if I say, "Okay, I'm not going to speak ill of others."

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm?

Student H: Suppose I take a precept that says I won't speak ill of others.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: And, you know, if I follow that precept-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: -it seems like [aside inaudible]- If I don't follow the precept, it seems like there's no reason for it at all, you know, and if I do follow the precept religiously, it seems like, you know, I am being caught by it.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm.

Student H: I mean, I'd be happy to take the Sandokai as precepts that- You know, I just don't understand. If they're not rigid, they don't seem to be any use at all. And if they are rigid they don't seem to be consistent with the Sandokai and things like that.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student H: I mean, it- I always wondered about that part in the meal chant where we say, you know, "to practice good and avoid evil."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: And I asked you about that once, and you said something to the effect that that means just, you know, pay attention to what we're doing. Don't look around, don't, you know, don't get caught by it.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: But if that's so, I mean, why don't we say that? Why don't we say, "I practice- I vow to," you know, "practice zazen in my everyday life and not be caught by rules"?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: You know, why go through this "good and evil" thing, you know? It doesn't seem- It seems kind of phony.

Suzuki-roshi: Nooo. [Laughter.] You are trying to argue with me, that's all [laughs, laughter]. You need precepts, actually, you know, even though, you know, you shouldn't, you know [laughs]. It is not possible to violate precepts actually. You know, you cannot. But you feel, you know, as if you are violating precepts, you know. Actually, you feel in that way. So, if you actually feel in that way, you should accept your feeling and, if you accept that feeling, then you have to, you know, say something: "Excuse me," or "I am sorry," or something. That is also quite natural. This is, you know, working precepts. This is, you know, dead: "Don't kill" is dead precepts. "Excuse me" is actual working precepts, which is, you know, not foot behind or foot before. Do you understand? If you read precepts [and say or think], "Okay, I will do that," you know, that is precepts. And when you feel you violate it, you may say, "Oh, excuse me." That is quite natural, you know.

Student H: If it were natural-and I feel very natural about some of the precepts-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: You know, I feel just naturally that I shouldn't, you know, talk nasty things about people.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: But sometimes, mmm- [as if to say, "I don't know"]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.]

Student H: If you said to me, like, not to take harmful drugs? At least sometimes it seems natural to take those things, because they don't seem so harmful. But, you know, I mean, if the precepts were all natural, and, you know, if I just wanted to do it like that-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student H: -and if it works [?], you know, that's a different thing.

Suzuki-roshi: When you say so, you know, you may say, "It is quite natural for me to live in this world, to be born in this world." You know, it means that. You see? But is it natural? [Laughs, laughter.] [Students commenting off-mike.] Hmm? [Laughter.] You are already accepted, you know, which you shouldn't accept. Why did you come here? That is already maybe big mistake [laughs, laughter].

Student H: They didn't say [1-2 words inaudible] when I came here.

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student H: They didn't ask me about precepts. They just wanted to know if I had \$2.50 a day.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, loud laughter.]

Student I [David Chadwick?]: You know, maybe the office should say, "You have \$2.50, and are you willing to follow their precepts?" [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Good bargain. Good deal. But it cannot be so, you know, simple. So we- Anyway, you know, you should say, "Oh, I am sorry." That is necessary. If you, you know- When you are born, you cannot say so [laughs, laughter]. But now you can say so [laughs]. So you should say, "Oh, I am sorry to be your daughter or to be your son. Oh, excuse me." [Laughs, laughter.] "Oh, I am sorry I caused you a lot of trouble for you. Oh, excuse me." You should say so. That is actual precepts, you know. Hai.

Student J [Grahame Petchey?]: Roshi, sometimes I feel this way about listening to lectures. And maybe this is somewhat the same question that Stanley was asking. It's like, at one time I was just walking along, and suddenly someone came and said, "Did you realize that when you're walking, when one foot is ahead, the other foot's behind?"

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student J: I said, "No!" [Laughter.] "I hadn't thought about that." And so for a long time, then, that amazed me: You know, that when one foot was ahead the other one was behind.



Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student J: And I was very aware. "I wonder why he ever asked me such a," you know, "a question like that? Was I aware that when one foot is ahead the other is behind?" And I used to think about it a lot, you know. [Laughter.] One foot ahead and the other behind, and it's always that way, but this was a very strange thing and it occupied my attention: the one foot being ahead and the other behind.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student J: And then after a long time, I found that I was just walking again-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student J: -you know, and then I didn't think so much about that. And then one day as I was walking, another man came up and said, "Did you realize that when you're walking, one foot is ahead and the other is behind?"

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student J: And-it's like, I feel right at that point right now.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: You know, I [laughs]-I still don't understand it at all, you know: That one foot is ahead and the other is behind.

Suzuki-roshi: But-

Student L: I still have to deal with it somehow, you know, that I can't understand what it means. But it's certainly right there.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: And half of me says, "What's the relevance of it?"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -because it doesn't bother me any more-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -and another half of me says, "Yeah but it's still happening like that," you know, "every time you take a step. That's still right there happening."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. You know-

Student L: Do you see what I'm saying?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. For your, you know, life, you know, if you think just your life only, you know, as a personal practice, you know, it doesn't make much sense. But if you see what we are doing-all human being doing-you know, that is exactly how we cause trouble for human being. You know, right foot or left foot, maybe Rinzai or Soto, or America or Soviet Union, or peace or war, you know. If you understand in that way this is big, big problem, and how you solve it is to walk on and on and on. Hai.

Student M: Do I understand you to say that the problem is how to be aware of all these opposites and polarities and precepts without being conscious of being aware? The consciousness sort of fixes things-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student M: -and that is not real either. It fixes the chain.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Chain will be, you know, fixed, and you cannot move, you know. But still you should move, you know. And time doesn't wait for you. So you should go on and on and on following the reality. If you think about this point, you already started to walk, you know. If you [are] just thinking about it, you know, it doesn't work, and you are not walking forward. But if you think, you know, "The world is going on and on. We are becoming older and older, you know. Today will not come again, and tomorrow I have to go to somewhere," you know. If you think in that way, you know, you cannot think same thing always, one after another. You should go on and on and on. At that time you do not-you cannot stop and thinking.

So anyway, you should go on and on and on, making best effort. When you make best effort, that is actually you are walking. So, you know, left foot sometime may be, you know, behind. Sometime may be forward-ahead. Sometime you feel as if you are doing something good, and sometime you feel as if you are doing something bad. But, you know, in that way, you are going on and on and on. That is, you have to accept it. If you have to accept it, and if you have to live on each moment, actually you are living on each moment. Then you should do something. You should say something. "Say something!" [pats the table with his hand three or four times gently] [laughs, laughter], a Rinzai master maybe say. "Say something now!" [hits the table with his stick once for each syllable]. What do you say? That is, you know, the point.

Student N: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student N: We have an expression in America: "Put your best foot

forward." [Laughs.]

Suzuki-roshi: "Best foot"?

Student N: That's what we say.

Suzuki-roshi: Ahh.

Student N: Put your best foot forward. So maybe that's where we get hung up on it. We have to decide which of the two feet we are going to put out because that's the good foot.

Suzuki-roshi: "Best foot forward"?

Student N: Ahh.

Suzuki-roshi: "Best foot forward." [Laughter.]

Student N: Which means you only take one step, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: And next time you may try to "best foot forward" again.

Student N: Then you'll hop [laughs].

Suzuki-roshi: "Best foot forward." That is not actually what we are doing, I don't think, you know. We say, you know, Ashiba motsureru, [3] you know. By thinking, you know, if-when your feet does not go smoothly, you know, it means that you are involved in some idea, and, you know, Ashiba motsureru, you cannot walk smoothly. So if you, you know, if you try to make best foot forward always, your foot will be-will not go smoothly, I think. That will not be best way. I don't know, actually, what do you mean by "best foot forward"? So, this kind of teaching follows actual practice of zazen, you know, in everyday life, so that we can smoothly go [on] and on and on, we have this kind of idea. Without being caught by right foot of left foot. Right or wrong. Good or bad. Without confused, you know, disturbed way of footing-footwork. Smoothly you should go. That is our purpose of practice.

Mmm. I have no time any more. Excuse me.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/21/00).

[1] Momotaro is a classic nursery song of Japan. The lyrics are found, for example, in *We Japanese*, p. 322.

[2] Yanagi = willow; ni = [?]; yuki = snow; ore = broken piece (of twig); nashi = [?].

[3] Ashiba = foot; motsureru = tangled.

## **9 - Sandokai Lecture #11**

Saturday, June 27, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #11

Tassajara

[The following lines of the Sandokai are discussed in this lecture:

Line 33 Bammotsu onozukara ko ari,

Line 34 masani yo to sho to wo iu beshi.

Line 35 Ji sonsure ba kangai gasshi,

Line 36 ri ozure ba sempo saso.

(Transliteration by Kazuaki Tanahashi.)

Line 33 Everything--all beings--have their own virtue.

Line 34 You should know how to apply this truth.

Line 35 Things and emptiness are like a container and its  
cover fitting together,

Line 36 like two arrows meeting head-on.

(Translation by Suzuki-roshi.)]

[Begins with indecipherable whisper.] Today's lecture will be about how we observe everything-how we understand everything and how we should treat things-with what kind of understanding is the-will be the purpose of tonight's lecture. Everything has the-[sudden loud feedback from the sound system. Suzuki-roshi stops speaking. Whispering exchange takes place about the sound system.] Oh. Okay.

Before I talk about the value of things or how we understand things, we should-I think I must explain those words [referring to the text on the blackboard].\* The important words here is-this is, you know-bammotsu is "myriad of things." It means "many things," "all things." [Ari means]\* "has." [Onozukara means]\* "naturally"- "naturally." [Ko means]\* has "function" or-this ko means "function" or "virtue."

Because, you know, if something has some function, you know, that function will be virtue for us-value, you know, exchange value. Or-value as a, you know-mostly we-when we say "value" it is exchange value, but this value [ko ] means more-it-a wider meaning. This has more wider meaning, you know. The ko-this ko- Ko is not [exactly?] function or-utility [searching for word and seemed to find it in "utility"]. So utility is more like value, you know. But it means more-it has more wider sense.

Ahhh. I don't know what to s- [partial word-"say"?]- [Laughs.] Funct-[partial word-"function"?]-ko. Ko is- It is sometime- It may be "merit," you know. Sometime it may be someone's-what someone did, you know, in his life or in our society or in our small society or community. Ko. This word include those things like virtue or utility, or some merit, or some deed. Everything has its own, you know- Because this [bammotsu] is-this "everything" include human being, and mountain and river, and stars and suns [planets]\* and fixed stars- Everything. It include everything. So function of-. Its function is, you know- Everything has function. Because of this function, that function will be for us value or virtue.

So this is, you know- This function- When we say "function"-function, you may wonder, "function of what," you know? Function of something. That something could be ri.

And we must crit- [partial word]- I have to use many technical terms tonight, so [laughs] I want to explain, first of all, those technical terms I have to use. For an instance, you see something. You see- Oh. [Laughs, laughter. The sound system is suddenly turned up and Roshi hears his own voice coming back from the loudspeakers.]\* You hear [laughs, laughter], you know, voice, you know. But this voice is, you know, will be- You say you are listening to me, but you actually what you are listening to is maybe my voice, or you are listening to some function of, you know, electricity or machine, you know. That machine, you know- The electricity will be the function of something, you know, function of some universal, you know, entity of electric, you know-electricity which covers almost all-whole world, whole universe.

So actually you are not listening to me, you know, you are listening more like listening to our universe-univer- [partial word]-voice of universe, maybe. Voice of electricity. This is, you know, one understanding of my lecture. And another understanding will be, you know, you are listening to my nature, you know, what kind of nature I have. And you are listening to the nature of electricity. So when we, you know-when you see something or when you listen to something, already you have idea of whole universe. It is so-called-it, maybe- When we, you know, understand things in that way, we call it understanding of tai. Tai means "body." Body. But it is more ontological, you know, big body which include many thi- [partial word-"things"?]-everything.

And its nature is sho.[1] But that sho does not mean some special nature. It means nature of everything-basic nature for everything. And when we understand things more than-something beyond our words, we call it ri, "truth." Truth is not- Truth, when we say "true character," you know, it is something beyond our idea of good and bad, long and short, right or wrong. That is ri, which, you know, include various meaning of things.

Ko -and we have another word here, yo. This word [yo ] is used-related to ri. And this word, yo or ko [it appears that Suzuki-roshi corrected himself and decided on ko ], is related to things-virtue of things-and this [yo? ] is application of the truth, you know.

Looks like same, you know. Ko is "virtue," you know. Yo is, you know, "usage." But when we say yo, it is more function of truth or ri. When we say ko, it is function of things-each things-each thing [ji]. This is- Of course, we sometime we use it for, you know, for many things, but mostly here, we-in Buddhist technical term, this is-this word [yo] is related to ri.

And here [in Lines 33 and 34]\* we-he is talking about oneness of yo and ko (virtue of things). "And the truth applied itself to each occasion and every thing."

Mmm. It doesn't [laughs] make much sense [laughs, laughter]. Maybe I will translate it literally: "Ea- [partial word]-Everything-all things-has- There is virtue in all being-myriad." This [bam] is myriad. This [motsu] is "things." "Many things." "There is their own virtue in many things."

You should say-masani [2] means "you should." "Should," you know. This [iu] is "say." And its application [yo ] and the place [sho]. "You should say"-here it says "say," but it means "you should see," you know-"see" and "say." "You should notice." When you notice something, you will say [something], so same thing.

"You should say," or "You should notice its application and where the truth is applied." So if you see things, you should know there-there is-true teaching is revealing itself. And you should see it. And, you know, in what w- [partial word]- Sho means "place." "In," you know, "in what place the truth revealing itself."

Hmm. And sometime we use this word [ko] and this word [yo] together: koyo. Ko means, you know, "function." And yo is its utility. Koyo means, you know- When we say koyo, we understand each things [ji ]. And not only each things, we understand background of each things, which is ri. So we do not understand things just as you see [them]. You-we understand background of each things.

And we should know how you use it, you know. To know how you use it is to know the teaching. When you know the background of things, or

way things are going, that is ri-way things are going. Then you will know how to use it.

So "to understand things" means to understand background of everything. And to understand value of it means to understand how you use it in right way-how-and according to the place-according to the place-according to the things-we should know how you use it. To know how you use it is to know the background of each things. That is to see things-as-it-is, you know.

Usually, to see things-as-it-is, means, you know- Usually, even though you say, "I see things-as-it-is," you don't. You see the one side of the truth, or one side of the each reality-one side of the reality, not the oth-[partial word-"other"?]-background. You don't see the background, which is ri. You only see things in term of ji-each event, each things-and you think each thing exist in that way, but it is not so. Each things are changing and related with each other. And each things has its background. The reason why- There is reason why they are here.

So to see things-as-it-is means to understand ji and ri is one, and distinction and equality is one, application of the truth and the value of the things is one. When we understand in this way, we understand things-as-it-is. So we, you know-for an instance, we thinks, you know, all universe is for human being [laughs]-only for human being. That is not right understanding, you know. That is very selfish understanding.

Our understanding is mostly based on, you know, human-centered idea. So you don't see true value of the things. You don't appreciate the true value of things. Nowadays we talk about, you know-our idea is more-became wider. Our way of understanding things are more free and wider. But even so, our understanding of things is very human-centered understanding.

So you have many questions [laughs] to ask me. If you understand this point clearly, there is not much things to ask. Most of the questions and problems are, you know, created by human-centered selfish idea. "What is birth and death?" you know [laughs]. That is already very self-centered, you know, idea. Of course, birth and death is our, you know, our virtue [pointing to ko].\* To [laughs]-to die is our virtue; you know. To come [in]to this world is also our virtue. And there we see, you know, how things are going: not only us: everything is going in that way-birth and-appeared and disappeared, and became older and older, or growing bigger and bigger. In that way, everything exist. Why our-should we, you know, treat ourselves specially [laughs]? Birth and death. When we say "birth and death," is mostly birth and death of human being. When you, you know, understand birth and death as, you know, birth and death of every things, including plants or vegetables or trees, you know, it is not anymore a problem. If it is problem, it is problem of everything, including us. If that is problem of everything, it is not problem anymore [laughs, laughter].

So every-almost all the question comes from narrow understanding of things. So it is necessary, you know-to understand things in this way: more wider sense, more clear understanding is necessary. You may think to talk about this kind of thing doesn't help you at all [laughs, laughter]. It will not help you [laughing] as a selfish, you know, human being. It will not help any selfish human being. Buddhism does not-do not treat human being in special category. When we treat human being in a special category, we treat human being who has very egoistic deluded being [laughs]. That is human nature.

But you accept, you know, actually. You do not reflect on our human nature and try to, you know, find out some truth-try to find out some confidence in yourself. But that is not possible, because background is wrong.

So here [Bammotsu onozukara ko ari] we say, "everything-all being-has its own virtue." So human being should be in the place where we are. [Writes on board.] Sho. Tokoro.[3] "Place."

And human being has some nature. So according to the nature, we should live like human being. Only when we live like human nature [being] who is-who has selfish human nature, you know, it means that you are following the truth in its greater sense, because we count [take into account?], you know, our nature in our judgement. So we should live like human being. That is how we should live in this world. So we cannot-we should not try to be a cats or dog, which has, you know, more freedom [laughs] and [are] less selfish. Human beings should be put in a cage or [laughs] invisible, you know, big cage, when dog and cats is-has no special cage of morality or, you know, teaching or religion. They don't need any religion. But we human being need religion. We human being should say, "excuse me" [laughs], but cats and dog don't need to say "excuse me." So human being should follow our way, and cats and dogs should follow their way. This is, you know, how we should apply our-the truth for everything.

Although, you know, if we, you know, observe human way and cats and dog observe animal way, it looks like human way and animal way is different. Why it is different is because we human being has different nature from animal and different form from animal. Although it is different, but background of our nature is same. Because, you know, the place we live-where we live-is different-so application of the truth should be different. Like we use electricity, you know. We will use it as a light, you know, and sometime as a speaker. But when you use electricity, according to the usage of the electricity, you know, the mechanism should be different.

So human being has its own mechanism, and animal has its own mechanism. So, you know, even though way of using it is different, but we are all using same electricity. So is the application of the truth. This



is actually what he is talking about-Sekito is talking about.

So we should not attach to the difference of the usage because we are using same nature, or same thing-same true nature or buddha-nature. So we are doing actually same thing. So time and-according to the situation, we will use buddha-nature in different way. That is how we apply-how we find out the true nature in-within ourselves in everyday life.

Next two-oh [adjusts mike]-next two line:

Ji sonsure ba kangai gasshi,

[ri ozure ba sempo saso.]

Ji means-I explained already ji-"various things and events," and including things you have in your mind-"things you think about" is ji. Ri is "something beyond your thinking or beyond your understanding or perception" is ri. And again, ji and ri is same thing.

When we think about [something], we are think[ing] about this [ji?]. So actually, it doesn't- Same thing, but we must understand in two ways. We should not-our understanding limit in this area of ji.

Now, Ji sonsure ba kangai gasshi. Ji-when we see-where there is ji, things, there is ri, like cover [gai] and its container [kan], you know, meet together. Ri is, you know, understood in this sentence [Line 35]. "Where there is ri-there-ji-there is ri, like cover and-container and cover meet." [4] It means that where there is someone, you know, that I am here means that the true buddha nature is here. So I am, you know, tentative expression of buddha nature, and- I am not just "I," you know. It is more than "I." I am expressing true nature in my own way, so that I am here means that all whole universe is there [here], like that there is lamp [referring to the kerosene lamp on the altar],\* there is kerosene oil. That there is ri, or where there is ri, there is ji. Ji is understood in this line: ri ozure ba sempo saso. Ri ozure ba.

Ri means-I already explained. Ri ozure ba. When ri accord with the event-"the way ri accord with ji " (events or things) "is like two arrow meet together." And there is old story for this. [5] There were-in China, in old China, in War Period, [6] there were famous-famous archery master [Hiei]. [7] And his disciple, Kisho, [8] you know, were-was also very good at-in archery [laughs]. And his disciple, you know, became very ambitious, and he [laughs] wanted to compete with him [Hiei]. And he was waiting for his master's coming with bow and arrow like this [demonstrating].\* Seeing his disciple, you know, the teacher also, you know, took the bow and arrow and hit-trying to hit first [laughs], but both of them are so good and quick that arrow meet against [each other] in the air. Shhht! [Laughs.] [Tape turned over.]

That, you know, that I am old, for an instance, there is some reason [laughs]. Without reason, I do not become old [laughs]. And without reason, you know, I cannot be-I couldn't be youth, you know, a boy. With same reason, I became old, you know, so we cannot complain why I became old [laughs]. The background of, you know, my being old is the background of my being raised up as a youth-as a beautiful boy [laughs, laughter]. If I should complain, I should complain when I become a, you know, good youth and see a beautiful girl [laughs]. I should complain at that time also, because, you know, background of my being old is always same, you know. We-we-I am supported-I have been supported [by] same background, and I shall be also supported [by it] even [when] I die. [Laughs, laughter.] That is, you know, our understanding.

When you, you know- To accept things, you say, looks like very difficult, but it is not difficult. It is very easy to accept things-as-it-is. Very easy. If it is not easy, if it is difficult, "Why it is difficult?" you should think, you know. Maybe, you may say, it is because of your shallow, you know, selfish understanding of yourself. But you say-you may say why [do] we have selfish understanding of things? But selfish understanding of things is also necessary. Because we are selfish, you know, we work hard. Without selfish understanding, we cannot work.

So we need some candy [laughs] always. That candy will be selfish understanding. It is not something to be rejected, but it is something which helps you always. So, you should be, you know, grateful for your selfish understanding which create [laughs] many questions. That is just question. It does not mean much [laughs, laughter]. You can enjoy question and answer, you know [laughs, laughter]. You can play j-[partial word-"joke"?] play game with it, but you shouldn't be so sincere about that. That is understanding of middle way.

The understanding of middle way could be understanding of ri, emptiness, and understanding of somethingness, which is ri [ji]. And both is necessary, you know, because we are human being and we-our destiny is to live for maybe 80 years or 90 years as a human being, so we must have some selfish, you know, way of life. Because we have selfish way of life, we will have difficulties, at the same time, which we should accept. When you accept, you know, in that way, it is middle way. You don't reject it. You accept it, but you don't stick to it, you know. You just enjoy it-enjoy your human life as long as you live. That is middle way, you know. That is understanding of ji and ri.

So, when there is ji, there is ri; when there is ri, there is ji. To understand in this way is to enjoy our life without rejecting problems or suffering.

Suffering, you know- I noticed something, you know, very important, which I did not put emphasis on it so much so far. Suffering is very valuable thing, I think. Our zazen practice should be, you know-I

understand today, when I was talking with someone-discussing with someone, you know. Our practice may be-could be, you know, suffering-practice of suffering. How we suffer will be our practice [laughs]. It helps a lot.

I think most of us has suffering, as you have pain in your legs when you sit. In everyday life, you have suffering. Bishop Yamada[9]-do you know him? Perhaps some of you may know him. His- He put emphasis on unshu, which Hakuin-zenji practiced for a long time.[10] He was weak. He suffered consumption when he was young, and he conquered the illness by zazen practice. His zazen is called, you know, unshu. Unshu means to-when you take breathing, you do groar-what [how] do you say-"m-m-m-mmm"?

Students: Groan?

Suzuki-roshi: Groan? M-m-m-mmm. When you suffer, you know, you say "m-m-m-mmm" [laughs] or "m-m-m-mmhh."

Students: Sigh?

Suzuki-roshi: No, not sigh.

Students: Moan?

Suzuki-roshi: Moan-no. More strength-like a tiger in pain.

Students: Roar? Growl?

Suzuki-roshi: Growl? [Laughing.] He always said when you-your breathing should be like breathing you when you suffer. M-m-m-mmm, m-m-m-mmm. [Laughs, laughter.] Instead of saying "m-m-m-mmm, m-m-m-mmm," [laughs, laughter] he said you should put more strength here [pointing to hara]\* and take long exhaling like [demonstrates exhale], without saying "m-m-m-mmm," you know. You know, when you say "m-m-m-mmm, m-m-m-mmm"-when you say "mmm" it is not unshu. But when you don't say like the last alphabet [letter] of Sanskrit, "mmm," you know, "m-m-m-mmm." So he is- Hakuin called it unshu. When you repeat this unshu like you suffer from something, physically or mentally, and you-your practice is directed just to suffer[ing] you have, then that is-can be a good practice. It does [is] not different from shikantaza.

When you, you know, you suffer just from-by here [pointing to his chest and panting]\*-this is, you know, agony, you know. When you suffer completely, you should suffer from "m-m-m-mmm." You feel good, you know, when you do that [laughs, laughter]. It is much better than to say nothing or just to lie down.

Bishop Yamada, you know, had from his-he has had always difficulties

until quite recently. He became-he, you know, is, maybe, over the cloud,[11] you know [laughs]. So maybe when he was in America, he suffered a lot in Los Angeles [laughs, laughter]. He suffered. But I have-at that time, I have not much suffer, you know-suffer from, so I couldn't understand-I couldn't agree with his practice of unshu, like, you know, a sick person [might]. "M-m-m-mmm." [Laughs, laughter.] "What is that practice?" I thought. [Laughs, laughter.] "M-m-m-mmm, m-m-m-mmm." But I found out, you know, why he practiced that kind of practice. And I found out that that practice helps us a lot. Of course, he understood, you know, what is suffering. No one likes suffering, but our destiny is to have suffering. That is human destiny. And how we suffer is the point. No one enjoys suffering, but we should not be completely caught by suffering. We should know how to suffer our human suffering. That may be Bishop Yamada's practice.

So, to find out oneness of ji and ri, oneness of joy and suffering, oneness of joy of enlightenment and difficulty of practice is, in one word, our practice which is called "middle way."

Mmm. Do you-did you understand [pointing to Lines 35 and 36]?\*

You may say, when there is suffering, there there is joy of suffering, or there there is nirvana. When even you are in nirvana, you know, you cannot be-get out of suffering. That is true nirvana. Buddhist nirvana is something like that. In suffering there is nirvana. That is true understanding of nirvana. "Extinction of-complete extinction of desire," we say, but what does it means by-by it is to have complete understanding of it and to live accordingly. That is zazen, you know. You are like this [sitting upright]. You are not this way-this side of-leaning over [to] the side of nirvana, or leaning against the side of the suffering. Right here. That is our zazen. So everyone can sit, you know, [everyone can] practice our zazen.

Mmm. No time to have question and answer. Ah, maybe.

I am talking about-I am following his poem one by one, or-so-it is-but actually it is necessary to read from beginning to end, you know, like this. If you talk about [it] piece by piece, it doesn't make much sense.

But next lecture will be the something like conclusion of all the lectures we-I gave. He is very strict, you know, in the conclusion [laughs]. Very strict. You cannot escape from him. [Makes humorous noise.] You cannot say anything [laughs]. If you say something you will get a big stick, that's all [laughs, laughter]. [Makes another humorous noise.] At [In] his time, you know, the Zen world was too noisy, so he became angry with it. "Shut up!" [laughs]-that is what he said, actually, in one word [laughs]. So I shouldn't talk so long. Maybe already too long [laughs]. Excuse me.

-----

Sources: Contemporaneous typescript and notes by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/1/00.

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[1] Marian Derby's transcript has a margin note stating: "NOT THE 'SHO' IN THE TEXT," which means "place" in Line 34 (masani yo to sho to wo iu beshi).

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[2] David Chadwick's manuscript on the Sandokai states that beshi means "should," and masani means "actually," "properly," or "naturally." The Random House Japanese-English Dictionary states that masa ni means "exactly" or "really."

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[3] tokoro: place, part, address.

[4] Hence, "Where there is ji there is ri, like container and cover meet."

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[5] The full story of two arrows meeting in mid-air is found in The Book of Lieh-tzŭ (Ch'ung-hsu chen-ching, or True Book of the Expanding Emptiness): (A. C. Graham, trans., London: John Murray, 1960, pp. 112-113). This collection of stories and essays is attributed to Lieh-tzu, a Daoist philosopher from the Warring States Period, but its written form may date from as late as 300 C.E.

[6] The Warring States Period extends from 430 to 221 B.C.E.

[7] Hiei (Ch. Fei Wei). A written annotation in Marian Derby's transcript gives the Japanese version of his name as Higi.

[8] Kisho (Ch. Chi Ch'ang).

[9] The late Reirin Yamada was Soto Zen bishop of North America from 1960 to 1965. He led several sesshins at Zen Center.

[10] Hakuin-zenji (1689-1769) was an important Japanese Zen master who revitalized and systematized the Rinzai school. His breathing practices are described in the autobiographical essay "Yasenkana," reprinted in Trevor Leggett's *The Tiger's Cave* (London: Rider and Company, 1964, pp. 142-156).

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

[11] Perhaps meaning "over his suffering."

\* From the contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby.

## **10 - Whole-Body Zazen**

Sunday, June 28, 1970

Whole-Body Zazen  
Tassajara

You should sit zazen with your whole body; your spine, mouth, toes, mudra. Check on your posture during zazen. Each part of your body should practice zazen independently or separately; your toe should practice zazen independently, your mudra should practice zazen independently; your spine and your mouth should practice zazen independently. You should feel each part of your body doing zazen separately. Each part of your body should participate completely in zazen.

Check to see that each part of your body is doing zazen independently. This is also known as shikantaza. To think, "I am doing zazen" or "My body is doing zazen" is wrong understanding. It is a self-centered idea.

The mudra is especially important. You should not feel as if you are resting your mudra on the heel of your foot for your own convenience. Your mudra should be placed in its own position.

Don't move your legs for your own convenience. Your legs are practicing their own zazen independently and are completely involved in their own pain. They are doing zazen through pain. You should allow them to practice their own zazen. If you think you are practicing zazen, you are involved in some selfish, egotistical idea.

If you think that you have some difficulty in some part of your body, then the rest of the body should help the part that is in difficulty. You are not having difficulty with some part of your body, but the part of the body is having difficulty: for example, your mudra is having difficulty. Your whole body should help your mudra do zazen.

The entire universe is doing zazen in the same way that your body is

doing zazen. When all parts of your body are practicing zazen, then that is how the whole universe practice zazen. Each mountain and each river is going and flowing independently. All parts of the universe are participating in their practice. The mountain practice independently. The river practices independently. Thus the whole universe practices independently.

When you see something, you may think that you are watching something else [outside yourself].[1] But, actually, you are watching your mudra or your toe. That is why zazen practice represents the whole universe. We should do zazen with this feeling in our practice. You should not say, "I practice zazen with my body." It is not so.

Dogen-zenji says, "Water does not flow, but the bridge flows." You may say that your mind is practicing zazen and ignore your body, the practice of your body. Sometimes when you think that you are doing zazen with an imperturbable mind, you ignore the body, but it is also necessary to have the opposite understanding at the same time. Your body is practicing zazen in imperturbability while your mind is moving. Your legs are practicing zazen with pain. Water is practicing zazen with movement, yet the water is still while flowing because flowing is its stillness, or its nature. The bridge is doing zazen without moving.

Let the water flow, as that is the water's' practice. Let the bridge stay and sit there, because that is the actual practice of the bridge. The bridge is practicing zazen; painful legs are practicing zazen; imperturbable zazen is practicing zazen. This is our practice.

-----

Edited by Bill Redican from the original transcript; no tape has been located. Only minor editorial changes were made by Redican (e.g., punctuation, spacing). No words were substituted or deleted from the original transcript (10/16/00).

[1] In parentheses in the original transcript.

## **1970 juli (12)**

### **1 - Sandokai Lecture #12**

Saturday, July 04, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #12 "It Is Not Always So"  
Tassajara

[This lecture is concerned with the following lines of the Sandokai:

Koto wo uke te wa subekaraku shu wo esu beshi.

Mizukara kiku wo rissuru koto nakare.

Sokumoku do wo ese zumba,

ashi wo hakobu mo izukunzo michi wo shiran.

(Transliteration by Kazuaki Tanahashi.)

If you listen to the words, you should understand the source of the teaching.

Don't establish your own rules.

If you don't practice in your everyday life as you walk,

how can you know the way?

(Translation by Suzuki-roshi.)]

Tonight and tonight lecture and one more lecture will be the last concluding lecture for Sandokai.

And here it says Koto wo uke te wa subekaraku shu wo esu beshi. Koto means "the first character." We read from this side, you know: Koto wo-Koto? Koto wo uke te wa. Koto means "words." Uke te wa: "to receive" or "to listen to"; "to receive," you know. This is something like "hand," you know. The same type [?] character-"to receive." If you receive words, it means that if you receive teaching, you should-subekaraku-you should-subekaraku-should-you should.

Shu wo-shu is "source of the teaching"-shu-source of the teaching which is beyond our words. Esu beshi is "to have actual understanding of it." So if you listen to the words, you should understand-e-understand- shu-source of the teaching. Usually we, you know, stick to words, and it is difficult, because we stick to words, it is difficult to see the true meaning of the teaching. So we say, "words or teaching is finger pointing at the moon." If you stick to the finger pointing at the moon, you cannot see the moon. So words is just-to suggest the real meaning of the truth is the words. So we shouldn't stick to words, but we should know actually what the words mean.

At his time, you know, at Sekito's time, many people stick to words-or each one's, each Zen masters [taught] personal characteristic of Zen. Each masters had, at that time, their own way of introducing the real teaching to the disciples. And they stick to some special teachers-some particular way, so Zen was divided in many schools, and it was very hard to the student [to know], "Which is the true way?" And actually, to wonder which is the true way is already, you know, wrong. Each was, you know- Each teachers is suggesting the true teaching by his own



way, so each teachers, you know, true- Each teachers is suggesting same truth-same source of the teaching which was transmitted from Buddha. Without knowing the source of the teaching, to stick to words was wrong, and actually that was what the teachers at his [Sekito's] time was doing, or students' way of studying Zen.

So he [Sekito] said-he says, "If you receive words, you should understand the source of the teaching." Source of the teaching is the teaching which is transmitted from Buddha and which is beyond each one's own way of expressing the teaching or suggesting the teaching. Do you- Oh.

Student: Roshi, can't see.

Okay. They cannot see. All right.

Words. Words. Koto. [Someone writing on blackboard.] We go this way. You know, this is Chinese character, and we read-Japanese people read from here to here [laughs]-opposite way. This is "words." This is words. Koto wo uke te wa subekaraku shu wo esu beshi.

And next sentence is, Mizukara kiku wo rissuru koto nakare. Mizukara kiku wo rissuru koto nakare. "You" is understood. "You should not": nakare is "not," "should not." Rules: kiku means "rules." Rissuru is "to establish." Mizukara: "by yourself." "You should not establish rules for yourselves." It means that you should not establish, you know, some rules for yourself, and you should not stick to it or you should not [be] bound by it. [Laughs.] That is most people-what most people does. You say, "This is right" and "This is wrong." And [laughs] you say so-when you say so you establish some rules for yourself [laughs]. And because you say so [laughs], naturally you will stick to it and you will be bound by it.

That is, you know, why Zen school-Zen teachers, you know, divided in many ways: Soto, Rinzai, Obaku, Ummon, Hogen, Igyo, you know. There are many schools. But originally it is one teaching. But they establish, you know, or their disciple establish one school and stick to their "family way" and bound by their family way. That is how Zen school is divided in many schools. Why Zen school is divided in many branches is because they stick to words. When they understand Buddha's teaching, they understand the Buddha's original teaching in their own way [laughs] and stick to their understanding. And they think that is Buddha's teaching. In other words, they stick to, you know, fingers pointing at the moon. And if three people are pointing at the same moon, you know, three people have [laughs]-each person has his own fingers and if this is teaching there are already three schools. But the moon is one [laughs, laughter]. So he [Sekito] says, "Don't," you know, "establish his own rules for yourself."

Nakare means "do not." Mizukara is "for yourself" or "for himself." Kiku

is "rules." This is very important in our practice. We are liable to establish our rules. "This is," you know, "rule of Tassajara," you may say [laughs]. But rules is the finger to, you know, to have good practice in Tassajara according to the situation. So actually rules are important, but you should not think this is the only, you know, way, this is the true teaching, or-and that rules, you know, they have is wrong. You shouldn't understand in that way. In everyday life, it is true, you know. You shouldn't stick to your own understanding of things. Something which is good for someone is not always good for someone else, so you should not, you know, make special rules for everyone. But even so, rules are important. It is important, but when you stick to it and when you force the rules to others too much, it is, you know, to establish rules and to force the rule for others.

So when you, you know, enter monastery, anyway, once you enter some monastery you shouldn't say, "This is my way" [laughs]. If you come to Tassajara, you should obey Tassajara's rules. You should not establish your own rules for yourself. What you should do at Tassajara through Tassajara rules to see the actual moon is, you know, how you practice zazen at Tassajara. Rules is not the point. The actual teaching the rules will catch is the point. So observing rules naturally you will understand what is the real teaching.

So this is, you know- From the beginning, this point is maybe missing in almost all of us. Most of the people, you know, start to study Zen to know what is Zen. This is already wrong. It is the first step to, you know, to- It means that he is always trying to provide some understanding or rules for himself.

The way you study Zen is like-you should be- The way you study Zen should be the way a fish, you know, pick up its food [laughs], you know [laughs]. They do not try to catch anything, you know. They are just swimming around. And [laughs] if something good come-snap! [Bites teeth together.] [Laughs, laughter.] While you are following Tassajara rules, you know, even though it is so hot, anyway you are observing Tassajara rules [laughs], eating in hot zendo [laughs], like a fish, you know, swimming around, and, you know, as you are doing so, you will get something. I don't know whether you realize it or not. Anyway, as long as you are following rules, you will have something. Even though you don't have anything or you don't study anything, actually you are studying, like a fish, you know, like a fish doesn't know what they are eating. That's all [laughs]. In that way we should study Zen. To understand does not mean to, you know, to understand something by hear [or "here," pointing to head?].

For Zen student, if you ask question, you know, "What is good?" to Zen student, Zen student may answer, "Something you should-something you do is good, and something you don't is bad." [Laughs.] That is answer. Something you do is good, and something you don't is bad. [Laughs.] That's all. You don't think so much about good or bad.

So Dogen-zenji says, "The power of 'do not' is good." Power of "do not." That is something intuitive-very inmost function of ourselves: innate nature. Our innate nature have some function before you say [said?] "good" or "bad." That function is something-is sometime good and sometime bad. We understand in that way. But that innate nature is beyond the idea of good or bad. So when you start to wonder why we practice zazen in such a hot weather [laughs, laughter], then, you know, that is the first step to the confusion [laughs, laughter]. We should be like a fish, always swimming around in the river. That is Zen student [laughs]. Don't, you know- So Dogen-zenji said, "There is no bird that fly after knowing what is sky or where is the limit of the sky." They just fly in the big sky. That is how we practice zazen.

So you should not make some rules for yourself. Or you should not try to make rules for yourself. These is very strict words, you know. It looks like very- It looks like it doesn't mean much, but actually when he say so, he is waiting with big stick [laughs]. If you say something [Sekito says], "Don't make rules for yourself! Don't try to understand by your head." He is waiting like this [laughs] [Suzuki-roshi holds up the pointer or stick as if ready to strike].[1] So when he say so, we cannot say anything. Hai. Hai. [Laughs.] [The Hai/Hai exchange was said as if two people were talking to each other.] That's all. You shouldn't say even "Hai." You should do things like a mule or ass [laughs].

You may say, "This is absolute surrender." It is not so. It is, you know, the way to understand what is the source of the teaching. When we say, "source of the teaching," we liable to, you know, wonder what it is. But source of the teaching is not something which you can understand by words, but something which you will-which you have when you do things quite naturally and intuitively without saying "good" or "bad."

Time is always going on and on. We have not much time to say "good" or "bad" [laughs]. You know, moment after moment we should follow the flow of the time. You should go with the time goes. We don't have time to say "this way" or "that way." When we become tired of, you know, doing something, you may say, "this way" or "that way" just to kill time. But [laughs] actually when you see the vegetables in the garden which is almost, you know, dry up in the hot weather, you have not much time to [laughs] say what will be the appropriate thing to do for us, you know, for today [laughs]. While we are discussing we are becoming more and more hungry. So kitchen people should go to the kitchen and prepare some food for next meal [laughs]. That is the most important thing.

But it does not mean there is, you know, it is waste of time to think about. It is good thing to think about, but we should not stick to words or stick to rules too much. This is very delicate point. Without ignoring rules, without sticking to the rules, we should continue our Tassajara practice. This is the way Sekito is suggesting.

And he says, Sokumoku do wo ese zumba. Sokumoku do wo ese zumba, ashi wo hakobu mo izukunzo michi wo shiran. Sokumoku: Soku is to, you know-excuse me? [Laughs.] Soku is, you know, the antenna of the, you know, insects; moku is "eyes." So it means that to use our eyes and our five senses. Sokumoku: moku is "eyes"; soku is "sense organs."

Do wo ese zumba: do is "dao" [someone is writing on the blackboard]. E means "understand not," you know. "If you don't understand dao with eyes and sense organs."

Ashi wo hakobu: ashi means "foot." Hakobu means "to carry on," "to go," you know, "to carry on."

Izukunzo: "how." "How could you do that," it means this words.  
Izukunzo.

Michi wo: michi is "way"; shiran, "to know."

"If you don't understand dao, way, you don't understand way, how could you-even though you move or you operate your foot-operate"- (uma is "operate")-"your foot-your feet-how could you know the-could you know-shiran-could you know-michi-way-(michi is 'way')-how could you know the way?"

So it means that only way is using your five senses-sense organs-eyes and many sense organs-whenever you go, using your sense organs like eyes and nose, and at that time simultaneously understanding the source of the teaching. If you don't do that, even though you prac- [incomplete word]- ashi wo hakobu-"to operate your feet" means to practice. So even though you practice, you cannot know the true way: michi wo. Michi-true way. Michi wo shiran.

So, you know, the way is-the more important thing is not rules but to, you know, find out the true mean [partial word] source of the teaching with your eyes, with your ears, wherever you are, you know-is how you understand the source of the teaching. That is more direct way to know the source of the teaching without trying to establish some particular way for yourselves. So if you stick to words, and if you do not see true way by your eyes, by your nose, ears, or tongue-sticking to some rules and, you know, ignoring actually direct experience of everyday life, even though you practice zazen, it doesn't work, he [Sekito] says. So without, you know, saying this way-"Rinzai" or "Soto," or "this way" or "that way"-to have direct experience of everyday life is more important thing, and that is how we understand the true source of the teaching transmitted from Buddha. That is the conclusion of the Sandokai.

So true way could be, you know, could be a stick. True way- The original way of Buddha could be a stone. Like Ummon said, "It may be a toilet paper" [laughs]. What is true way? Or what is Buddha? Buddha is

something which is beyond our understanding. So Buddha could be everything. It is, you know, just- Instead of "Buddha," we say, you know, "toilet paper" [laughs]. Anyway, even though you say "Buddha," it doesn't make much sense [laughs]. So it may be much better to say "toilet paper" or "three pounds of hemp," as Tozan said [laughs].

So, you know, the best way is if you, you know, if someone ask you, "Who is Buddha?" the answer may be, "You are Buddha too" [laughs]. That will be the answer. If you, you know- Then, if someone ask, "What is mountain?" "The mountain is also Buddha" [laughs]. That will be the answer. So in Japanese, mo mata. Mo mata is "also." If you say, you know- You shouldn't say, "This is Buddha." Rather- If you say, "This is Buddha," that statement will lead you [to] some misunderstanding. So, "This is also Buddha." If you say so, it is okay. It does not mean you don't stick to lamp. But lamp is Buddha, you know. If someone ask, "Where is Buddha?" you may say, "Here is Buddha too." If you say "too" it is okay. It is not so definite. "Too," you know. So somewhere else- Buddha may be somewhere else too [laughs]. [Tape turned over.]

[So the secret of the perfect Zen statement is, "It is not always so." ]  
[2] ... [under]standing. This is Tassajara rules, but it is not always so. This is- As long as you are at Tassajara, you know, this is our rule. But it is not always so. You should not forget this point. So this is also Buddha's way-Buddha's rule. If you say so, there is no danger. There is no-You will not invite any misunderstanding.

And this is how you get rid of selfish practice. Even though you think you are practicing Buddha's way, you are liable to be involved in selfish practice when you say, "This is- The way should be like this," you know. If you- If that statement is strict enough to accept this kind of teaching, it is okay. If, you know- Even though you say, "This is our way-our Tassajara way." You should definitely say so. But you should be ready to accept some other's way.

This is rather difficult, you know: to have very strict-having very strict, strong confidence in your actual practice and flexible enough to accept other's way too is rather difficult. For you, you know, to be ready to accept someone's teaching is not strict way. But unless you are ready to accept other's practice, you cannot be so strict with your own way. Only when you are, you know, ready to accept someone's opinion you could say, "Definitely you should do so." And you may say, "As long as I'm here you should do so" [laughs]. Even though, you know, you say so, it does not mean- It means that if someone else come, I will observe his way. Or else you cannot, you know, you cannot be so strict with yourself. Do you understand this point?

So usually strictness means to become rigid, to be caught by your own understanding and no or-do not provide any room for others. That is usual way, you know. That is not our way.

So my master always said-if someone ask his opinion about something, about some matter, he always said, "If you asked me," you know, "my opinion is this!" [hits the table with stick at "this"] [laughs, laughter]. When he say so, he is very strong [laughs]. Why he could be so strong is because he says, "If you ask me" [hits table with stick] [laughs]. You know, that is our way. So to be just, you know, yourself is to be-to have-to be ready to accept other's opinion too. That is very important point. Each moment you should intuitively know what you should do. But it does not mean to reject someone else['s] opinion.

In some translation, it says, Koto wo uke te wa . Koto means "forementioned," you know, "things" or "words." How many words I don't know, but, you know, but it is not so. This is more wider meaning: Koto is, maybe, "words." "Words," maybe-not only words in Sandokai, but also various words we mean, we use, and it may include various idea which we have or we may have, or things we see or things we hear. So koto include everything. And ashi wo hakobu means "practice." Sokumoku means "our everyday affairs," "our everyday life."

"In everyday life there is dao, and if you do not practice our way in everyday activity, there is no way to-no approach to the true way." That is what he [Sekito] means. Don't stick to words. Don't, you know, make your own rules and force the rules to others. It is not possible to force any rules for others, because each one has his own way, and each one should have his own way.

That is the conclusion of Sandokai.

Ah. Just right time, maybe [laughs, laughter]. Hmm? I am sorry we have no time [laughs] for you to ask question.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/1/00.

[1] The description in brackets is from the original typescript.

[2] Sentence in brackets from original transcript. Not on tape.

## **2 - Sandokai Lecture #13**

Monday, July 06, 1970

Sandokai Lecture #13: "Don't Spend Your Time in Vain"  
Tassajara

[This lecture is concerned with the following lines of the Sandokai:

Ayumi wo susumure ba gonnon ni ara zu,  
mayote senga no ko wo hedatsu.

Tsutsushin de sangen no hito ni mosu,  
koin munashiku wataru koto nakare.

(Transliteration by Kazuaki Tanahashi.)

The goal is neither far nor near.  
If you stick to the idea of good or bad,  
you will be separated from the way  
by high mountains or big rivers.

Seekers of the truth,  
don't spend your time in vain.

(Translation by Suzuki-roshi.)]

Here it says:

Ayumi wo susumure ba gonnon ni ara zu,  
mayote senga no ko wo hedatsu.

Tsutsushin de sangen no hito ni mosu,  
koin munashiku wataru koto nakare.

Ayumi wo susumure ba. Ayumi is "foot" or "step." Susumure ba: "to carry on." Susumure ba gonnon ni ara zu. Gon is "near"; on is "far away." Ayumi wo susumure ba. Ayumi is actually "practice," you know. Ayumi wo susumure ba gonnon ni ara zu.

"There is no idea of far away from the goal or nearer to the goal." This is very important. When you [are] involved in selfish practice, there is, you know-you have some idea of attainment. And when you have-you strive for to attain enlightenment or to reach the goal, you have naturally, "We are far away"-you know, idea of, "We are far away from the goal." Or, "We are almost there," you know. Gonnon: "near" or "far away."

But if you really practice our way, enlightenment is there. Mmm. Maybe

this is rather difficult to accept [laughs], you know. When you practice zazen without any idea of attainment, there is actually enlightenment. Or you may understand in this way like Dogen-zenji explained: In our selfish practice there is enlightenment and there is practice. Practice and enlightenment is two-a pair of opposite idea. But when we realize-when we understand our practice and enlightenment as an event in realm of great dharma world, enlightenment and practice is two event which appears in a great dharma world. The both practice and enlightenment is also events, you know, which will have-which many events in our life or in our dharma world. When we understand in that way, enlightenment is one of the event which symbolize the dharma world, and practice is also an event which symbolize our big dharma world. So there is- If both symbolize or express or suggest the big dharma world, you know, actually we sh- [partial word], there is no need for us to be discouraged because we do not attain enlightenment or why we should be extremely happy with our enlightenment. Actually there is no difference. Both has equal value.

So enlightenment- If enlightenment is important, practice is also important. We cannot evaluate which is good or bad. When we understand in this way, in each step we have enlightenment. Even though we have enlightenment, you know, there will not be no need to be excited with it. And step by step we will continue endless practice, appreciating the dharma world-bliss of dharma world. That is so-called- it "practice based on enlightenment"-a practice beyond our experience of good and bad, a practice which is beyond our selfish practice.

Last night, he [Sekito] said, "Whatever you see, if you," you know, "that is- Whatever you see, that is dao." Unless you don't understand in that way, you will not-even though you practice our practice you will-the practice not work. And tonight, you know, in this line he says, "If you," you know, "practice our way in its true sense, there is no problem of, 'We are almost there' or 'We are far away from the point'," it is said. Beginners' practice and great Zen masters' practice are not different. But if you [are] involved in selfish practice, then that is delusion. Mayote senga no ko wo hedatsu. If you practice deluded practice, if you practice our way, you know, in dualistic sense-practice and enlightenment-then there is barrier or difficulties of mountain and river-crossing river or mountain: Senga no ko: This is "mountain"; this is "river"; this is "difficulties." [Suzuki-roshi is presumed to be pointing to characters on blackboard.] You will be, you know, you will have-you will be separated from the dao by the difficulties of crossing mountain and river: Mayote senga no ko wo hedatsu.

And next line is Tsutsushin de sangen no hito ni mosu. Tsutsushin de is "most respectfully" or "reverently." "I tell all the seekers of the way." Sangen no hito means "seekers of the truth." San is like sanzen, like sanpai? [1] Sanzen means, you know, "to visit Zen masters." San. Gen is "profound teaching." Hito means "man." So "to visit profound teaching" or "to study profound teaching"- "those who study profound



teaching." "I say this much to the people who want to visit the real teacher." Gen is, you know, "profound"- "profound teaching."

Koin munashiku wataru koto nakare. Koin means "sunbeam" or "day and night." Ko is "beam"- "sunbeam"; and in means "shadow." And koin- this is one word- koin means "day and night" or "time."

Munashiku- "don't"- wataru is "to spend" or "to cross"- "to pass." "Not"- nakare is "not." Munashiku is "in vain." Wataru is "to pass." "Don't pass day and night without doing anything" or "in vain."

To, you know, to pass day and night in vain does not mean only to, you know, goof off [laughs] without doing anything. It is- that is maybe, you know, one way of [laughs] passing the day and night without doing anything [laughs], but it does not mean, you know, such a- what he [Sekito] means is more profound: Even though you, you know, work very hard, sometime you may be, you know, passing your day and- valuable time without doing anything, we say so. If you don't know what you are doing [laughs], or he is passing his time in vain, he may say, "No, I am striving very hard to make my saving account [laughs] ten thousand dollars" [laughs], but to us, you know, it is just spending his time in vain. It doesn't make much sense [laughs].

Even though you, you know, work hard in Tassajara, you know, in work period, it doesn't mean- it does not mean you are, you know- it does not always mean you are spending your time properly- doing something properly [laughs]. Mmm. [Laughs.] What does it mean then [laughs]? If you goof off [laughs] you are also, you know, wasting your time. Even though you work hard, maybe you are, you know, spending your time in vain. This is maybe a kind of koan for you [laughs].

Do you know what does it mean, "Every day is good day"? [Laughs.] "Every day is good day." This is famous, you know, koan. "Every day is good day." It does not mean, you know, don't make complaint even though you have some difficulties: "Even though it is hot, you shouldn't complain. Even though it is cold, you shouldn't complain. Whatever happened, you shouldn't complain." It does not mean, you know, something like that.

"Every day is good day." What it means [is], "Don't," you know, "spend your time in vain." I think most people are spending their time in vain. If he say, "No, I am always busy." But if he say so [laughs], it is sure sign of [laughs] his spending time in vain.

Most people do things, you know, as he know what he is doing, with some purpose. But even so, I don't think they are doing things with proper understanding of their activity. I think still he may be doing things in vain. When you do something with usual purpose, which is based on some evaluation, or useful or useless, or good or bad, valuable or less valuable- that is, you know, not perfect understanding. You know, if you do things whether it is good or bad, you know, or successful or

unsuccessful, out of question. Because you feel you should do them, then that is real practice. Not because of Buddha or because of yourself, or because of the true, or because of for yourself or for others. If you do things for the things, that is true way.

Mmm. I cannot explain so well. Maybe I shouldn't explain so much [laughs]. You shouldn't do things just because you feel good, or you shouldn't stop doing things just [because] you don't feel so good. Whether you feel good or bad, there is something which you should do. Unless-if you don't have this kind of feeling-if you don't understand this kind of feeling-of doing things, you know, whether it is right or wrong, or good or bad-if you don't understand this kind of feeling, you are not yet started our way in its true sense.

I don't know why, you know, I am [laughs] in Tassajara [laughs]. Not for you or for myself, or not even for Buddha or for Buddhism. I am just here [laughs]. I cannot- You know, I don't feel so good if-even when I think I have to leave Tassajara in two-three weeks, I don't feel so good. I don't know why [laughs.] I don't think that is just because you are my students. I don't think so. I do not have any particular person whom I love so much [laughs]. I don't know why I have to be there. I have not much attachment to Tassajara. It is not because of I attach to Tassajara.

Hmm. Anyway, I am not seek [partial word]-I am not, you know, expecting anything in future or in term of monastery or Buddhism. But I don't want to, you know, live-I don't want to live in the air. I want to be right here. I want to stand on my feet, you know. The only way to stand on my feet is when I am Tassajara I should be at Tassajara [laughs]. That is the reason why, you know, I am here. I want to be here. That is the most important thing for me: to stand on my feet and to sit on my black cushion. I don't trust anything but [laughs] my feet or my black cushion. This is my friend, always. My feet is always my friend. When I am in bed, my bed is my friend. There is no Buddha, or no Buddhism, or no zazen. If, you know, you ask me, "What is zazen?" you know, my answer will be, "To sit on black cushion is zazen," or "To walk with my feet is my zazen." To stay at this moment on this place is my zazen. There is no other zazen.

When I am really standing on my feet I am, you know, not lost. So, for me, that is, you know, nirvana, for me. So there is no need to travel, to cross, you know, mountain or river, for me. I am right here on the dharma world. So I have no difficulty to cross mountain and river. That is how, you know, we do not waste our time. Moment after moment we should live on this moment, right here, without sacrificing this moment for the future.

At Sekito's time, there were, you know, naturally, you know, especially Zen Buddhism is very poliminous [polemical], you know. The background of the teaching is always some discussion or a kind of fight.

Especially in Chinese Buddhism you can see this kind of context in their teaching. And talking about various way of practice and various way of understanding of Zen. They were lost in dispute [laughs]. There were many schools of Zen. But because they were involved in some kind of right teaching or wrong teaching, or traditional teaching or some heretical teaching (heresy), they lost their main point of practice. So that is why he says, "Don't spend your time in vain," sacrificing their actual practice for some idealistic, you know, practice, to attain some perfection of what kind of understanding is traditional understanding told by the Sixth Patriarch-compiling, you know, Sutra of Sixth Patriarch in their own way [laughs], and [saying], "This is the Sixth Patriarch's way. Those who do not have this book is not," you know, "the descendant of the Sixth Patriarch." This kind of, you know, understanding of Zen were prevail [prevalent] at that time. That is why he says, "Don't," you know, "I reverently say to the seekers of the profound way, don't spend your time in vain." It is, you know-what it means is very profound. Without being, you know, caught by some idea, you know, some selfish understanding or practice or teaching-to follow right practice is our way. [Tape turned. Sentence completed.]

This kind of practice is called "polishing tile practice" [laughs]. Tile. "To polish tile practice." Usually, people may polish a mirror, you know, because if you polish it, you know, it will be a clear, good mirror, you know. To have clea- [partial word]- Why you polish it is to have clear surface of the mirror. But if someone start polish a tile [laughs], you know- For the people who understand why we polish a mirror is to have a mirror-like complete, you know, shiny surface of it. So if someone start to polish a tile, you may laughed at him.

So to polish tile is-to make good tile is to polish tile. And to polish mirror is to have actual mirror is why we polish a mirror. [Someone may say,] "Oh, this is just a tile. It cannot be a mirror." You know, that is the practice [of those] who easily give up their practice because he thinks, you know, "Anyway, I cannot be a good [laughs] Zen student. It may be better to give up without polishing it, without sitting zazen." Without realizing, tile is, you know, valuable-sometime much more valuable than a mirror, because a mirror is too expensive for the roofing [laughs]. No one can, you know, afford to make a roof by mirror. Tile is very good for to make our roof. So tile is also important, as mirror is important to see, to look yourself into it. That is "tile-polishing practice." Mazen, we say.

As you know, there is a famous story[2] between Baso,[3] the grandson of the Sixth Patriarch, and Nangaku,[4] a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. Baso, you know, was practicing zazen. Nangaku, the teacher-who passed, you know, by-asked him, "What are you doing?" "I am practicing zazen to be a buddha." "Ah, that's very nice of you" [laughs, laughter], "trying to be a Buddha." And the teacher [Nangaku] picked up a tile and started to polish it [laughs].

So Baso asked him, you know, with some curiosity, "What are you

doing?" [laughs, laughter]. He [Nangaku] said, "I want to make this tile a mirror." [Laughs.] And the disciple Baso asked him whether it is possible to, you know, make tile a mirror. He [Nangaku] said, "Well [laughs], you said," you know, "you are practicing zazen to be a buddha, but buddha is not always someone who attained enlightenment. Everyone is buddha. Whether they attained enlightenment or not, they are buddha." "You said, 'To be a buddha,' but to be a buddha sometime means to practice-" His [Baso's], you know, answer was, "I want to be a buddha by practicing-by sitting practice." And so he said-teacher [Nangaku] said, "You said, 'practice in sitting position.' But Zen is not," you know, "always-to sit in sitting position is not Zen always. Whatever you do, that will be zazen."

So he was lost, you know. Baso was lost. "Then what will be the appropriate practice?" [he asked]. And so he explained-he asked without explaining to him, he asked, "If a cart does not go," you know, "which would be the appropriate way: to hit a cart or to hit a horse?" [Laughs.] "Which will be the appropriate [way]?" But he couldn't answer because the disciple Baso was still involved in practice to attain something.

So he [Nangaku] continued the explanation of the practice. In short, I cannot translate it literally, but what he said was, "If you think [by] whipping a cart or horse, you can," you know, "drive a cart is [you are] wrong, because cart and horse actually is not separated, is one." To whip a horse means to whip a cart, you know. And if you whip on cart, naturally horse will go [laughs], because they are one.

So to practice and enlightenment is one, like a cart and horse is one. So if you, you know, practice actually physical practice, as a practice, that is also enlightenment. And that you practice Buddha's practice, of course, that is enlightenment. But actually that is practice too. We call practice based on enlightenment is "real practice which has no end." We call enlightenment which started with practice, which is one with practice, is "beginningless enlightenment," because, you know, if someone start practice, there is enlightenment. Where there is practice there is enlightenment. Where there is enlightenment there is also practice. There is no enlightenment without practice. If you don't stay on this spot realizing your position, then you are not practicing our way. So if you are wasting your time or if you are trying to sacrifice your present practice for future attainment, that is not real practice.

Sekito actually was the direct disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. He knew the Sixth Patriarch's way-practice very well. So when Katakū Jinne [5] and his disciples started to denounce the Northern school of Jinshu, [6] he [Sekito] felt bad about them attaching to some, you know, idea, and denouncing, you know, superficially, without realizing what is real practice. (The Hoku-shu Zen [7] [was] Jinshu's practice.)

This kind of-this understanding is extended-succeeded by Dogen in

Japan, and Dogen extended his idea more widely and not just, you know, logically but more emotional way-more, with more feeling and more poetic way through his tenacious, you know, thinking mind.

So some people may say Sandokai is not so good, you know, because it is so philosophical. [Laughs.] It may be so, you know, if you don't understand the background of his [Sekito's] teaching, and if your mind does not penetrate through his words. We say to read back of the paper, you know, not printed characters, but the other side of the book. You may feel in that way. But this is actually very important, you know, work-Sandokai.

Do you have some questions?

Question/Answer Session

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student A: I don't understand all the vows we make.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm? Vow?

Student A: Well, I understand what you said tonight, but, you know, in the light of what you say, you know, I don't understand all the vows and stuff. Like, if there's no sentient beings to save, why do we say how we "vow to save sentient beings?" It seems like a big joke to me.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Because your practice is, you know, always confined in realm of, you know, why we practice zazen. What does it mean, by your practice. Anyway, actually, you are practicing very good. Why do you practice your practice so good? [Laughs.] I don't understand. [Laughs.]

Student A: It doesn't feel very good to me.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. Anyway, you are doing well. [Laughs, laughter.] Because, maybe, because I give lectures, you know, my lecture will, you know, will be some enticement [laughs, laughter]. May be better not to hear my lecture-just practice zazen.

Student A: I don't mind zazen so much, but I kind of-I don't like to make promises that I don't understand.

Suzuki-roshi: "Make promise." Our promise, you know: If sentient beings are number [partial word]-numerous, you know, numberless, or desires are numberless-sentient beings are numerous, you know, it is-you cannot say, "I vow to save them" or "I vow to put an end to them." It is, you know, it is very silly. It doesn't make any sense [laughs]. This is true. I agree with you. It doesn't make any sense.

But still you do it. Why? You don't feel so good if you don't work for others. Our practice is not just to s [partial word]- We say, you know, we make four vows just, you know, in that way. But what we really means is more than that. But tentatively or for sake of sake of convenience, we, you know, say in that way just four.

But I feel in this way, really, truly, you know, it is lucky that we have, you know, inexhaustible desires and numerous sentient beings to save. And each of them is almost impossible to save them in term of, you know, "I save you" [laughs]. You cannot save in that way. But whether it is possible or not, to continue this kind of practice is our vow. Anyway, whether it is possible or not, out of question. Whether this is Buddhist way, or Bodhisattva's way, or Hinayana way, or Mahayana way is out of question. Anyhow, do it! That is our vow.

Student A: When I-I mean, when I don't- It seems cheating, you know. I mean, when I promise to do something, it seems, you know, I need to have some meaning. If it doesn't have any meaning, I won't say it. If it doesn't have any meaning to me, I can't say it.

Suzuki-roshi: Your arrogance. That is your arrogance.

Student A: I don't know. Maybe. But-

Suzuki-roshi: Even though you cry, that cry doesn't make any sense. You're still-your practice is still based on some selfish practice. You don't give up yourself. You have to suffer more and fight more with yourself. With yourself. No one to fight with-nothing to fight with. Fight with your selfish practice until you give up. That is most important point for real students. You shouldn't fool yourself. He doesn't want to be fooled by our teaching, or Zen, or something like that. That is right. You shouldn't [be] fooled by anything.

Student A: Well, what do I do at the end of lecture? I can't-I- You know, everybody will say the four vows, and I won't believe them. I-

Suzuki-roshi: You don't have to believe in [them] literally, you know. Because various teachers and numerous people, you know, repeat it in that way, that is why you should do it. That's all. If, you know, they are cheating themselves, you know, you should be cheated, you should be fooled by it with all sentient beings. That you cannot do that means you want to be some special person. That is good, you know. That much spirit we should have. But the answer is, you know, that is not the way. You know, answer is very cold. Cannot be sympathetic with your, you know, practice. Some great teacher will give you some candy. Go and get candy.

Student A: It's not like that, Roshi. I mean, I just-maybe part of it is, but I still don't understand. I feel very-I don't feel right. Even if the whole world is fooled, if there is something I don't believe, or I don't

understand-

Suzuki-roshi: "You don't understand." How much truth you can understand by your small mind? And you should know the limit of your thinking mind.

Student A: But- I forget-

Suzuki-roshi: What you see, you know, actually, you see various color, but how many colors do you see by your eyes?

Student A: But I can't-

Suzuki-roshi: How much sound you can hear? You only think, you know- Your thinking mind works dualistic only. You have no words to explain this kind of reality, you know. If you understand our teaching through those characters, it is almost impossible. This is just suggestion. You see? So because you stick to my words, or by scriptures, or you think scriptures should be something perfect, more convincing- You think in that way, but first of all, you know, we have to confess what I'm talking is not right. What I'm saying is not always true. I am suggesting something more than that. That's all. So to, you know- That is even- Not only Buddhism, but Confucius says, you know, "If it is," you know- "If someone want to fool you," you know, "you should be fooled by him." That is very important.

Student A: Even though practice is greater than words, still, in the small world of words, I don't feel strong enough yet to be inconsistent, you know. I don't feel that I can say, "Well, I don't see that light there," you know, because I do. I mean, it may be ignorance or something, but it seems like it's there to me. And in order to be kind of what I feel is straight or clear- If I say to you, "I don't see that lamp, Roshi," then something funny happens inside of me, you know. And sometimes that same funny thing happens when I say the vows, because I think, "Oh, okay, I vow to save all sentient beings." But then something is going on inside me, you know. There aren't any [2-3 words unintelligible]-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I understand that. You know, we priest always put our hand together when you eat. How many times you put your hand together, you know. How many times you put your hand together in Tassajara, you know? I didn't like it at all, you know. I felt as if I am fooling myself [laughs], and, you know, I didn't feel so good. But as I had to, you know, I did it, that's all. But now I understand, you know, because I understand how foolish I am. I have not much strong spirit [laughs] as I had before. So I understand. But still, you know, truth is truth. I cannot agree with you now. Maybe if I were to be your age, I can agree with you. I could have agreed with you quite easily, and you would have been a great friend of mine, but now [laughs] I ca [partial word-probably "can't"] [be] your friend. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, do you think that we have any choice? For instance, I am here at Tassajara.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: Am I here at Tassajara by my choice, or am I simply here at Tassajara?

Suzuki-roshi: Well, that's- The answer for that is, you know, your buddha nature brought you here at Tassajara. That is my answer. Your choice is not- You ch [partial word]-. I think that was not comp [partial word], you know, your choice, you know, completely. Maybe your choice, you know, twenty or thirty percent your choice. But most of the reason for your [being] here is something more than that. That we hear Buddha's teaching is, you know, because of our previous study. And wisdom seek for wisdom. We are listening to the teaching which we have listened or have had studied under many teachers in my past life. Dogen said so. Wisdom seek for wisdom. But, you know, even though you feel, you know, "I am feeling this way right now, one hundred percent," you may say so, but actually that voice is now covers all of your being or character. But actually it is a little tiny part of you saying so, and you feel as if your whole body is saying so. That's all. That is, you know, so-called-it- Ahh. Maybe I shouldn't explain [laughs] so, you know, so much in traditional way.

Student B: Well then, if I were, say, to become buddha, would I have anything to do about it? Or would I have anything to do with it? Would I have anything to do with it?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. First of all, you know, try to forget yourself, and rely on your true voice-nonverbal voice-voiceless voice. And you listen to "tongueless speech," we say. Don't listen to my words. [Laughs.] Ahh. Think about this point, you know, and-. Hai.

Student C: Will I hear your stick on my shoulder tomorrow?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: In the morning-in the early morning, will I hear your stick on my shoulder?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Stick?

Student C: Will you hit me with your stick tomorrow morning?

Suzuki-roshi: Okay. All right.

Student D [Roovane ben Yumin]: Roshi? Is the voice- Whose voice is it that we listen to?



Suzuki-roshi: Mmm! Your voice and Buddha's voice. That is, you know, what Sandokai is talking about. You think sometime [it is] your voice, but that voice is Buddha's voice. But you think in that way, you know, from one-sided feeling. You think you are here. You think you are, you know, Roovane, but [laughs] actually it is not so [laughs, laughter]. No, not at all. If I think I am Suzuki, you know, if someone call me "Suzuki" I [laughs] feel very funny. "Oh [laughs], is this Suzuki?" [Laughs.] "Oh no, I," you know- First reaction is, "No, I am not Suzuki." [Laughs.] Hai.

Student E: Roshi, this may be a good gassho [presumably bows], and someone may look at me and say, "Oh, this is good gassho."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: But there may be a cold heart behind this gassho.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Cold heart or warm heart out of question. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student E: The [laughs] gassho is a good one [said as an aside]. Is it still good gassho [addressed more loudly to Suzuki-roshi]?

Suzuki-roshi: Perfect! [Laughs, laughter.] [End of tape. Not clear if Q&A session continued.]

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 1/22/01.

[1] Sanpai (Jap.) = triple prostration.

[2] In Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), translated by Thomas and C. C. Cleary in The Blue Cliff Record (Appendix, p. 566).

[3] Baso Doitsu (Ch. Chiang-hsi Mazu Daoyi, 709-788): Tang Chan master of many other Chan masters; student of Nangaku Ejo.

[4] Nangaku Ejo (Ch. Nanyue Huairang, 677-744): Early Chan master; student of the Sixth Patriarch Daikan Eno (Ch. Dajian Huineng); master of Baso Doitsu.

[5] Katakū Jinne (Heze Shenhi, 670-762): a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor. He and/or his followers denounced Jinshu's teachings in the Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor.

[6] Daitsu Jinshu (Datong Shenxiu, 605-706): founder of the Northern school of Chan Buddhism.

[7] Hoku-shu Zen: Northern school of Chan Buddhism.

### **3 - Eko Lecture #1**

Wednesday, July 08, 1970

Eko Lecture #1: The First Morning Eko  
Tassajara

[This is the first in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The lectures were delivered from July 8 to July 15, 1970.

The Japanese transliteration and English translation of the ekos are based, with minor changes, on David Chadwick's "EkoStudy Book: A Tassajara Project," December 1970 (unpublished manuscript, San Francisco Zen Center).

The First Morning Eko:

Choka butsuden fugin

Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shinji, fushite shokan o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo, shosai myo kichijo darani o fujusu,

Line 3. atsumuru tokoro no shukun wa

Line 4. daion kyoshu honshi Shakamuni Butsu;

Line 5. Shintan Shoso Bodai Daruma-daiosho;

Line 6. Nichi-riki Shoso Eihei Dogen-daiosho;

Line 7. Daisho Monjushiri Bosatsu no tame ni shi tatematsuri.

Line 8. Kami jion ni mukuin koto o.

## Morning Service Buddha Hall Sutra

Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us, and may we receive his true compassion.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Maha Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra and the Dharani for Removing Disasters,

Line 3. we offer the collected merit to

Line 4. the great kind founder, the original teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha;

Line 5. the First Patriarch of China, the great Bodhidharma;

Line 6. the First Patriarch of Japan, the great Eihei Dogen;

Line 7. and the great sage Mañjushri Bodhisattva.

Line 8. Let us reflect their compassion and mercy.]

I want to explain eko.[1] The eko is- After reciting sutra, we-[it is] a sort of explanation of why we recite sutra. And this sutra is for such-and-such buddha, or next sutra is for arhats, or third one is for our patriarchs, and fourth one is for disciples and students who is related to this monastery and the ancestors or relative who passed away. Those are eko.

The first sutra-first of all, we recite sutra for-for Shakyamuni Buddha. And here in Tassajara we recite sutra for Bodhidharma, who is the First Patriarch of China-and next-third-excuse me [first sutra]-and Bodhidharma and Dogen-zenji, who is the First Patriarch in Japan. So in India, we-Shakyamuni Buddha; in China, Bodhidharma; and in Japan, Dogen-zenji. The firstPrajña Paramita Sutra is recited for those patriarchs and buddhas. But originally, even nowadays in Japan, we recite this sutra-first sutra for Buddha, and-and Dogen-zenji, and Keizan-zenji (who is the founder of Soji-ji Monastery),[2] and then we, you know, [invoke] Keizan-zenji and many deities who protects, you know, or who is related to Dogen-zenji.

When Dogen-zenji went to China-as you know, he went to China when he was twenty-four, with Myozen.[3] And he arrived-after he arriving-after his arriving at China, he stayed in-in the ship for three or four months, maybe three months. When he was there [on the ship], he was-once in a while he landed [went ashore] and visited many temples and came back to the ship. And in this way he spent three months.

During that time, his brother-dharma brother or he-who is Eisai-zenji's [4] disciple-who was Eisai's disciple, Myozen. Myozen did not stay in the ship. He landed [went ashore], and he went to his teacher's temple-a temple where his teacher studied and received transmission].[5] So he left Dogen in the ship, and he landed. Dogen, alone, [was] living in the ship and collecting information.

At last-no, before he landed, a monk, old monk about sixty-one, came-visited his ship. And Dogen, of course, wanted to know what is going on in China. That monk was from Aikuo-zan Monastery.[6] And in Aikuo-zan Monastery there was a shrine where the deity called ShoboshichiroDai Gongen. And we recite, you know, in Eihei-ji, and so many monasteries we recite. We call his name "Shoboshichiro Dai Gen Shiribosatsu." And that deity which is enshrined [at] Aikuo-zan, [is] also enshrined in Shobo-zan. Shobo-zan means "to invite treasure mountain" [laughs]-"inviting treasure mountain." Shobo-zan.

It is enshrined in the mountain where people can-from where people can see Japan and Korea. It may be pretty high mountain. And under [nearby] the mountain there is a big fishing port [laughs]. There various, you know, trading ship come in from Japan and Korea and many places. So we call-they call that mountain Shobo-za. Shobo-za means "to invite treasure-treasure-inviting treasure mountain." So inviting the treasure and many things from other country. So this mountain-this deity is very-very closely related to Dogen-zenji's trip to China.

[In Japan] we say in the morning eko, "Shoboshichiro Dai Gen Shiribosatsu. Gatto no shinsai ni shukensu." Mmm. "Shoboshichiro Dai Gen Shiribosatsu." But here in America we don't recite, you know, [the name of this deity]. It doesn't mean much to you. So we skip "Shoboshichiro Dai Gen Shiribosatsu," or we say, "Gatto no shinsai." "Gatto no shinsai" means the temples in Japan who has long, long history-there many deities have been enshrined.

So those-we recite sutra [in Japan] first of all for those deities too. But we don't recite [in America]-we do not have this kind of [deities]-here in America we do not have this kind of deity, so we don't-so we just recite sutra for Shakyamuni Buddha and for Dogen-zenji [and] Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma is the First Patriarch in China; Dogen-zenji is the First Patriarch in Japan. So we recite sutra not only [to] Shakyamuni Buddha but also to those teachers.

[Line 1] Aogi koi negawakuwa shinji,

fushite shokan o taretamae.

Aogi koi negawakuwa means-aogi is "to," you know, "to," you know, "to"-aogu means "to look"-what do you say, you know?[7] "To look at" or "to look up," you know. Altar is higher place, so Aogi koi negawakuwa

shinji, fushite-. Aogi koi negawakuwa shinji, fushite shokan o taretamae. Shinji means "mercy." "I want to receive." Koi negawakuwa means "we want," you know. Koi negawakuwa. "I want to receive." Shokan is "wisdom." "I want to receive wisdom of the Buddha."

[Line 2] [Jorai Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo,

shosai myo kichijo darani o fujusu.]

We have recite- Jorai means-jo is, you know-means-ahh, very difficult-jo [laughs]. "Up and down." "Up" is jo.[8] "Down" is ge.[9] Jorai means "We-," you know, "So far we recited sutra," you know. "So far we recited-the sutra we recited so far, maybe, the sutra we recited is four [?] jorai-jorai-the sutra Maka-Maha Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra. So far we recited the sutra of Maha Prajña Paramita, and we respectfully-." Hmm. "So far we recited sutra Prajña Paramita, and its merit is-by its merit, we want to repay the mercy of great teacher Shakyamuni Buddha and Joyo-daishi.[10]

[Line 5. Shintan Shoso Bodai Daruma-daiocho,

Line 6. Nichi-iki Shoso Eihei Dogen-daiocho.

Line 7. Daiocho Monjushiri Bosatsu no tame ni shi tatematsuri]

Nichi-iki Shoso-Nichi-iki-ah-Shintan[11] Shoso. Shintan-Shintan means "China." Shoso means "the First Patriarch." The First Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma-daiocho. And First Patriarch in Japan, Eihei Dogen-daiocho. Nichi-iki means "Japan." Shoso means "the First Patriarch." Eihei Dogen is Dogen's name. The monastery he founded is named "Eihei-ji." So Dogen is called after the monastery he founded. Dogen is called "Eihei Dogen." Eihei Dogen-daiocho-no tame ni shi tatematsuri. [12]

And we here [Tassajara], we recite sutra in zendo. And [in] zendo, as you know, we have Mañjushri Bodhisattva,[13] you know. So we also recite Prajña Paramita-Prajña Paramita Sutra is for Mañjushri Bodhisattva too.

So we call [recite] four names: the great benevolent teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha; the First Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma-daiocho; the First Patriarch in Japan, Eihei Dogen-daiocho; and the great-"-daiocho" means "great sage"[14]-great sage Mañjushri Bodhisattva. And we want to respect or repay the benevolence of those teachers and bodhisattva. That is what eko means-eko which we-which doan[15] recite means. Although what we-we skip many deities which has-which is related to our history, I think it is necessary for you to know what kind of feeling we have when we recite sutra for the-those teachers.

Let me continue something which Dogen experienced in his voyage to

China. It was not so easy thing to go to China at that time. Three times- once of three times, you know, a ship-big ship could go to China, according to the historical events. So it cost a lot of money to go to China by a big ship, and it took more than one month to go to-from Japan to-to China. So it is not at all easy thing.

After arriving [in] China, Dogen spent three months in the ship. During [that] time, he was very much discouraged in one way-to see bad practice of Chinese famous Zen masters [laughs]. I think this is always true [laughs]. If you go to Japan to study Buddhism, you will be also discouraged to see many famous Zen-famous Zen masters. According-he described-Dogen-zenji described in Shobogenzo what kind of experience he had at that time, good and bad.[16]

He also. you know- He respected- After he received transmission because of Nyojo-zenji,[17] he respected Chinese priests very much. But before he met with Nyojo-zenji, he was pretty critical with Chinese monks. For an instance, he said Chinese monks did not know even precepts, you know, which is described in Kegon Sutra or many other precepts-book of precepts-sutra of precepts. They didn't know [them] at all.

They-they had long fingernails [laughing] and long hair. Very interesting. And dirty clothing, and he did not-they did not know even to-how to rinse their mouth. That is why he wrote Shobo-[partial word]- in one of the fascicle of Shobogenzo, how to clean up our face and body after-when you go to rest room or when you get up.[18] And he says, you know, their breathing had strong smell [laughing] from too- When he talk with some famous teachers [laughter], he-he could hardly stay with him because his-their, you know, breath exhale is too bad-smells too bad [laughs, laughter]. And, you know, even in great China, there is not much good teachers, and he was very much discouraged. And they did not know even what is precepts.

But on the other hand, you know, the monk who visited his ship to buy mushroom, you know. At that time, maybe, Japan-ships from Japan loaded a lot of mushroom-Japanese mushroom. So head-head cook of Aikuo-zan Monastery, you know, visited ship from Japan, and he wanted to buy some mushroom. So Dogen-zenji, you know, seeing a monk who is buying mushroom and addressed him: "Where are you from?"

And he said, "I am a head cook of Aikuo-zan Monastery. Next day-next day is July 5th,[19] and we will have, you know, noodle-we must serve noodle for monks. So for-for noodle [soup] we want mushroom for seasoning." You know, if you put mushroom in noodle soup it taste very well, as you know. So for special occasion of July 5th, he [the tenzo] came to buy some mushroom to Dogen's ship. After-but he said, "I cannot talk with you so long because I am very busy. Tomorrow I must-by tomorrow-by this evening, I must go back to the temple because tomorrow we have to-I have to cook for monks."

But he was over sixty, so Dogen-zenji wondered, you know, in such a great monastery, there must be someone, you know, some young priest who may cook for monks, you know. And so he asked him to stay for one night to tell him something about Chinese monasteries. But he [the tenzo] said, "I am busy. I must go home-go-go back to the temple."

And Dogen asked again, "You are over sixty, you know. You don't have to work so hard. You must rest, and you must read some scriptures, or you must study some koan, or you must study-you must spend your time in sitting meditation or reading sutra," he said. "That is more appropriate practice for you," Dogen said.

That-but that monk said, "You don't know what is practice [laughs]. You, a venerable priest from Japan, do not know what is practice. And you don't even know what is character to read [laughs]. You don't know any characters! You don't know any Chinese character, even. You cannot read anything. Even though you read it, that's-that will not help you," he said. So he [Dogen] was very, you know, startled.

And Dogen asked again, "Then what is characters, you know? If I don't know any characters-I think I know many characters." In his mind, you know, he read whole scriptures three times, you know, at that time. It is difficult for usual person to read all the scriptures once, you know, even in his whole life. But at age of twenty-four, he went over three times all the scriptures.

But he [the tenzo] said, you know, "You don't know any character-Chinese characters even," [laughs] that monk said to him. And he [Dogen] was very ashamed of himself, and he couldn't say anything.

And that monk said, "If you want to know what is character, you should come to my monastery. Then I will show you what is actual character," that monk said to Dogen. And later Dogen says, "It is because of that monk that I could understand a little bit about Buddhism-Zen Buddhism." [20] So not all the-in China, even though almost all the monks were not so good, but there were several good ones, including this monk, head cook of Aikuo-zan.

The first sutra is for Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha means, you know, as you know, sometime he may be a historical buddha, and sometime he may be a dharma-dharma body, and sometime he may be you yourself, which is, you know, which has same buddha-nature as Buddha. So when we say "Shakyamuni Buddha," we mean Shakyamuni Buddha who is one with us, you know, who is one with Shakyamuni Buddha and with one with us. Shakyamuni Buddha is nothing but each one of ourselves. That is Shakyamuni Buddha in its true sense. The first sutra is Prajñā Paramita-is recited to the Shakyamuni Buddha which can be each one of ourselves-which can be a dharma body, or which can be a historical buddha who was born in two thousand and five hundred

some years ago. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Do you have some question? Hai.

Questions and Answers

Student A: Why is Mañjushri such a special bodhisattva for the zendo?

Suzuki-roshi: Bodhi- [partial word]-Mañjushri is, you know, symbol-symbolic buddha of wisdom. Wisdom means, you know-not wisdom in its true-usual sense. Wisdom means something more than that, which [is] not accumulation of knowledge or wisdom to know something. Wisdom means fundamental truth-so-called-it ri, you know, ri? Ri/ji.[21] So when we practice zazen, you know, what we will have is Mañjushri's wisdom, or Mañjushri's true nature. That is why we recite sutra-we have Mañjushri in zendo. So we resume the true nature of Mañjushri. We are supposed to resume the true nature of Mañjushri. That is why we have Mañjushri in our zendo. Hai.

Student B: Why did Dogen-zenji stay on the ship?

Suzuki-roshi: Stay on the ship? He wanted to-he [was acting] carefully, you know. He wanted to know where he should go, you know-where he should be. Once in a while, of course, he visited, you know, many temples around there, but he came back to the ship. And he was preparing to, you know-he-he was writing many letters to the many temples, you know. He did not, you know, he did not just, without any preparation, he did not call [on] any temples. Maybe, yeah, that is the reason. Hai.

Student C [David Chadwick]: In the last-the last line of the sutra, Kami jion ni mukuin koto o?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

David: The-that word mukuin-

Suzuki-roshi: Mukuin?

David: -it sort of-it means "pay back" or "compensation"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: -or something. Could you explain exactly what that means? It seems to be a very important part of that-the eko.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Kami-kami is, you know, kami jion-kami means "up." So, you know, "towards Buddha," you know. Kami. "To the Buddha." Kami.



Jion means "Buddha's mercy." Buddha's mercy means Buddha who left teaching for us, Buddha who transmitted his spirit to us, and Buddha who encouraged-who is encouraging our practice, who is protecting our practice always, you know. So we say Ho nu no jiwan.[22] Ho nu no jiwan. Ho is "dharma milk," you know [laughs], the benevolence of dharma milk-giving dharma milk to-

David: Now-now-

Suzuki-roshi: -pay back his- [interrupted by David].

David: -who gives-who gives who?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? We.

Student C: The ones who are chanting-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: -are-are-are-

Suzuki-roshi: By merit of chanting this sutra, or by practice of chanting-

David: -are-

Suzuki-roshi: -what we want to do is to pay back [laughs] Buddha's, you know, mercy of milk-dharma milk.

David: -are-are we-are we paying it back by-by practicing-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

David: -too [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: To pay back-the way to pay back to the [his] mercy is-to practice hard is only way to pay back his mercy. There is no other way. So practicing-chanting-sutra chanting sincerely, we pay back-in this way, we pay back to the mercy of Buddha. That is what it means. Hai.

Student D: I don't understand how there can be more than one buddha-how there can be-

Suzuki-roshi: More than-

Student D: Bodhidharma was one personality, and-and Dogen was another personality?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student D: How can this be?

Suzuki-roshi: It can be more, but we picked up [out], you know, just three. It can be numerous-innumerable, but we pick up Shakyamuni Buddha from India, from China Bodhidharma, from Japan Dogen-zenji. We should call Keizan-zenji's name, but when, you know, because we pick only one [laughing] from China, so in America we picked up only one from Japan, who is the First Patriarch in Japan. Do you understand?

Student D: Um, no-

Suzuki-roshi: It is-it is a kind of representative.

Student D: Do they-do these men differ-did they differ in personality?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student D: And how can that be if they are all buddhas?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] A good question. It must be so, you know. We should not be all, you know, we should not be like all-all of us shouldn't-should not be like Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born in India more than two thousand years ago. We cannot be the same. We must-we-the-the-we say, you know, we are like a candle: big and small candle, red and white candle, you know. And there is big and small candle, but fire is the same, you know. Or the stream is same-shallow and deep, and flowing fast. And some in-in mountain-in the mountain-in the mountain it will flow fast, in the field it will go slower and maybe deeper, but it is same water.

Unless you don't understand this point, you don't understand Buddhism. Spirit is the same, but how, you know, someone express it-the spirit is different. It cannot be same. Okay? So should be different, but there is no contradiction. Hai.

Student E: After the eko when we all say [chant] the Ji ho san shi-[23]

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student E: -eko?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student E: Could you say something about what it means [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: That is-maybe I have to explain tomorrow. Then. Some other questions? Hai. Hmm? Oh. Hai.

Student F: Roshi, daiosho-"great sage"-means something so big and so far away and so long ago, and this practice that we have here is so small and so new, and our flame-flame-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: -of our candle is so small that it's very hard sometimes to believe that when you say "Bodhidharma-daiosho" or Dogen's name in the eko, that they really will come here, that we can feel close to these men.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: I know it must be so, but it's very hard to feel.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I, you know, I feel for you, you know. It is absolutely necessary, you know, to be related to this kind of, you know, spiritual history, you know. We must make a great effort to get contact with this kind of spiritual, you know, history or effort of great sages. You say you cannot understand. "There is no wonder for us. That I cannot understand," you may say. But it-it means that you gave up, you know [laughs], already to understand something which has been going, you know, in our human history.

Student G: If we chant sincerely, will that help us?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Yeah. It-it-it will, you know, some day. Why I say "some day" is, you know, you will see here in Tassajara many teachers-many good teachers. Then you will-through their character they will understand-you will understand something, not literally, but you will feel something. So, you know, we have to-we have-we come to the point where we should make one step forward in our-in our practice in Zen Center. So far, you know, we somehow get together and started Zen Center practice so that, you know, to establish American Buddhism, you know. So far we have [been] striving for establishing something. But when you say "American Buddhism" or "establish something," you know, it is something like for your convenience. [You may think] "because this is America, America must have American-our own way of Buddhism."

That is very true [laughs]-very true-but one point is missing. As-what is your name? [speaking to Student D; unclear reply]-as someone said, you know, we cannot understand why we pick up-we, you know, pick up [out] Bodhidharma or Dogen or Buddha. They are three different characters.

Pretty soon you will have [laughs], you know, one more character, you know, in-from America. They are-should be different. It- They are different, but they should be connected with some spiritual relationship. That- Without this kind of effort, you cannot establish American Buddhism in its true sense.

American way-if you don't like to say "Buddhism"-American way should

be established. And when it is established, it is-the American way should be closely related to some other country's way too. Your way should not be separated from other country's way. You know, that is-if you try to establish something special, something different from other country's way, that is, you know, selfish practice. It is not bodhisattva way.

So if you, you know, think about this, you have to understand, you know, Japanese Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and Indian Buddhism too as a Buddhist. So it is not so easy thing. So we should be concentrated on this point from now on. Hai.

Student H: Roshi, the phrase "dharma transmission"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student H: -what exactly does that mean? What is the dharma transmission?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] If you are ready to listen to me, I will explain it to you. I have it and you haven't [laughing, laughter]. So when I give you, I will explain what it is. But if I-even though I explain it, if you don't understand, you know, it doesn't make any sense. So more closer relationship between us is important and necessary-real, you know, human relationship [laughs]. Hai.

David Chadwick: If your name were chanted in eko, would it be "Zenshin Shunryu-daiosho," like Eihei-Eihei-ji Dogen-Eihei Dogen?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh [laughs, laughter].

David: So would-would we use this-this place's name [Zenshin] or your personal name?

Suzuki-roshi: If my-my name isn't-I don't know. I have-my teacher gave me my name already. [24] Not "Zenshin Shunryu." [Laughs, laughter.]

David: You mean-well I thought-I thought that he was called Eihei Dogen-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: -in there because he was-he founded Eihei-ji Temple, not because Eihei was his name.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: Was Eihei his name?

Suzuki-roshi: Eihei, no. Not his name-his temple's name. He called his

temple Eihei-ji.

David: Oh-okay. What-what should-how should you be called?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. That up to you [laughing, laughter continuing].  
Whatever you call me, it's okay with me. Anyway, I don't listen to you.

David: You wouldn't be able to-you wouldn't be able to listen if we were chanting your name in the eko!

[Brief and mostly unclear exchange off-mike. Mike volume drops severely. Last thing S.R. says is "okay."]

Student G [Alan Marlow]: The name that one-I've been trying to figure out-the name that one's teacher gives one-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Alan: -when is that name used, as opposed to the-our-our name-Alan Marlow, or Shunryo [sic] Suzuki. How is-how is that name used and when is it used-the name that you're given by your teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: After you receive ordination, you know, strictly speaking, you know, we should use his n- [partial word: name]-his Buddhist name like Sojun,[25] you know. We'll do it, you know. "He is Sojun!"  
[Laughs.] Uh-huh.

Mel [?]: Hai.

Suzuki-roshi: Hai. [Laughs, laughter.] Ohh-

Alan: No, but Roshi you don't use that-the name that your teacher gave you, do you?

Suzuki-roshi: My-my name is Shunryu.

Alan: Shunryo [sic].

Suzuki-roshi: Shunryu. This is the name.

Student I: What does it mean?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student I: What does it mean-"Shunryu"?

Suzuki-roshi: Not much. [Laughs, loud laughter.] You make me blushful [blush/bashful].

Student J: Roshi, would you tell me?

Suzuki-roshi: You-you must be a great teacher, you know. Not me. You must use your name, but I'm okay. I am here, anyway, drinking a lot of water. [Laughs, laughter.] My ma- [partial word: master?] teacher died when I was 32 years old.[26] So I was not so lucky, you know, in this point.

So I want to live as much as I can [laughs], you know. I was very weak. I don't think I-I didn't think I will live more than 50-60. But 66 is, so six is extra. Now I become greedy [laughs, laughter], because of you. Ten years more. Give me ten years, all right? I-I am asking Buddha, you know, give me ten years more. Then you will be, you know, 40-50. You will be a good teacher if you try hard.

If you follow Buddhist way, you will [be] sure to be a good person. That is quite-I am so sure about that. Each student here, you know, improved a lot. That is very true. So if you live-if you practice our way maybe five more years, you will be a quite different person.

Our way is difficult. Why it is difficult is it is because it is too simple. [Laughs, laughter.] It's like nothing happening at Tassajara [laughing]. All day long, day after day, we are carrying stones and building cabins, and scrubbing floors, eating same food. You know, it looks like nothing happening here. [Laughs, laughter.] But something great is happening here. I am quite sure about that.

Then you will know what is transmission, what is Bodhidharma, or Dogen, or Buddha. You yourself are Buddha. Then you will recite sutra with full joy, you know, to pay back their mercy.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Bill Redican 11/20/99.

[1] Also ekomon: a dedication chanted by participants in a Buddhist ceremony in which any merit thought to arise from participating in the ceremony is transferred to or offered for all sentient beings to help them in their path toward enlightenment.

[2] Keizan Jokin (1268-1325): after Dogen, the most important Zen master in the Soto school. He reestablished an ancient Hosso monastery as Soji-ji in 1321.

[3] Myozen Ryonen (1184-1225): dharma successor of Eisai-zenji and,

after Eisai, the second master of Dogen-zenji. This story is recounted in Dogen's *Tenzo Kyokun* ("Instructions for the Tenzo"), in Eihei Shingi. The events took place in June or July of 1223.

[4] Eisai-zenji (1141-1215): Japanese master of the Oryo lineage of Rinzaï Zen.

[5] Ching-te Monastery on Tien-tung Mountain.

[6] That is, the temple was located on Ayüwan(g)-shan (Jap. Aikuo) Mountain in eastern China (see T. Leighton and S. Okumura, *Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1996, p. 54).

[7] Aogu (Jap.): look up; look up to; ask for (advice); depend on.

[8] Jo (Jap.): best; upper.

[9] Ge (Jap.): lower in quality or ranking; lower position.

[10] Joyo-daishi: [Japanese name for ?]

[11] Shintan: Ancient Indian name for China.

[12] Suzuki-roshi appears to have jumped from the end of Line 6 to the middle of Line 7 ("no tame ...").

[13] Mañjushri Bodhisattva : the bodhisattva of wisdom; lit., "He Who Is Noble and Gentle." Throughout the lecture, Suzuki-roshi uses the Japanese version of the name (Manjushiri). For the sake of simplicity, the Sanskrit is used here in all cases except for the Japanese text of the *ekos*.

[14] -daiosho/-daishi (Jap.): From dai, "great, big, or serious," + osho or o + shi, "priest": lit., "great honored teacher." An honorific title for Zen masters conferred after death. Used in formal contexts such as ceremonies or chants.

[15] Doan (Jap.): generally, anyone who plays an instrument such as a bell or drum in a Zen temple; specifically, the person who keeps time in the zendo and sounds the bells in a Soto Zen monastery.

[16] Shobogenzo fascicle(s): [State names of fascicles?] .

[17] Tendo Nyojo: Tien-tung Ju-Ching (1163-1228).

[18] He may have been referring to the Shobogenzo fascicle Senjo ("Rules for the Lavatory") or Senmen ("Washing the Face").

[19] July 5th: The fifth day of the fifth month is traditionally celebrated

in Chinese and Japanese monasteries (Leighton and Okumura, op. cit., p. 54).

[20] In Tenzo Kyokun ("Instructions for the Tenzo").

[21] See, e.g., SR-70-06-01 and SR-70-06-03. Ri refers to the noumenal: the true source of teaching that is beyond words. Ji refers to the phenomenal: aspects of existence that can be apprehended with the senses or that can be thought about as objects.

[22] [Phonetic only.] Translation: .

[23] Ji ho san shi i shi fu: "All buddhas ten directions three times."

[24] Suzuki-roshi was given the Buddhist name "Shunryu" at birth by his father Butsumon Sogaku, a Soto Zen priest. The two Japanese characters for Shunryu translate as "Excellent Emerging." He was later given the Buddhist name Shogaku, "Auspicious Peak," by his master Gyokujun So-on on May 18, 1917. [David Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber*, New York: Broadway, 1999, pp. 3, 20.]

[25] Probably referring to Sojun Mel Weitsman.

[26] Gyokujun So-on Suzuki (c. 1877-1934).

## **4 - Eko Lecture #2**

Friday, July 10, 1970

Eko Lecture #2: The Second Morning Eko  
Tassajara

[This is the second in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The Second Morning Eko:

Choka ugu fugin

Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa,

Line 3. jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kensho,

Line 4. juroku dai arakan, issai no ugu burui kenzoku ni eko su.



Line 5. Koinego tokoro wa,

Line 6. sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Line 7. Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho  
sen koto o.

Dedication for the Morning Service Arhat's Sutra[1]

Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and respond.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Maha Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra,  
we dedicate the collected merit to

Line 3. the all-pervading, ever-present Triple Treasure,  
the innumerable wise men in the ocean of enlightenment,

Line 4. the sixteen great arhats and all other arhats.

Line 5. May it be that

Line 6. with the Three Insights and the Six Universal Powers,  
the true teaching be restored in the age of decline.

With the Five Powers and Eight Ways of Liberation,  
may all sentient beings be led to nirvana.

Line 7. May the two wheels of this temple forever turn  
and this country always avert the Three Calamities.]

[The first chanting is chanted][2] in Buddha hall. In China and also in  
Japan, we have seven important buildings. One is sammon.[3] Sammon  
is main gate.

And the first building you see in front of sammon is Buddha hall  
[butsuden]. When-here we have the first chanting. Usually those-this  
Buddha hall is the building where we celebrate for our nation or for our  
president or emperor-something which is related to the country. That is  
the most official-the building where the most official ceremonies are  
held.

And behind the butsuden-Buddha hall-we have hatto, where we give lecture or where we observe memorial service-services for members-where we recite sutras. This is so-called-it hatto. Hatto means "hall of-dharma hall," the place where we spread dharma.

And [on] the left-hand side of the butsuden there is kitchen, kuin or kuri.[4] Kuin or kuri. That is the kitchen. And usually guest room is-rooms are attached to the [1 word unclear]-attached to the kitchen building. And [on] the other side of the kitchen-excuse me, the opposite side of the kitchen-left-hand side of the Buddha hall,[5] we have sodo or zendo.

So that makes 1-2-3-4 [counting]. And we have 5-that makes 5: sammon (the main gate), and Buddha hall, hatto, and kitchen, and sodo-zendo or sodo. And we count two more. The one is restroom. We call it tosu. Usually tosu is built right-hand side of the-as you enter, right-hand side of the main gate we have tosu.[6] Tosu is rest room. And we have also bath room-bath room or bathing room, you know [yokushitsu]. That is, you know-you have bath room and restroom is same, but in zendo we have-in monastery we have two separate building. And so we have seven important buildings.[7]

And in zendo and bath room and toilet, we do not talk, you know. That is rule. In zendo we don't talk [laughs]. In bath room we shouldn't talk. And in rest- [partial word] in restroom or toilet we shouldn't talk. That is so "three silent practice-three silent practice place," we call it.

And the first, most formally, the first chanting is chanted in butsuden, Buddha hall. And next chant is usually chanted in hatto. [At] Eihei-ji, right now we chant all those sutra in hatto. But most fo- [partial word]-if it is something very formal for the country, like chanting we have first-the first of every month, or fifteenth of every month, we chant sutra for the country. In that case, we chant it in Buddha hall. And noon service usually held in Buddha hall too.

And next-next service or chanting is for arhat.[8] This point, you know-you may wonder why Mahayana Buddhists chant for Hinayana, you know, arhats [laughs]. You may wonder, but we strictly observe chanting for arhats who is so-called-it, you know, Hinayana Buddhist. Hinayana or Mahayana is, you know, just, you know-when Mahayana Buddhists arise, they denounced, you know, Theravada Buddhist because of they-Theravada Buddhists or Hinayana Buddhists just, you know-their practice is just for themselves and not much for others. And Mahayana Buddhist-Buddhists' practice is for others too-for themselves and for others too.

But this is a kind of, you know, discrimination which we should-as a Buddhist, which we shouldn't [practice]. So in Soto School-or I think in Rinzaï too-we recite a sutra for arhats, who were the direct disciples of Buddha. And there are many arhats. We count at least sixteen arhats.

Many of tho- [partial word]-we find-find many Buddha's disciples which belong to-which is included ten famous buddhas, outstanding buddhas, and disciple.

There are various kinds of Buddha's disciple, you know: the disciple who was very forgetful, maybe like me [laughs]. He couldn't-he couldn't remember a single words even. So Buddha didn't know what to do with him. So he taught him to sweep garden only, and he swept the garden always. And at that time he was saying-sweeping garden and-and sweep your mind. And he was sweeping the garden, reciting that short words. But he practiced his way so sincere that-so at last he attained arhatship by sweeping garden. He is very famous, you know. Buddhists, you know, put emphasis in actual, you know, attainment, not wisdom-not wisdom acquired by intellectual study, but actual experience of renunciation to-which will go beyond our intellectual understanding of the teaching.

Those arhats-the arhats, you know-their practice, of course, you know-arhats practice for arhats-or practice of Theravadin Buddhism-or we call it sometime Hinayana practice-is, as you know, practice of four stage of meditation.[9] Most teachers who come [from] southern countries or from Tibet talks about four stage of practice which we will attain by our meditation. For-for us Zen student, it is important to know what is the four stages of zazen.

The first stage is the practice, you know, with various-with many desires or ignorance. The cause of ignorance is-cause of-we count desires maybe four or five. The drowsiness, you know. And ignorance-so-called-it mumyo-ignorance. Ignorance of no under- [partial word]-ignorance-ignorance means, you know, has very deep sense.[10] Because of ignorance we came [laughs]-we appeared in this world. It is more than, you know, ignorance in its intellectual sense. And greed. Those are three important, you know, and anger. The fi- [partial word]-in the first stage we shouldn't have, you know, drowsiness [laughs]. If you-when you are sleepy, even though you are sitting, you are not actually sitting. So drowsiness is the enemy of the practice.

And anger is also the enemy of the practice. If you are angry, you know, you cannot sit, you know. When you sit, you are, you know-when you start to sit, you are not angry anymore. But as long as you are sitting, you have no anger. You will have some of desires, but controlling somehow the desires, except drowsiness or anger, we can sit pretty well. And when we-when you sit, your mind become clear, and you can think, you know, in the first stage.

So in the first stage, you will have clear mind-clear thinking mind, and you will have control of, you know, some control of various desires, and you have no anger. You have no drowsiness. That is the first stage.

[In] the second stage, you have-you don't think. That is the second

stage. But you have, you know, so- [partial word]-you have emotional, you know, trouble or desires, but you don't think.

In the third stage, you don't have emotional, you know, problem. Emotionally you are calm in the third stage. And you have joy of calmness of, you know, or calming-joy of no problem of emotional problem-problems. So there you have emotionally-joy of being emotionally very calm.

In the last stage, which is the fourth stage, you [do not?] have even joy of calming down or conquering emotional difficulties. You have no joy of anything. That is the fourth stage. And there, you know, you will attain arhatship. There you have nothing to attain or nothing to study at the fourth stage, which is the highest stage. But later, you know, they-they put one more stage over it. But actual practice is the fourth stage is in a form world. And over the form world we have no-no-form [?] world. And no-no-form world is-consist of the meditation in which we experience nothingness of outward object.

And next one is, you know, the nothingness within ourselves, you know. Even though you experience emptiness of outward object, you have some idea of outward object, you know, noth- [partial word]-emptiness of outward objects, so your mind is directed to outwards.

But in next stage your mind will be directed inward, like a jewel, you know, shine [by?] itself. And like jewel has nothing, you know, in themselves. That is the second stage.

And [in] the third stage, we have no idea of anything which is inside or outside. That is the third stage. And [in] the fourth stage is-we don't have any idea of somethingness or nothingness. Or we have no idea of nothingness even. That is the last stage.

So we count eight, you know, dhyana: [11] first to fourth stage, and adding to it four stages. The last stage is the characteristic, you know-you can see the characteristic of Buddhism.

When you, you know, in usual, you know, Indian meditation-according to usual meditation-excluding Buddhist meditation-those who meditate, you know, [in the] first stage will, you know, accordingly, you will be [re?]born in the first deva or heaven. And when you practice second dhyana, you will be [re?]born-you will come-appear in the second heaven. In this way we have, you know, respectively, four heavens.

But, you know, if-if you-someone who appeared in heaven, according to Buddhism, should disappear from heaven too, you know [laughs]. Something which appears should disappear, you know. There is nothing which does not disappear. So even, you know, [if] you go to heaven, you know, you appear in the heaven, you should disappear from the heaven. That is, you know, so-called-it "karma."

You have karma, you know. You create karma to go to, you know, heaven, and as long as you have karma to go to heaven, that karma will continue, and you will eventually, you know [laughs], went down to the bottom of the first or "desire world." So unless you, you know-as long as you are depend on karma, your practice is depend on karma activity or karmic practice. That practice is not Buddhist practice, because it is-the practice is involved in karmic activity.

So Buddhist practice should go beyond karmic practice. That is why we practice shikantaza, which is go beyond the way to go which is-which do not expect any result from our practice. Just to sit, just to resume our true nature is our practice, without, you know, trying to attain something, without being involved in karmic activity. That is Buddhist practice, you know. Various teachers, so far, from southern countries and Tibet, emphasize this point.

Our practice should start from nothing and end in to nothing [laughs]. That is [laughs] our practice. So that is, you know, the stage arhat, you know, will attain finally. That is arhat. They-their practice is very-very much similar to the non-Buddhistic practice, but actually there is clear distinction from non-Buddhistic practice.

[Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae.]

In-in the sutra-in the eko we say, Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae. Aogi koi negawakuwa. Aogi-aogi is "to-to look upward." Aogi koi negawakuwa. Koi negawakuwa.is "we-what we want-I want or I ask." "Looking upward, what we ask is" shokan. Shokan is "Buddha's witness," you know, or "Buddha's protection." Fushite kanno o taretamae. Fushite means "to-to kneel down." Fushite. Fushite kanno o taretamae-"respond." When we have-when we kneel down with selfish [selfless?] attitude, with pure mind, then buddha-nature hereby will appear. So kanno means "respond."

Objectively speaking, you know-subjectively speaking, our buddha-nature arise from our innate nature, but objectively speaking, buddha-nature will come to us when we kneel down with pure mind. The buddha-nature will come to us. So fushite-"kneeling down, we ask respond-response of buddha-nature." It means that, you know, "we, looking upward, seeing respectively many arhats, we ask for their protection, and, looking-kneeling down, we ask arhats to join our practice." That is what it means.

[Line 2. Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa]

Jorai, you know, "so far-why we recite it-this sutra." Jorai. Jo is "up." Rai is "come." So "until now we recited Prajña Paramita Sutra." And why

we recite it, the Prajña Paramita Sutra, was-the merit-atsumuru tokoro no kudoko wa. Atsumuru is "to-we concentrate" or "gather up," you know, the merit of reciting sutra.

[Line 3. jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kensho]

We recite the sutra for-jippo joju no sambo. Jippo joju no sambo kakai muryo no kenjo[12], we say. I-I didn't put in-eyes-my eyes [laughs]. [Probably referring to eyeglasses.] Jippo joju no sambo. Jippo is ten-okay-it's-it is okay-jippo joju is-jippo means "ten directions." Joju means "always present." Joju. Ju is "dwell" or "live" or "is." "Which exist in ten direction." [13] Jo is "always." Ju is "dwell" or "live." So the sambo is "three treasures." So jippo-"three treasures which is-which present-which is present in ten directions always."

And kakai muryo no kenjo. Kakai is-ka is "seed"-oh no, "fruits," and kai is "ocean." Muryo is "limitless." Mu is "no." Ryo is "limit" or "measure." "Beyond measurement." So innumerable or incalculable or limitless.

Kensho means like sages and arhats. So ka-why we say "fruit" words is if you practice our way, that will be a-a seed of, you know, attainment, or seed of the merit. So practice-if practice is seed, the-what you will have by it is the result or fruit. But here, you know, we shouldn't understand fruit is next and seed is first. Fruit and seed is result in the same time in our practice. We should understand in that way, but rhetorically [?] we should say kakai muryo no kensho: "All the sages and arhats, which are in the limitless sea of the attainment, especially sixteen arhats-sixteen arhats."

[Line 4. juroku dai arakan, issai no ogu burui kenzoku ni eko su.]

Juroku. Juroku is "sixteen." [14] Dai arakan: "the great arhats." And issai-"all." Issai is "all." Ogu-ogu is another name of arhats, "who is worthy for offering," you know. [15] O means "respond," and gu is "offering": "who is worthy for receive offering." That is arhat. "All the arhats."

Burui kenzoku. "And the arhats who belongs to each sixteen arhats," you know. There are sixteen arhats, and many arhats, you know-under each of sixteen arhats there were many arhats. That is kenzoku. Kenzoku is "the family," you know. Sixteen arhats were the head of [each of] the family of arhats. So [laughs]-many arhats. So some-in some temple, we say juroku dai arakan-gohyaku[16][corrects juroku to gohyaku] dai arakan. Sometime we say-we count five hundred [arhats].

Some people say why we say five hundred arhats is in the first assembly after Buddha, seventy-about one hundred years after Buddha passed away, they had big meeting to, you know, to-we say ketsuju. [17] Ketsuju means to-to have meeting and discuss about the teaching Buddha left and recited-someone recited the teaching, what Buddha told

them, and the rest of the people, you know, corrected if there is some correction. And it is okay they-all of them said that was what Buddha said. They agreed. In this way, scripture was transmitted to us. So there were supposed to be five hundred disciples, so we say "five h-" [partial word]-gohyaku dai arakan, "five hundred arhats." But anyway, we count sixteen arhats or more.

Issai no ugu. Issai no, or "all [of]." [18] Ugu-ugu is another name of arhats. Arhats has many names. Arhats has, you know, because-according to the attainment, they have so many names, like "no-return sage." [19] "No-return sage" is after, you know, extinguishing all his karma. They do not come back to, you know, to this world anymore [laughs] because he has no karma to come back. That is a kind of stage he will attain. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over. Rest of original tape is extremely slow.]

... maybe tomorrow.

They have five powers. One of the five power is to-power to be sure that he will not come back, you know, in desire world again. That is one of the power of arhats or confidence of arhats. So we say arhats is fugen-ka: [20] "no-return stage" or "no-return sage." Or "slaying-enemy sage." [21] "Enemy" means, you know, enemy of mortality. So he has no enemy like [such as] mortality-like, you know, physical and mental desires. [22]

So sometime we call him-we translate, you know-Chinese people translated arhats in many ways: fugen-no sage or setsuzoku-no sage-setsuzoku is "slaying enemy sage." [23] Ugu is the one of the name of, or one of the translation of "arhats." Issai no ugu burui kenzoku. Kenzoku is "family." Burui is something like "tribe," you know. Bu is "group." [The suffix] -zoku is also "group." [24] They-there were various group of arhats.

[Line 5. Koinego tokoro wa,

Line 6. sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Line 7. Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho  
sen koto o.]

Koinego tokoro wa,

sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho  
sen koto o.

Maybe better to explain this part-to leave it for next-tomorrow's lecture.

If we, you know, if you call-if you-if you say them [then?], you may think there [them?] is something quite different from Hinayana practice, but it is not actually so, especially for Soto school. Hinayana practice is- is very important. We do not discriminate [against] Hinayana practice at all. We respect arhats, and we respect their effort. And we ask arhats to join our practice, or we, you know, we-our desire, our wish is to practice hard as arhats practice. That is why we recite sutra for arhats every morning.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Questions and Answers

Student A: I read in Zen Notes[25] Sokei-an said that the arhat in the final stage liberates himself by his intellect-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student A: -liberates himself by his intellect.

Suzuki-roshi: Intellect? Intellect.

Student : Does that mean by thinking?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Thinking. That is not last stage, you know. It is the second-third stage they have no intellectual thinking. But they have joy of, you know, conquering our desires. That is the third stage. And last stage, we have no desire-no joy of anything but [1 word]. That is the last step. Maybe you-

Student A: Well, you said it was the last stage. And it made me think that when you use the word "intellect," it didn't mean that-

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so.

Student B: -it didn't mean that [6-8 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so. The difference is, you know, we have clear thinking. And they has [?] went without desires. But they are with-what we don't have is [1 word] and anger. We don't have. [Laughs.] Because you don't have it [laughs], you will not seek it. So, you know-interesting-more interesting point is, you know, everyone can, you know, go further. So final step is similar to arhats-last stage for arhats. [Tape ends, apparently before the question/answer session is finished.]



## Appendix A: The Second Morning Eko

"Suzuki Roshi's Revised Translation of Morning EKO II"

Line 1. May Buddha observe our practice and give us his response to our sincerity.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Maha Prajñā Paramita Hridaya Sutra, we dedicate the collected merit to:

Line 3. the Three Treasures in the Ten Directions, past, present, and future, the innumerable wise men and sages who are in the Sea of the Fruit of Practice, and

Line 4. the sixteen great arhats and their followers who attained the supreme attainment of arhatship.

Line 5. What we aspire to is that

Line 6. the Three Powers the Six Unrestricted Ways of the arhats may be always with us in our unceasing effort to renew Buddha's way, to save all sentient beings from the world of suffering and confusion,

Line 7. to keep the Two Wheels of the dharma turning forever, and to avert the Three Calamities forever.

[Note: This translation, with minor grammatical revisions by the present transcriber, was reprinted from David Chadwick's Eko Study Book, 1970, p. 82. According to David Chadwick (10/8/99), he may have reviewed the translation with Suzuki-roshi, but, if so, only briefly. It does not follow the text of the transcript as Suzuki-roshi translated this eko. (See, e.g., the end of SR-70-07-12.)]

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Bill Redican 11/18/99.

## Appendix B

Eihei-ji Monastery, Fukui Prefecture, Japan

From Daihonzan Eiheiji, Yoshida-gun

Fukui-ken, Japan 910-12, 1988

[1] Another English version, entitled "Suzuki Roshi's Revised Translation of Morning EKO II" is appended from Chadwick, 1970, p. 82. See Appendix A.

[2] The first words of the lecture are missing on tape. Phrase in brackets was based on Suzuki-roshi's own wording in Paragraph 7.

[3] Also sanmon.

[4] Also commonly daikuin, "main kitchen."

[5] If the kitchen is to the left of the Buddha hall, the sodo/zendo would be on the right (directions described while facing the Buddha hall from the main gate).

[6] At Eihei-ji, the yokushitsu (bathing hall) is to the right of the main gate, and the tosu (toilet) is to the left.

[7] Sammon, butsuden, hatto, sodo/zendo, (dai)kuin, yokushitsu, tosu.

[8] Suzuki-roshi pronounced it "arahat" throughout, which is one of several variations on the word: arhat (San.), arahat (Pali), arakan (Jap.), fusho (Jap.), ogo (Jap.), lohan (Chin.), rakan (Jap.), and setsuzoku (Jap. trans. of Chin.).

[9] Possibly referring to the four stages of the supramundane path (magga) taught in the Hinayana tradition: (1) stream-enterer; (2) once-returner; (3) never-returner; and (4) worthy one (arhat).

[10] mumyo: mu (Jap. "no"); myo (Jap. "to be clear"); ignorance of the true nature of existence (cf. SR-67-08-14).

[11] dhyana (Sanskrit) or jhana (Pali): meditation; absorption; an absorbed state of mind arising from concentration.

[12] Not kensho, as in version at start of lecture. Kenjo and kensho may be two different ways of pronouncing the same word in Japanese.

[13] Ten directions (jippo): the four standard points of the compass

(N, S, E, W), plus the mid-points (NE, SE, NW, SW), plus up and down.

[14] By tradition, there were sixteen original disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha.

[15] Arhat is also derived from the root "worthy": arh, "to deserve, to be worthy, to be fit." The Japanese arakan may derive from araka, "remote": an arahant is said to be remote (araka) from sinful things (see Majjhima Nikaya, I, 280).

[16] gohyaku (Jap.): five hundred.

[17] 500 monks, all arhats, are said to have assembled in 480 B.C.E. near Rajagriha, India, for the First Buddhist Council.

[18] The no indicates the possessive "of."

[19] Possibly referring to the third of the four stages of the supramundane path: the stage of never-returning. Someone who has reached this stage (an anagamin) is not born again in the world of desire or sensuality (kamadhatu).

[20] fugen-ka: Japanese term for Sanskrit anagamin. See also anagon (Jap.).

[21] See Note 22.

[22] A never-returner has overcome the first five fetters: (1) belief in one's individuality or ego (drishti), (2) skepticism or doubt, (3) clinging to rites and rules, (4) craving, desire, or sensual appetite, and (5) hatred or resentment. An arhat also overcomes the remaining five fetters.

[23] Also, "killing the thief" or "killing the enemy"-i.e., overcoming passions. Hence, someone who has overcome his or her passions.

[24] As in kenzoku.

[25] From 1954-1995, a monthly publication of The First Zen Institute of America (founded in New York City by Sokei-an Sasaki [1882-1945]).

### **5 - Eko Lecture #3**

Saturday, July 11, 1970

Eko Lecture #3: The Second Morning Eko, Part 2 of 3  
Tassajara

[This is the third in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The Second Morning Eko:

Choka ugu fugin

Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa,

Line 3. jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kensho,

Line 4. juroku dai arakan, issai no ugu burui kenzoku ni eko su.

Line 5. Koinego tokoro wa,

Line 6. sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige, gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Line 7. Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho sen koto o.

Dedication for the Morning Service Arhat's Sutra

Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and respond.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Maha Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra, we dedicate the collected merit to

Line 3. the all-pervading, ever-present Triple Treasure, the innumerable wise men in the ocean of enlightenment,

Line 4. the sixteen great arhats and all other arhats.

Line 5. May it be that

Line 6. with the Three Insights and the Six Universal Powers,

the true teaching be restored in the age of decline.

With the Five Powers and Eight Ways of Liberation,  
may all sentient beings be led to nirvana.

Line 7. May the two wheels of this temple forever turn  
and this country always avert the Three Calamities.]

Last night I-I explained-oh, excuse me-already about arhat. The second  
sutra-second sutra reciting of Prajña Paramita Sutra is for arhats. And in  
eko it says:

[Line 1.] Jo-Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o  
taretamae.

[Line 2.] Jorai, Hannya Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no  
kudoku wa,

Some people say, Jorai, Maka Hanyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, but  
some other people say, Jorai, Hanya Shingyo-don't-without saying  
Maka. That is more usual. Jorai, Hanya Shingyo o fujusu.

When we, you know, when kokyo start sutra, we say  
MakaHanyaharamita Shingyo, and when we-in-in sutra-in eko we say,  
Jorai, HanyaShingyo o fujusu. That is more usual. But you can say:

[Line 2.] Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru  
tokoro no kudoku wa,

[Line 3.] jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kenjo,[1]

[Line 4.] juroku dai arakan, ogu issai burui[2] kenzoku ni eko su.

We already-I explained already so far, and tonight I have to explain  
about arhats' so-called-it "supernatural power."

Sanmyo[3] rokutsu. Sanmyo rokutsu is-sanmyo is the-the power of-of  
clair- [partial word]-clairvoyant, you know, to see things through  
various obstacles. He-he can see his past life, even.

And next one is to hear everything from a distant. That is a[n] arhat's  
power. And the last one is the power to put an end to the kar- [partial  
word]-karmic life. So arhat-for arhats there is no karma because he  
extinguished all the desires, and he has no-he doesn't cause any karma.

That is the third one. Sanmyo. San is "three." Myo is "clear-clear powerful power." That is sanmyo.

The rokutsu.[4] Rokutsu is-in rokutsu is those three [sanmyo] is included. And when we say rokutsu, to-the power to read someone's mind is the-one of them. And to know, you know- The first one in rokutsu-the first one is the-to see everything-clairvoyant-ears to-capable of hearing everything. So-and to read someone's mind, to have insight into others. And he is able to observe or-observe the cause of the various suffering. And-shuku-shuku-shukumyotsu[5]-and he has power of to see people's past life, including his past life. And he has a kind of supernatural power to fly, you know, or to cross the river without boat-that kind of supernatural perfect freedom from everything. This is more, you know, subjective, you know, power. But you-you cannot say this kind of power is something objective power. [It is] more subjective, but for him, you know, that ki- [partial word: kind?]-he [an arhat] has that kind of power. Or he thinks, you know, he-he has some conviction, you know, like this.

And how he attained this kind of power is power of practice. And this kind of practice is called, in Chinese, shuzen. Shuzen means practice to attain some supernatural power is shu- [partial word]-a kind of practice which is called shuzen.

But the last one-the-to know, to extinguish all the cause of the karma, is the more Buddhistic practice and only Buddhist-the power only Buddhist have. The Buddhist, you know-purpose of Buddhist practice is to be free from karma is the-why Buddhist practice Buddhist way.

And the last one is the most important one. So there is some koan about this. Some, you know, arhat-some sage or hermit called [on] the Buddha and said, "We have five supernatural powers, but I heard that you have six, you know, supernatural power. What is the last one?" [Laughs.] And the gedo, or, you know, the hermit or sage asked Buddha. Buddha didn't say anything, but he said-the hermit said in this way: "What is that-what is that power which we do not have?"-he asked-sage asked-hermit asked.

Buddha said, without answering to his question-yeah-he said, "What will be that," you know, "what will be that last super-" [partial word]-not supernatural power, but-"that last power? What do you think it is?"- Buddha asked.

Buddha knows that even-even though he explain, he [the sage] will not understand what is the last one, the power to be completely free from karma. Usually, you know, people, even Buddhist, thinks after attaining arhatship they will have that sixth powers, including the power to be free from karma. But that last, you know, the power to be free from karma, is not any special [laughs] power. It is quite, you know, usual power we have.

But we do not care for that power so much, and we ignore that power always. Although we have it, we ignore it, and we think we have no such power. But actually we have. So the sage thought, "Buddha must have some special power," you know. Five powers he-he has is already supernatural, special power, but "Buddha has more special power," he thought. But Buddha, you know, didn't have any special power. But he knows what kind of power he himself has.

Usually, because we don't know what is that power, we are involved in karmic practice. If we know that, you know, we have-originally have that kind of power, we will not, you know, create any karma. Just because we are ignorant of it, we create karma for ourselves. So even to, you know, practice to attain some special power is, you know, actually to create karma for himself. So even though-because of those practice-to fly to the heaven or to-to go to the heavenly body without any trouble, but if he-if he goes to the-some heavenly body, he has to come back to this world. If you die, you know, in the heavenly body-if he appeared in-if he take a bath in the heavenly body, he should die in the heavenly body. That is-that kind of, you know, supernatural power do not possess any power to be free from karma. But last power, which Buddhist has, [is] the power to be free from karma, and for that purpose we practice our way.

Dogen-zenji, you know, in his Shobogenzo, [in] the fascicle of supernatural power, "Jinzu." [6] Jinzu-rokujinzu, [7] we say. "Six." Jin is, you know, usually translated, maybe, [as] "supernatural power," but jin is "true"-something which is true is jin. True power. Tsu is, you know, to-the power which is-maybe you can use the word "omnipresent," or "wherever you go, there is that power"-the power which everyone has. That is tsu in its true sense.

But, you know, when we say five power or six power, that power is power to work for some purpose. But true power which we have or fundamental original power which we have is the power to work everywhere under various circumstances. That is tsu. Rokujinzu: six true universal powers-you cannot say "universal"-or effective power or-mmm-it doesn't come, that word-very useful words-English words. You can-something you can-power you can apply to every circumstances.

There is also-in Shobogenzo ["Jinzu"], he [Dogen] referred to the story, you know, Zen story between Isan [8] and his disciple, Kyozan. [9] Isan [and] Kyozan are the founder of Igyo-shu. I-kyo-shu. "Isan's/Kyozan's school." Isan, you know, one day was taking nap [laughing] in his cabin, maybe. He was sleeping. And his disciple, you know, Kyozan, opened the door and see the-his teacher Kyozan [Isan] was sleeping. So his-Isan, you know, the teacher [thought] "Oh, someone-someone came. Oh my!" So he turned to the wall, you know. He was sleeping this way. But because someone came, he turned to the-faced to the wall-turned, you know, his body.

And-and his disciple Kyozan [said], "Oh, I am sorry," he said, "but don't be disturbed. I am your disciple. Don't worry. [Laughs.] Don't be so formal," you know, he said.

And he [Isan] was going out [got up to leave], you know, and the teacher said, "Hey, Kyozan." [Laughs, laughter.]

And Kyozan, you know, came back. And sha- [partial word] "May I help you?" he said.

"Yes. I had a good dream," you know, "so I want to tell you about my dream."

The disciple said-disciple, you know, sit down [and asked], "What was the dream?"-[laughs, laughter] his disciple said.

And Kyozan [Isan] said, "What do you think that was?"-the teacher said.

That was the story, you know. [Laughs, laughter.] And, you know, what is, then, supernatural power? What is a supernatural power? Supernatural power is already there, you know [laughing], and moreover, you know, his disciple, because he was asked, "What do you think my dream was?"-so he went out to the kitchen and brought a-a b-[partial word: basin?]-brought some water in the basin with towel. And put the water, you know-offered the water to Kyozan-Isan.

Isan [said or thought], "Oh, this is very good!" And he washed his face and wiped his face with the towel. And, you know, as soon as he wiped-finished wiping his face, Kyogen,[10] another disciple, came in. And, you know, Isan again [said]: "We are talking about good-my good dream. What do you think it was?"[laughs]-Isan asked Kyozan [Kyogen].[11] Kyozan [Kyogen], you know, went to the kitchen again and brought a cup of tea [laughs].

"Please have a cup of tea because you washed your face already. How about cup of tea?" That was, you know, Isan-Kyozan's [Kyogen's?] supernatural power [laughs]. That was the koan [laughs].

This kind of, you know, power could be extended everywhere, you know. There is no end, you know, [to] this kind of good relationship between teacher and disciple. There is no end in the relationship. Even though he is teacher, he has no idea of being their teacher. Even though they are disciple, they-they feel as if his [their] teacher is their friend. But they know exactly, you know, what [laughs] their teacher need and what they-what his-what he means. That is-Dogen-zenji says, that is real, you know, power who-which really well-trained teachers and disciple-disciples have.

This kind of power, you know, or this kind of-way of practice, for us, it



is, you know, we ignore this kind of practice. You may, you know, rigidly practice zazen [laughs], but you will ignore this kind of practice. Sometime your rigid idea of practice will-be hindrance of the real practice, which was going [on] between Isan and Kyozan. Dogen-zenji-Dogen admired their practice very much. "That is real practice," he said.

When you continue this kind of practice without any idea of teacher or disciple or practice, even, then there is no way to create karma. Even though you see things, you know, things does not create any problem for you because you don't feel you saw something, you know. Even though you see it, you don't even remember what you have seen. If it is necessary it will be in your mind, but when it is not necessary that object-that object you saw will vanish. So no karma, or no trace of practice, or no trace of activity remain. That is-that kind of practice looks like very easy and common [laughs], but actually this kind of practice will ap- [partial word: appear?]-will go [on] between, you know, good teacher and good disciple. This is, you know, actually the last power of sanmyo, and last power of six supernatural power.

[Line 6.] sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Sanmyo rokutsu. Sanmyo rokutsu. And-and in eko it says, Sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi. Mappo-mappo is, you know, last stage in Buddhist history, where there is no more Buddhism [laughs, laughter]. [12] Last period. According to. you know, scripture, last-first 1,000 year after Buddha's death is the shobo, "the age of right law-right dharma." There they practice our way very hard, and there there is teacher and teaching, and-and so they can attain enlightenment in the first 1,000 years after Buddha passed away.

And next stage, next-after 1,000 year, the zobo-period of zobo will start. There there is teaching, but-and there is, you know, teachers, but teachers who has no enlightenment. So [laughs] knows-teachers knows what is Buddhism, but actually they do not practice so hard. But they know what is Buddhism intellectually. So there is no student who attain enlightenment. That is, you know, the time of zobo, which will continue for 1,000 years more.

And the last period is after 2,000 year from Buddha's death, and there there is no Buddhism. There may be some, you know, relics of Buddhism [laughs], but there is no Buddhism at all. Even [if] there is teaching, no one read it. No one knows what is Buddhism. According to some scriptures, you know, it is so.

And that period in Ja- [partial word]-history of Japanese Buddhism, that mappo, the last period, started from Kamakura period, when Nichiren [13] or Shinran[14] appear. Dogen, you know, appeared in that-in the same age. It is-it may be about 1200 [C.E.], yeah. And so Shinran or

Dogen-Shinran or Nichiren thought because this is, you know, a time of the last period of Buddhism where-when Buddhism will be banished [vanished?], so the teaching should be changed. The teaching should be some teaching which is-which could be applied in the last period of Buddhism.

That is why Nichiren and-and by Nichiren and Shinran, a kind of reformation of Buddhism was done. But it is not actually reformation, you know. It is more, we can say, restoration of [Buddhism]. He-they tried to restore the Buddhism-the Buddhism in the time of Buddha.

But way, you know-Shinran, for an instance, thought, because it is-it is not possible to attain enlightenment any more for the people in this period, so the only way is to, you know, to ask the help of Buddha, and by means of Buddha's help will-will be saved, reciting, you know, Namu Amida butsu. And with strong faith, believing in Amida Buddha's power, they will be saved. That was, in short, Shinran's way.

And Nichiren, you know, thought it is, you know, the time of mappo now, but according to Lotus Sutra, if we recite Lotus Sutra, or if we recite it for-for others, or if we obtain Lotus Sutra, even, the merit of obtaining the Lotus Sutra, or merit of reciting Lotus Sutra will save us even in the period-period of mappo. So ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... maybe his good means of, you know, maybe so. But he actually believed in that-believed in that way. Even though people may read Lotus Sutra, if they do not actually observe things as it is described in Lotus Sutra, he cannot be a true teacher. So he wanted to prove the power of Lotus Sutra. So he-so that he can prove the power of the Lotus Sutra, he did many things-he tried many things. Once he was almost killed by the people which was sent by government at Kamakura, but their sword break-broke when they wanted to kill Nichiren. That was actually appeared in that way as you read it in Lotus Sutra.

So he said, "This is the power of," you know, "Lotus Sutra." And he said, you know, "If-because we-no one believe in Lotus Sutra, which is the only sutra for the period of mappo, so something terrible will happen to Japan." And several years later, you know, the Mongolians, you know, came, you know, to conquer Japan with many ships. But Nichiren thought, "If-if I am believe in this sutra, the Japan will not be conquered." And as he said so, the Mongolian ships were destroyed by the hurricane [laughs] before they arrived to Hakata in Kyushu.[15] So people, you know, were terrified [by] the power of the Lotus Sutra. In that way, you know, Nichiren School was established.

Shinran, you know-after the many years of war period, when people did not know what to do, Shinran said, "If you say-just say Namu Amida butsu, you will be saved.[16] Amida Buddha will save you. So why don't you recite the name of Amida Buddha?" Without traveling [to] various

countries, sometime he was sent to some lonely island, [like] Sado, but he did not stop his practice. He was strongly believe in Amida Buddha and his power of faith.

In this way, you know, in Kamakura period, even [if] it was already the last period of Buddhism, a new Buddhism, you know, arise. Dogen was one of them. But Dogen's attitude is quite different, you know. He did not believe in, you know, mappo. That is just skillful means of Buddha. Actually, there is no such thing [as the] last period or the first period or second period. That is just Buddha-to encourage people to believe in Buddhism. Buddha said so to encourage people. So that is just skillful means.

So even [if] it is the time of mappo, if we practice hard we will attain enlightenment. The Buddha-Buddhism will not die. He believed in-Dogen believed in his practice, the practice of, you know, practice of non-practice. That is [laughs] Dogen's practice. There is nothing to practice, especially. Whatever we do, that is practice. If so, there is no special practice.

By shikantaza you will not gain anything, but you will be you yourself. So by shikantaza you will establish yourself on yourself. You will be you. Tile will be a tile. Mirror will be a mirror. And that is, you know, our practice. There is no secret in our practice. If that is practice, there is no special teaching like Buddhism. The Buddhism is already there when Buddha appeared in this world. It is not because Buddha appeared in this world [that] Buddhism was established. That is, you know, Dogen-zenji's understanding of Buddhism.

So the last power of practice is without being involved in karmic practice. How we should practice our way was Buddhist practice. So Buddhist practice start from nothing-nothingness, not from somethingness. We start our practice from nothing to attain nothing [laughs]. That is Buddhist practice. You may think that is very strange, but that is, in short, Buddha's-Buddhist practice.

[Line 6.] sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige. Goriki-goriki is-here it says: faith, and exertion-exertion, mindfulness, contemplation-contemplation-zazen, you know-dhyana-and wisdom. This-those are five powers.

And hachige. Hachige is rather complicated. It is related to Theravadan practice. I explained last night about primitive Buddhist practice: four stage for zazen, for Zen-four stages of Zen, of form world, [and] four practice of non-form world. That makes eight. And in each stage there is attainment-renunciation. Eight-eight meditation power, or eight kinds of

renunciation to free one from attachment-our attachment-to free from everything.

The first-as I explained last night, the-in the first stage you have no anger, or you have no drowsiness. Because you are not angry, and you-your mind is very calm, so you can think clearly. And you have physical joy, and spiritual joy, and concentration. So in the first stage you have clear thinking which can be, you know, contemplation of shastra[17] of teaching-dharma, or you can observe things clearly. That is thinking mind. And physical joy, and mental joy, and concentration. So you have four. One-two-three-four-five.

And in the second stage, you-you-you don't think in the second stage. So your mind is more clear, you know, because you don't think even. There is no waves of mind-thinking mind-so you are, you know, physically and mentally or emotionally or mentally, you will be more-you have a kind of joy of [being] free from emotional disturbance or thinking faculties. And you have concentration-good concentration.

So you have there inner purity of mind-inner purity of mind free from thinking, and you have physical joy, and physical or emotional, you may say, or emotional joy and spiritual joy, or mental joy and concentration. By this-in this stage, what you will have-the power you will have is to see all things. How you get, you know, how you get this kind of power, you know-they practice, you know, various practice, you know, [for example] to see a skeleton [laughs]-to put skeleton in front of you and you sit [concentrate] on it. So even [if a] beautiful lady appears in front of you, we may say, "Oh, that is skeleton!" [Laughs.] "In that way you will be free from, you know, objective world." [Laughs, laughter.]

You may laugh, but actually they did it-sometime in front of fire they sit; in front of water they sit. Or they contemplated on our physical being, observing physical body is a bag of nasty things [laughs]. It is [laughs, laughter]-it looks-looks like beautiful. It is mostly practice for men, maybe [laughs]. "So a woman, maybe, looks like very beautiful, but inside of the woman is nasty, you know [laughs, laughter]-[containing] five organs and many things" [laughs, laughter]. They practiced, you know, in that way. That is more, you know [laughs]- And in that way they wanted to be free from objective world.

But in the second stage, they, you know, changed their way-not to-to contemplate on objective being, but to contemplate in- [partial word]-inward, you know. Directed their concentration inward. And inwardly they could make ourselves sure that we are not permanent any more. So it is foolish to attach to ourselves. If so, it may be more foolish to attach to something outside [laughs]. If, you know, each one-each [something like a light bulb pops loudly; laughs, laughter]- If he is, you know, not worthy to attach to, then the people may, you know-outside people could be more worth- [partial word]-worthless to attach to. In that way, they wanted to be free from outward object. So their practice

was the power of practice to see all things as impure, and thereby removed their lust-lust or desires.

Second one is to remove attachment to external phenomenon. Those, you know, power will be gained by-in the first and second stage of practice. And third one is the power of not to give arise [a rise?] to the desires even [if] phenomenon looks like beautiful, you know. Now, you know, after attaining the attach- [partial word]-detachment from themselves and from outside world, you know, they are quite sure-he will be quite sure that he has power of detachment.

So to make their power sure [sure of their power?], they tried to see some beautiful flowers, you know. If they, you know, attach to it-if they become attached to it or not. They tried, you know [laughs]. They opened their eyes and saw some beautiful lady. [They saw] if he attached to her again or not. That-and if he doesn't attach to someone, that is-it means that he has really, you know, the power of detachment [laughs]. In that way they test themselves. That is two [to?], you know, that is the third one. And it will-in this way, the-each-in each stage, they obtained more power of detachment and until they attain arhatship.

It is described in this way, but if you literally take this description, it is-it doesn't make much sense. But later, you know, in the formless world, when they attained the world of formlessness, their practice-their power obtained by their practice is to contemplate boundless space-boundless space of form, you know.

And they contemplate on the limitless consciousness of ourselves. That is more inward practice. So their practice became wider and wider and until their practice come to the area of void. That is the fifth one. And fourth one was to contemplate on boundless space. And the fifth one is to contemplate limitless world of consciousness inwardly. That is fifth one. Sixth one is to contemplate non-substantiality-non-substantiality. There is nothing, nothingness, complete voidness-not voidness-but nothingness.

And seventh one [is] to contemplate the state of beyond thought. The seventh one is to contemplate on substantial- [partial word]-non-substantiality in term of, you know, substance. The seventh one is to contemplate on beyond thought, you know. To contemplate on non-substantiality, you know. Non-substantiality is a kind of idea, isn't it? Non-substantiality. So to go beyond the idea of no- -non-substantiality is the seventh one.

And last one is metsujin-jo,[18] which is same as the third one of the three-sanmyo. To attain metsujin-jo-metsujin-jo is, you know-metsujin-jo: to-to have no karmic activity-a cessation of all the activity.

So for a long time, you know, they practiced zazen literally in this way-

attached to this kind of psychological analysis, but actual practice cannot be like this actually. You can, you know, analyze your practice in that way-four or eight [stages of practice] or practice of form world, or practice of no- -no-form world. But actual practice, you know, cannot be like that.

So more and more Buddhists started to put more emphasis on actual practice, without analyzing our practice, without being involved in this kinds of, you know, stages. But if you carefully, you know, understand this kind of, you know, stages and interpretation of the stages, as I explained last night, there is very important key to the actual practice. But if you miss that kind of point, you will be easily caught by it.

Step by step: stepladder practice. We call it "stepladder practice." There is no end in stepladder practice. At first, you know, you may say there is three steps, but in each three steps-in each step there is three steps [laughs], and in each of the three steps there is three steps, if you carefully analyze it. So at least we have eighty-one steps or more [laughs]. Eighty-one, you know, eighty-one-two hundred [laughs, laughter] and forty-one stages. No end. So we shouldn't be caught by this kind of interpretation, you know. But we should have eyes to see what [it] actually means. And the people who set up this kind of teaching, you know, has-carefully they set up this kind of teaching, and commentary is-we have a great amount of commentary to those stepladder-like practice, so that it cannot be stepladder practice. We should, you know, understand this point.

So Dogen-zenji did not ignore this kind of practice and this kind of commentary and this kind of stepladder practice. But he more put emphasis on the everyday practice like to serve tea or to give their teacher water and towel or a cup of tea.

Hmm. Oh! [Probably discovers the late hour.] Excuse me [laughs]. No time for question tonight.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Bill Redican 11/17/99.

[1] Not kensho, as in version at start of transcript. They may be two different ways of saying the same word in Japanese.

[2] Not issai no ogu burui, as in version at start of transcript.

[3] (Suzuki-roshi clearly says sanmyo, not sammyo. But both spellings are common.) Sanmyo refers to the three transcendental types of

knowledge attained by an arhat, bodhisattva, or buddha. They are a subset of the six rokutsu (see below): (1) pubbenivasanussati (Pali): knowledge of former lives; (2) dibbacakkhu (Pali): divine eye; knowledge of the future destiny of oneself and others; (3) asavakkhaya (Pali): knowledge of the sufferings of the present life and the ways to remove their root cause, mental intoxicants.

[4] rokutsu or rokujinzu (Jap.); sad abhijñah (San.); chal-abhiñña (Pali): The six kinds of supernatural powers attributed to an arhat, bodhisattva, or buddha. The traditional six are:

(1) iddhividha (Pali): magical powers

(2) dibbasota (Pali): divine ear

(3) ceto-pariya-ñana (Pali): knowledge of the minds of others

(4) dibbacakkhu (Pali): divine eye

(5) pubbenivasanussati (Pali): knowledge of former lives

(6) asavakkhaya (Pali): extinction of mental intoxicants or passions.

[See, e.g., G. P. Malalasekera (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, 1965, Vol. I, p. 98.]

[5] shukumyotsu (Jap.): Japanese term for No. 5, pubbenivasanussati. (See H. Inagaki, *A Dictionary of Japanese Buddhist Terms*, 1992, p. 252.)

[6] jinzu (Jap.): abhijña (San.) or abhiñña (Pali). The five powers of sages or the six powers of arhats.

[7] rokujinzu or rokutsu (Jap.): sad abhijñah (San.) or chalabhiñña (Pali). The six kinds of supernatural powers. Roku (Jap.) = "six."

[8] Isan Reiyu or Zen Master Daii (Jap. for Guishan Lingyu): 771-853. Chan master of southern China; student and dharma heir of Hyakujo Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai).

[9] Kyozan (Gyozan) Ejaku (Jap. for Yangshan Huiji): 807-883. He and his master Isan co-founded the Iggyo School of Chan (Iggyo-shu in Japanese).

[10] Kyogen Chikan (Jap. for Xiangyan Zhixian): d. 898. Chan master; student and dharma heir of Isan.

[11] In the fascicle "Jinzu," Isan asks the question of Kyogen (not Kyozan), who then goes to get Isan a cup of tea.

[12] See also SR-70-06-01, pp. 11 and 13 (the third Sandokai lecture), for another discussion of these three time periods (the shozomatsu). The length of the time periods (e.g., 500 vs. 1000 years) differs from lecture to lecture, just as there are at least four views on the length of shobo and zobo in Zen literature (see, e.g., Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, p. 299).

[13] Nichiren (1222-1282): founder of Nichiren or New Lotus school of Buddhism in Japan, which places great emphasis on the Lotus Sutra.

[14] Shonin Shinran (1173-1262): founder of Jodo-shin-shu school of Buddhism in Japan, a community of lay followers who believe that liberation

is attained by the help and grace of Amida Buddha.

[15] The first Mongol invasion fleet was damaged by a storm in November of 1274. The second Mongol invasion fleet was similarly afflicted in 1281.

[16] Namu Amida butsu: "Veneration to Buddha Amitabha." This nembutsu, recitation of the name of Amida (Amitabha) Buddha, is the meditation practice of the Jodo-shin-shu. If nembutsu is done with complete devotion, the practitioner may be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha.

[17] shastra (śāstra, Sanskrit): instruction or textbook.

[18] metsujin-jo (Jap.) or nirodha-samapatti (Pali): "extinction of feeling and perception"; a state resembling death except for a sense of warmth, life, and consciousness.

## **6 - Eko Lecture #4**

Sunday, July 12, 1970

Eko Lecture #4: The Second Morning Eko, Part 3 of 3  
Tassajara

[This is the fourth in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on

the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at

San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The Second Morning Eko:

Choka ugu fugin



Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo o fujusu, atsumuru  
tokoro no kudoku wa,

Line 3. jippo joju no sambo, kakai muryo no kensho,

Line 4. juroku dai arakan, issai no ogu burui kenzoku ni eko su.

Line 5. Koinego tokoro wa,

Line 6. sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.

Line 7. Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho  
sen koto o.

Dedication for the Morning Service Arhat's Sutra

Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and respond.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Maha Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra,  
we dedicate the collected merit to

Line 3. the all-pervading, ever-present Triple Treasure,  
the innumerable wise men in the ocean of enlightenment,

Line 4. the sixteen great arhats and all other arhats.

Line 5. May it be that

Line 6. with the Three Insights and the Six Universal Powers,  
the true teaching be restored in the age of decline.

With the Five Powers and Eight Ways of Liberation,  
may all sentient beings be led to nirvana.

Line 7. May the two wheels of this temple forever turn  
and this country always avert the Three Calamities.]

In the second recitation of the Prajña Paramita Sutra, we dedicate for  
the-to the arhats and many various sages in the-in the world. And what

we pray is-what we pray is-this is the translation Mel [Weitsman] and I did. "What we pray is that the wisdom-that the wisdom-and Three Wisdom-and the Six Unrestruct- [partial word]-Unrestricted Ways of the arhats."

Three Wisdom-we explain the Three Wisdom. "And the Six Unrestrict- [partial word]-Unrestr- [partial word]-Unrestricted Ways of the arhats may be always with us in our unceas-[partial word]-unceasing effort to renew Buddha's way to save all sentient beings from the world of suffering and confusion." "World of suffering and confusion" means the mappo. "And to keep Buddha's way always new to our-always-our al-[partial word]-world always." That is the spirit of Dogen.

We understand the three period of Buddhism[1] is just the skillful means of Buddha to encourage people to practice our way. And next: "And we encourage ourselves, and we pray to-we pray to arhats to encourage ourselves, to continue our practice, even in our adversity, and keep the wheel of dharma turning forever, and to avert disasters of fire, water, and wind, and calamities of war, epidemics, and famine. That is, actually, what it says in this eko. After reciting sutra we recite- ek- [partial word]-doan recite eko, as you know.

And I-I have to explain more about what we pray in this-the second paragraph of the eko. Actually we-it is-according to the usual way of observing ceremony, we Zen Buddhist apply the usual way of prayer. But, according to Dogen-zenji, there is no need for us to expect help from outside. He says: "We are protected, actually, from inside firmly, so we don't have to expect any protect from outside." That is his spirit. Nyingmo sude ni sakan nare kemo nan somata.[2] We are protected from inside, you know, by ourselves, always, incessantly.

So, we don't have to expect any help from, you know, outside. But actually, it is so-our belief is so, but, when we recite sutra, we follow the usual-we apply usually-usual dedication-way of dedication. And this is also Dogen's, you know, idea. He says-for an instance-I cannot find out his word regarding- We, you know, ac- [partial word: actually?]-we do not have any idea of dirty or pure, or any idea of calamity or disaster. But even so, he says, we have, you know, practice of cleaning restroom, you know. That is a kind of practice. We clean our body, you know, because our body is filthy, you know. Even though, you know, we-our face, or mouth, or body is clean, we sh- [partial word: should?]-when-if you get up, you should wash your face, and rinse clean your mouth, you know, even though it is clean. We do it as a practice, you know, but not because it is dirty. That is our practice.

So, if you think, you know, to cleaning of [to clean] restroom is dirty work, that is wrong-wrong idea. Restroom is not dirty. Clean. Even though you don't clean it, it is clean. Or more than clean. But, you know, even-but we have to clean it as a practice, not because it is dirty. If you do it because it is dirty-if you think you have to clean it because it

is dirty, that is not our way.

[Line 6. sanmyo rokutsu, mappo o shobo ni kaeshi goriki hachige,  
gunjo o musho ni michibiki.]

So far we explained goriki and hachige. And next word is gunjo o musho ni michibiki. Gunjo means "all sentient beings." Gun is "various folk" of [or] "folks," you know. Jo means "living being." So it means "sentient being." Musho[3] means "arhatship"-another name of arhat. Gunjo. But here it means "sentient being who is [in] confusion and suffering." Gunjo o musho: "to lead sentient beings who is in defilement to the arhatship by the power of unrestricted power of arhat."

[Line 7. Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku sho sen koto o.]

And Sammon no nirin. Sammon means "the main gate of the temple," but sometime it means-sammon-means "temple." Sometime it is one of the building which is gate, but sometime it means "temple"-all the temple. Sammon no nirin. Nirin is "two wheels." Two wheel is dharma wheel and-and alms wheel or materialistic support.

So when dharma wheel is turning, you know, our belief is if the dharma wheel is turning-going, then the materialistic wheel will be, you know, will-will be going, too. That-that we are not supported by anyone means our dharma wheel, actually, is not going [laughs]. So we should know that. If our dharma wheel doesn't go-if we are not supported by people, it means that our dharma wheel is not going. This is very true.

I-you know-I have-you know-I-since I know this world of Dogen-zenji, I experienced it, I tested whether [laughs] it is true or not. So I-even when I was in, you know, when I was almost, you know, especially in the-during the war, wartime, I had not much to eat [laughs]. Most priest, you know, worked to earn some money to support themselves and to support their families. But my belief was if I, you know, observe Buddhist way, faithfully, someone will support me, you know. If no one support me, it means that Dogen's world was not true [laughs, laughter]. So I never ask anyone to give anything to me, and I just observed the Buddhist way, without working in, you know, as a teacher, or as a clerk of the town office [laughs, laughter], or I-I raised some vegetables and sweet potato [laughs]. That is why I know how to raise vegetables [laughs] pretty well.

When I was cultivating temple garden, you know, I have pretty spacious temple garden in front of the building, so I dig the garden out, and took out all the stones, and put manure in it, and I raised, you know sweet-I was trying to raise sweet potato, and some [laughing] villagers came and helped me too. And I had a good crop.

And one day, my neighbor came and opened my rice box, you know. I had rice box as much-as big as this [probably gesturing to students] and as long as this. Pretty big. One day, they came and-came to help me cooking. When they opened the rice box, there was no rice at all [laughing]. She was quite astonish-astound, and she, you know, brought me some rice-not much, you know. She didn't have so much rice. And, you know, my neighbors and my members collected some rice, you know. But I had pretty many members, so I had a half, maybe [probably indicating that the rice-box was half-filled]-pretty many rice. But, you know, when people found out that I have a-a lot of rice [laughs], they come to the temple. So I gave it-gave my rice to them. And the more I gave my rice to them, the more I got the rice [laughs, laughter].

But at the time, Japanese people had a awful time, you know. At that time, most people-city people went to the farmer's family and [ex] changed their dressing [dresses], or geta,[4] or whatever it may be. Something good was changed to food: potato, or rice, or sweet potato, or pumpkin. But I had no difficult- [partial word]-no such difficulties. Most of the time, I had a plenty of food. But I didn't feel so good, you know, to eat something special, something different from the usual people, so I tried to eat the same food which was given to us.

The Tassajara food, you know, is wonderful, you know: strong and rich, in comparison to the food we had in the wartime. So I-I don't have any complaint about food. And, if you observe our way strictly, we will be-we are sure to be protected by Buddha. That is very true. We should-should trust people, and we should trust Buddha. Since then, since wartime, Japanese priest started to wear, you know, your suit, you know, giving up robes-not give up, but when they have funeral service [laughs], or memorial service, they wear it, you know, to observe service. But usually they didn't. I didn't feel so good about that, you know. So that is why I didn't, you know-I don't wear-that is why I always wear robes.

When I was coming to America, you know, almost all the priests who is going abroad wear, you know, good suits and shiny shoes [laughs, laughter], but the head was not shiny, their hair was pretty long and well-combed, but their shoes were very shiny. With shiny shoes and new suits [laughs, laughter], they came to America, because, you know, they thought to propagate Buddhism to America. They have to wear something-they have to be like-something like American people. But, even though they wear-they buy best suits and best shoes, Japanese are Japanese. They cannot be American people anyway. And the American people will find some fault in your wearing-way of wearing your suits or shoes. So, anyway, Japanese are Japanese, you know.

So that is one reason why I didn't come to America in, you know, suits. Another reason is I was disgusted with the priest who gave up robe and

change their robe into suits to support themselves. When Dogen said: "We are protected from within, firmly, why do we expect support from outside?" That is our spirit. But [laughs] nowadays they started to lose that kind of spirit. The priests in Japan-most priests, I may say, in Japan, does not respect their way, their practice.

So we should [not?] expect from-material support from outside, but what we here it says, what we pray is dharma wheel and alms-and-what do you call it?-material fre- [partial word]-wheel goes smoothly forever. But to observe this kind of ceremony is important. Not because we have to beg arhats to help us, but because that is the way which we have [been] observing for long, long time. And this is, you know, how to repay the-to the bene- [partial word]-benevolence of the Buddha and arhats. Buddha and arhats are the people who, you know, supported themselves by their practice only, so if we observe, if we pay full respect to the arhat we will be also protected.

Sammon no nirin. Sammon no nirin. "Two wheels of Budd- [partial word]-temple will-may go smoothly." We say: "-food wheel and dharma wheel may go smoothly, and may the calamities of the country and the temple"-calamity like war, epidemic, and famine, or fire, water, wind. And big calamity is the calamity we will have in the last period of-kalpa-time. Many eons of time after all the universe will have big disaster-disaster, then we say koka.[5]

To some extent, you know, our universe will, you know, will-go on and on and will be built firmly, and firmer and firmer, until some-when we-when the universe go to some point, it will go to the destructive-it will enter into the process of destruction. That is also, you know, a kind of good means of Buddha.

We don't know-to-you know-if you-if we are going to the way of destruction, personally, we-from the time we were-we were born, we are going to the-we are in the process of death [laughs], you know, but that is just our understanding. But at the last period of time we will have big disaster. That is the "big disaster." The "small disaster" will be war, and epidemics, and famine, or flood, or fire, and the typhoon or hurricane. "May those, you know, disasters avert from us." That is how we-what we decide in the second-in the second dedication-dedication of the Prajñā Paramita Sutra. Words is going this way, you know: "I pray, I beg, may such-and-such," but spirit is different.

So in-when you recite sutra, you should express this spirit, you know. We should not, you know, observe our way or recite our sutra to ask arhat to help us, you know. That is not our spirit. When we recite sutra, the feeling we create here is the feeling of non-duality, perfect calmness, and strong conviction in our practice. That kind of feeling should be always with us. If that kind of feeling [is] always with us, we will be supported anyway.

If our practice, you know, become involved in dualistic, selfish practice to support our building, or organization, or to support our personal life, you know, there is not much feeling in our dedication. Only when, you know, we have strong confidence in our way, and without expecting anything, with, you know, deep, calm feeling, if we recite sutra, there is our rea- [partial word: real?]-actual practice. That is, you know, context of our practice-meaning of practice.

So if you cannot express that kind of feeling in your way of dedication, that is not our way. So Dogen says: "If we do not practice our way with, you know, with everyone, with all sentient beings, with every being in the world, or in the cosmic space, that is not Buddhist way."

So the spirit of zazen, you know, the zazen practice, should be always with us, especially when we recite sutra or observe ceremony. The spirit should be always there, that kind of spirit: not dualistic selfish spirit, but calm, and deep, and firm-with firm conviction, we should observe our way. That is actually arhat's unrestricted power.

So to clairvoyance or to hear something, you know, through or from distant, is just a part of our power-unrestricted power. Our power should be always with all beings, and our everyday life should be protected-that kind of power which pervade everywhere-which is everywhere. That is, you know, the last unrestricted power of arhat and the most important unrest- [partial word: unrestricted?]-power of arhat.

When we observe our way in that way, you know .... [Tape turned over. Possibly not many words lost.] ... even though you want to create karma in that way, that is not possible. Because we are always with us, we are always one with all buddha-world, where there is no karmic activity. That which is going in the world of Buddha is just, you know, Buddha activity, there is nothing but Buddha activity in the realm of dharma world. In that way, when we observe our way, we do not create any karma. We are beyond the karmic world. So with this spirit, and with this understanding, we should observe our way. So when we observe our way in this-with this understanding, there must be actual spirit of this kind.

Nowadays, you know, as our world become busier and busier, you know, even in a big monastery in Japan, they have not much [laughs] time to dedicate, you know, our way, you know, without any idea of time. So, you know, their doan is watching always time [laughs, laughter]-time to, maybe-"How many memorial service we may have?" [laughs], or "Ten more service, then it will be-will be-our breakfast will be-very late, so, let's make it faster [laughing, laughter]. It become faster and faster!

As we know, you know, how much-before we start morning service, we know how much service we will have, so from the beginning, we-we s- [partial word: say?]: Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyo [chanting very

fast]-GONG! [Laughs, laughter.]

They may think, you know, if they recite many sutras, they will be supported better [laughing], but actually it is not so. It is same, you know. Even though you cannot observe memorial service, ten [times]-but if you observe, you know, with the-with our spirit, one or two, we'll be supported anyway, you know.

If we are involved in the idea of time too much, you know, or feeling of the members too much, we will lose our way, and in this way, we lose our way, we lose our practice. And naturally, people lose Buddhism, you know. Our members thinks we have our priest, but priest is not any more priest because they are already involved in dualistic practice-involved in busy life, busy world, busy mundane world-so there is no priest, you know. Even though priest is there, they are not practicing priest way.

So, we say, "They're-they cover their pan with-you know [laughing], cover of bathroom." They mixed up, you know, worldly practice and priest practice. That is how we lose our way. So when priest observe our way like priest, there is priest. When we do not observe our way like priest, we are, you know, "cover of the restroom" [laughs], not cover of the pots and pan.

"To help others" mean-does not mean to help others for their convenience sake. Maybe, you know, priests may be the most troublesome people [laughs]. May be very difficult to handle. Even they offer, you know, million dollar, they may say "oh, thank you." Even one penny, they will "thank you." They will say "thank you," that's all. It is very hard-difficult to handle.

That is, you know, when-when-when people wants real priest, they should handle priest carefully. They shouldn't mixed up, you know, priest with someone else. Though we should not lose this confidence within ourselves, we don't have to say, you know, in-by words, but within ourselves we must have strong confidence in Buddha's way, and we should be supported from within, not from outside. So Buddhists should be Buddhist, completely. When Buddhist really become Buddhist, you will be supported as a Buddhist.

The eko will be like this:

[Line 2] We dedicate the merit of the recite-recitation of this

Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra to

[Line 3] the Triple Treasures-Buddha, dharma and sangha,

and to the sages in the sea of the fruitful world of

buddhahood,

[Line 4] and the sixteen arhats and their followers who attained the supreme attainments of the arhatship.

[Line 5] What we pray is that

[Line 6] the Three Wisdoms of-Six-Three Wisdoms and the Six Unrestricted Ways of the arhats may be always with us in our unceasing effort of-effort to renew Buddha's way forever. All sentient-to-excuse me-Buddha's way-to renew Buddha's way, to save all sentient beings, and sentient beings from the world of suffering and confusion.

[Line 7] And all the-and encourages-encourage us to continue our practice, even in our adversities, and keep the wheel of dharma turning forever. And to avert destruction of fire, water, and wind, and calamities of war, epidemic, and famines.

This will be the translation of the eko. Maybe good idea to recite, you know, eko after English, you know, Prajña-after reciting the English translation of Prajña Paramita Hridaya Sutra. In the second, you know, service. Tomorrow I will explain the third one, which is dedicated to the-our patriarchs.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (2/9/01).

[1] Shobo, zobo, and mappo.



[2] Phonetic only. Assumed to be quoting Dogen-zenji.

[3] musho (Jap.): no-nature; devoid of self-nature or fixed nature.

[4] geta (Jap.): Japanese wooden clogs.

[5] koka (Jap.), kalpagni (San.): the fire that occurs at the end of the kalpa of destruction.

## **7 - Eko Lecture #5**

Monday, July 13, 1970

Eko Lecture #5: The Third Morning Eko  
Tassajara

[This is the fifth in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The Third Morning Eko:

Choka sodo fugin

Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Sandokai o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no shukun wa,

Bibashi-butsum-daiosho,

Shiki-butsum-daiosho,

Bishafu-butsum-daiosho,

Kuruson-butsum-daiosho,

Kunagonmuni-butsum-daiosho,

Kasho-butsum-daiosho,

Shakamuni-butsum-daiosho,

Makakasho-daiosho

Ananda-daiosho,

Shonawashu-daiosho,

Ubakikuta-daiosho,  
Daitaka-daiosho,  
Mishaka-daiosho,  
Vashumitsu-daiosho,  
Butsudanandai-daiosho,  
Fudamitta-daiosho,  
Barishiba-daiosho,  
Funayasha-daiosho,  
Anabotei-daiosho,  
Kabimara-daiosho,  
Nagyaharajuna-daiosho,  
Kanadaiba-daiosho,  
Ragorata-daiosho,  
Sogyanandai[1]-daioho,  
Kayashata-daiosho,  
Kumorata-daiosho,  
Shayata-daiosho,  
Vashubanzu-daiosho,  
Manura-daiosho,  
Kakurokuna-daiosho,  
Shishibodai-daiosho,  
Bashashita-daiosho,  
Funyomitta-daiosho,  
Hannyatara-daiosho,  
Bodaidaruma-daiosho,

Taiso[2] Eka-daiosho,  
Kanchi Sosan-daiosho,  
Dai-i Doshin-daiosho,  
Daiman Konin-daiosho,[3]  
Daikan Eno-daiosho,  
Seigen Gyoshi-daiosho,  
Sekito Kisen-daiosho,  
Yakusan Igen-daiosho,  
Ungan Donjo-daiosho,  
Tozan Ryokai-daiosho,  
Ungo Doyo[4]-daiosho,  
Doan Dohi-daiosho,  
Doan Kanshi-daiosho,  
Ryozan Enkan-daiosho,  
Taiyo Kyogen-daiosho,  
Tosu Gisei-daiosho,  
Fuyo Dokai-daiosho,  
Tanka Shijun-daiosho,  
Choryo[5] Seiryō-daiosho,[6]  
Tendo Sogaku[7]-daiosho,  
Setcho[8] Chikan-daiosho,  
Tendo Nyojo-daiosho,  
Eihei Dogen-daiosho,  
Koun Ejo-daiosho,  
Tetsu Gikai-daiosho,

Keizan Jokin-daiosho,

Line 3. sangoku dento rekidai soshi no tame ni shi tatematsuri,

Line 4. kami jion ni makuin koto o.

Morning Service Patriarch Hall Sutra

Line 1. May Buddha observe us and may we receive his true compassion.

Line 2. Thus, as we recite the Sandokai [we offer] the merit collected hereby to:

Vipashyin Buddha,

Shikin Buddha,

Vishvabhu Buddha,

Krakucchanda Buddha,

Kanakamuni Buddha,

Kashyapa Buddha,

Shakyamuni Buddha,

Mahakashyapa,

Ananda,

Shanavasin,

Upagupta,

Dhitika,

Mishaka,

Vasumitra,

Buddhanandi,

Buddhamitra,

Parshva,

Punyayasha,  
Anabodhi,  
Kapimala,  
Nagarjuna,  
Kanadeva,  
Rahulabhadra,  
Samghanandi,  
Samghayathata,  
Kumaralata,  
Shayata,  
Vasubandhu,  
Manorata,  
  
Haklenayasha,  
Simhabodhi,  
Bashashita,  
Punyamitra,  
Prajñadhara,  
Bodhidharma,  
Dazu Huike,  
Jianzhe Sengcan,  
Dayi Daoxin,  
Daman Hongren,  
Dajian Huineng "Caoxi,"  
Qingyuan Xingsi,  
Shitou Xiqian,

Yaoshan Weiyān,  
Yunyan Tānshēng,  
Dongshan Liangjiē,  
Yunju Daoyīng,  
Tong'an Daopi,  
Tongan Guānzhī,  
Liangshan Yuānguān,  
Dayang Jīngxuān "Jīngyān,"  
Touzi Yīqīng,  
Furong Daokai,  
Danxia Zīchūn,  
Zhenxie Qīngliāo "Chānglū,"  
Tiantong Zōngjuē,  
Xuedou Zhījiān "Zu'an,"  
Tiantong Rujīng,  
Eihei Dogen,  
Koun Ejo,  
Tetsu Gikai,  
Keizan Jokin,

Line 3. successive generations of patriarchs who have transmitted  
the true teaching through three countries.

Line 4. Let us reflect their compassion and mercy.]

Tonight I want to explain the third eko. The third sutra we chant in every morning is Sandokai-Sandokai. We chant-originally, we chant it in sodo-patriarchs [hall]-where our patriarchs are enshrined. According to Chinese books about rules of a Zen monastery, the patriarch's building

or hall [joyoden] is left-hand side of the hatto [dharma hall]. And there were-they enshrined their Buddha. And the other side, right-hand side of the building, Bodhidharma was enshrined. And Hyakujo[9] also, enshrined, right-hand side of the-you know, if this is building [sound of paper being unfolded: probably gesturing]-hatto is here, and right-hand side, as you enter. The building [joyoden] is [on the] left-hand side [corrected left vs. right] as you enter. This is hatto-like this-and [on the] left-hand side as you enter, there is buddha-patriarch's hall. And here they enshrined Hyakujo and Bodhidharma. This side. And [on] the other-the other side of the building, they enshrined their resident priests. That was, according to the record, that was how they enshrined patriarchs.

In Japan, instead of-as it is difficult to have so completed-so complete, perfect building, so we have in-in, you know, in Buddha hall, we have patriarch's hall most-in the most temple. In Eihei-ji we have special building, but there we enshrine patriarchs, Bodhidharma, and Dogen-zenji, and successive patriarchs or masters for that temple. And there-when we observe very formal service like memorial service for patriarchs we observe the ceremony in that building, but usually we observe all the dedication in hatto, the main building-center building. Here is hatto [probably gestures], and this is-if this is hatto, this is-this is butsuden-this is hatto. Sam- [partial word: sammon]-main gate is here. And [on] this side there is kitchen. And [on] this side there is zendo. And we observe, every morning, dedication for the patriarchs.

In Buddhism, especially in Zen, we, you know, we have special feeling to our patriarchs. Buddha, you know-according to our teaching, Buddha is someone who passed away more than two thousand and two thousand five hundred years ago. But Buddha's spirit will last forever, as long as we have-we have descendant of the Buddha-disciple of Buddha-successive or-successive patriarchs. So actual, you know, Buddha is your teacher. This is our belief.

And you will be a Buddha too, and strictly speaking, each one of us are-is Buddha. Buddha's spirit, you know, is the spirit which will last forever. Why, you know, Buddha's spirit is immortal is because his spirit is supported by everyone of us and everything. And his spirit is supported by every being. So Buddha's spirit is always with us and with all being. That is how Buddha's spirit is supported.

So that is what actually mean by absolute spirit-absolute-absolute Buddha. So Buddha can be-once Buddha can be a Gautama Buddha, but year after year, when time changes, next Buddha will appear. And incessant- [partial word]-incessantly, forever, Buddha's spirit will appear. When we, you know, realize this truth completely, we each one of us become Buddha in its true sense. Each one of us is Buddha objectively and subjectively. When you acknowledge yourself as a son of Buddha, how you can acknowledge yourself a son of Buddha is through your teacher. We say we can transmit our teaching "from warm hand to

warm hand," you know, without any cessation-without any hindrance. To be-to be completely one with your master is how to be a Buddha.

Buddha said once, according to Mahaparinibbana Sutra.[10] "You should rely on self-light, light of self. And you should rely on light of dharma." So we-we call-we call hotomyo-jitomyo.[11] Hotomyo is "dharma lamp." Jitomyo is "light of self-self-lamp." "Self," you know, originally "self-lamp," and there's no difference between "self-lamp" and "buddha-lamp." But so-how to-we shouldn't-we must depend on ourselves. He always taught us to depend on ourselves. We should not depend on someone else. And you yourself is someone who-whom you can depend on. Without depend on yourself, how is it possible to find out someone-something who can depend on. He says in Dhammapada: "You yourself is refuge for yourself," or "You yourself is something which you can depend on." Without depend on yourself, how is it possible to find out something-something to depend on? Only you is something which you can depend on. So we call it jitomyo, "lamp of self." Hotomyo means, you know, "lamp of dharma"-dharma in its wide sense, everything, various being, and it-in its narrow sense, Buddha's teaching. Buddha's teaching, as I said now, is immortal because it is manifestation of the real truth which is-which exist with everything, which is supported by everything, and at the same time, which is supporting by-supporting everything.

So everything is supported by dharma, and dharma is supporting everything. So dharma is-so dharma is everything, and everything is dharma. Dharma and teaching is one. That is our conviction, our faith. And it-it is actually so. That is why we, you know, transmit our lamp to others. You may say: "If everyone has, you know, his own lamp, there will be no need to transmit a lamp to others." But even though you have it, if you don't feel you have it, it doesn't make sense. How you have the feeling of having dharma lamp within yourself is to-through your teaching-your teacher.

So "transmission of dharma" means to "find your own lamp through your teacher," you know. That is transmission. Ju-ju is "to give transmission" or sometime, "to receive transmission." Ju or "receive." This is hand. To accept something is ju, and to offer something is also ju. And ju means "realization" in Buddhism-in Zen Buddhism, you know, ju means, "realization." So ju equal kaku. Kaku means sometime "enlightenment" or "realization" or "to realize something." That it is so is kaku.

So to, you know, when-you recei- [partial word]-how you receive transmission from your teacher is to realize your own, you know, nature, your own lamp through your teacher. Even though you read Buddha's saying one thousand time, Buddha is already passed away, you know. It-he is not here. You may say, "his spirit is here," you may say, but we do not believe in some-some spirit like a, you know [laughs], like something-jewel, or burning fire, you know, in the air-



floating in the air [laughs].

We do not believe in "Buddha's soul" in that way. Buddha is already with us. That we, you know, realize our true nature is to realize Buddha's nature. So you-that you realize buddha-nature is the true evidence of the Buddha's presence. You know, when you realize, Buddha is here. When you don't realize, there is no Buddha for you, even though it is-is here. If you don't realize it, you know, it doesn't make any sense.

I had, this evening, treat of Japanese noodle with our guest [laughs]. Noodle is something which is supposed to be long, but my lecture is not-is supposed to be short, you know [laughs]. If noodle is-is very good noodle it is very long, and if it is not so good it is very short. So I think my lecture is not so good, so it should be short, you know [laughs, laughter]. So I am trying not to make it, you know, it is not possible for bad noodle to be long, you know [laughs, laughter]. So my lecture for tonight will be very short, especially after having a good noodle, which is very long [laughs, laughter]. But our transmission should be very long, very long, long, long-one should be. And our transmission is "special noodle," you know.

Dogen-zenji said: "When we realize buddha-nature, you know, you are the teacher-a teacher of your master too. And you will be even a teacher of Shakyamuni Buddha. When you attain enlightenment, Shakyamuni Buddha is-could be your disciple." And it is very much so.

So our noodle has no end. Circle, you know, our noodle is circle. So it is difficult to eat [laughs, laughter]. You know, if noodle is very good [laughs], when you eat it, you know, when you sip it [makes slurping noise]-like this, you know, even though the end of-end of the noodle is [laughs, laughter]-is arrive at you tongue, the other end should be here [probably gestures] if it is good noodle.

But Buddha's noodle is no end [laughs, laughter continuing]. So there's no way to eat, you know. You cannot see it and you cannot eat it. Only way to eat that noodle is to become noodle. That is our way. When you become noodle, you-you don't know which is end, and which is the beginning, and which is the end. That is, you know, Soto Zen noodle-special noodle for us.

So in here, you know, we dedicate Sandokai for our teachers. And after Sando- [partial word]-reciting a sutra, we have a kind of invocation to recite names of patriarchs from Shakyamuni Buddha to-to us. I'm, you know, I'm supposed to be seventy-nine-ninth generation from Buddha if Bodhidharma is twenty-eighth patriarch from Buddha. Historically, we don't know, you know, we have no accurate record for that. But almost, you know, it is supposed to be so.

And Dogen-zenji is the fiftieth-fifty-one patriarch from Buddha. And Nyojo-zenji is fifty. And, you know, after Dogen-zenji, in my lineage we

count twenty-as I am sixty-nine-so how much? Anyway, I am seventy-ninth. If-you know, if-you know-I must say, if Bodhidharma is Twenty-Eighth Patriarch, why I say so is I am not so sure, you know, no one is so sure that if Bodhidharma is exactly Twenty-Eighth Patriarch from Buddha. But after Bodhidharma it is clear-our lineage is very clear. There is no doubt that Dogen-zenji is the Fifty-First Patriarch from Buddha.

So the center of-the third dedication is actually the most important dedication for each one of us. And first one and second one is-first one is for, you know, Buddha as, you know, as we are one of the schools of Zen, so-called-it Soto-Soto school. And as a-as a school of Buddhism, we have some special-we have object of worship, which is Buddha. And, you know, Buddha, and Dogen-zenji, and Keizan-zenji in Japanese Soto.

But here we, as I said before, here we recite sutra first of all [for] Buddha and the First Patriarch of China, Bodhidharma, and First Patriarch of Japan, Dogen-zenji. That is what we recite sutra for- [partial word: formal?]-the m- [partial word: most?]-as a most formal, you know, dedication.

And next is for the arhats-Buddha's disciples, which is the arhats in primitive Buddhist-Buddha's age-original Buddhist time-Buddha's time. But this one, the third one, is directly related to-to us-actually, each one of us, having dedication for ourselves. And the third one is, I think, you know, the most important dedication for each one of us. What we say is quite simple, you know. With the merit of reciting Sandokai I-we dedicate to our patriarchs, and we recite names of the patriarch. That is what we do.

Here I-I have some difference to this lecture. Dogen-zenji said in-in his Shobogenzo fascicle of patriarch: [12] "When my form-[partial word]-my teacher Tendo Nyojo-daiosho-when I waited for the-my teacher Tendo Nyojo, Old Buddha,-daiosho, he bowed those patriarchs."

"Those patriarchs" is-he-he says, before Buddha, seven; after-in India, until Bodhidharma, we have twenty-eight; and in China, twenty-two. And, until Tendo Nyojo, my [his] teacher, "I waited for my teacher and I could bow to those teachers." It mean that Buddha bowing to Buddha, and each patriarchs are Buddha.

The Yuibutsu yobutsu[13]-four characters-but this-if you explain it, it is very difficult to explain. "Only Buddha" and Yuibutsu-"only Buddha." Yobutsu means "with Buddha." "Only Buddha and with Buddha." It means that you are Buddha and I am Buddha.

When you are Buddha, you know, I am not Buddha, you are Buddha. When I am Buddha, you are not Buddha. So each one of us are Buddha. So you can say, "You and me are Buddha." And sometime you can say, "I am a only Buddha." So he says Yuibutsu yobutsu. This is his technical

term.

Yuibutsu: "Only Buddha," you know, "I am only Buddha" is not perfect. Sometime I am-when I am Buddha, you are not Buddha. But we are, two of us, Buddha [laughs]. Do you understand? Yuibutsu yobutsu.

You may say, you know, you-it is difficult for you to understand the idea of transmission. Why it is difficult is, you know, when you say "transmission," you think as if you have something to transmit, you know: It is some traditional way of observing things or traditional understanding of Buddhism or something. You understand in that way. So there must be something to transmit. "But I don't want that kind of old tradition." That will [be?] what you may say. Because you have-when you say-we say "transmission," you say-you think there is something to transmit and your teacher is someone who transmit something to you. So if you receive transmission, you should, you know, obey completely, you know, to your teacher. So you should do things exactly as your teacher did. You will be-you will have that kind of idea.

So that is why it is difficult, you know, to accept transmission. But, you know, between teacher and disciple, if, you know, disciple receive transmission, he is a teacher [laughs]. Not me, you know. But sometime I may be a teacher. When disciple bow, you know, to me, I am a voluntary teacher. Even though two of us, different person, both with different character, with different way, you can express the, you know, Buddha's way. And when you express Buddha way-Buddha way in your own way, then your way include everything, including your teacher. So ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... to have vivid and refreshed way of expression of our true way. So disciple cannot be-disciple's way cannot be exactly like teacher's way. But there must be some similarity, but even though they are similar, actually what they will do is quite different. Teacher and disciples, usually speak, you know, same language [laughs]. I don't mean Japanese or American [laughs]-Eng- [partial word]-English language, you know. Language-by "language," I mean -Yo!-[laughs] [thumps something three times-possibly himself]-this kind of language. No! [Laughs.] This kind of language, you know. We should be able to understand with each other, in that way.

That is, you know, rokujinzu,[14] the six supernatural power of arhat. They understand things completely, you know. They understand something which is beyond word. They understand something which is told by Japanese or, you know, English, and more than that. That kind of relationship should be in [between] teacher and disciple. Even though they are living apart from teacher, there must be that kind of communication or else he is not, you know, teacher or disciple. How that is possible is, you know, because of our true practice-through our true practice-true zazen practice.

Generally speaking, actually, before you become your teacher's disciple, you may receive his transmission. And, you know, after receiving transmission, long, long time after you receive transmission, you will realize [laughing] what was transmission-what was your-who was your teacher. "Oh, he was my teacher!" You will realize it when it is too late, maybe. But you will come to that point if you continue in your practice.

So there is no need to worry [laughs], even though you receive transmission or lay ordination. Before, you don't know exactly what it was, even though you [were] ordained before you have not much understanding about ordination ceremony. That is okay, I think. If you, you know, feel some commitment to continue your practice, then it is okay. Some day, you will realize it.

I thought, you know, I-from the beginning, you know, I thought Gyokujun So-on was my teacher, you know. But, you know, but on the other hand, after many-I found out that, many years later, I was not his disciple at that time [laughs]. I thought I was, you know. I had a strong conviction of my being disciple of my teacher, but I found out that I was not his disciple in its true sense. Now I think I am, you know, his disciple. But I don't know how I feel next year [laughs]. Next year I may say, "Oh, last year I was [laughs] his disciple, yes [?]."

In this way, you know [laughs], your teacher is always with you. Sometime with you, and-but sometime you feel he is not your teacher. Or he was not your teacher. He-and sometime he will not be [laughs] your teacher. But it is okay, anyway. You will be his teacher. Teacher and disciple is, you know, that kind of relationship.

Day after day, we have strong conviction in our relationship, but that is not complete. It's-our relationship should be extended forever. So you are, anyway, bound to be your teacher's disciple. But it does not mean, you know, you should stick to the idea of relationship between teacher and disciple. Whether you stick to it or not, relationship is there. Buddha, you know, is taking care of it, whether you understand it or not. Our relationship between teacher and disciple is so wide and so deep, that we cannot-our small mind cannot understand what it is. There is no other way to understand the relationship between teacher and disciple.

So anyway, you know, to, you know-day by day you should bow to him, you know, that is the only way. It is day to day practice and practice just for that moment. Even though you don't bow to him, you are related to him, anyway. So if you don't, you don't feel good. If you do, you feel good, that's all [laughs]. It is not so difficult thing to bow to him. So better to bow to him, even though you don't know who he is.

Perhaps you may not understand what I am saying right now, but actually, if you have someone who can trust, you will feel good. And if you have someone who entrust your responsibility, you will feel good,

you know. In that way, we can, you know, live forever. We will have eternal life. Entrusting our responsibility-sharing our responsibility with many people. That is, you know, relationship between teacher and disciple. And that is why we recite sutra for-for our teachers every morning.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (2/9/01).

[1] Chadwick text gave as "Soyanandai."

[2] Also Taiso.

[3] Also Dajian Gunin.

[4] Chadwick text gave as one word.

[5] Chadwick text gave as Choro.

[6] Also, more commonly, Shingetsu Shoryo.

[7] Also Sokaku.

[8] Chadwick text gave as Seccho.

[9] Hyakujo Ekai (Jap.) or Pai-chang Huai-hai (Chin.): 720-814. Chinese Ch'an master of the T'ang period and dharma successor of Baso.

[10] Suzuki-roshi pronounced it parinibbana (Pali), not parinirvana (Sanskrit).

[11] Hoto (Jap.): "lamp of the dharma"; Buddhist teaching that dispels spiritual darkness as a lamp dispels shadow.

[12] The Shobogenzo fascicle is: \_\_\_\_\_.

[13] "Yuibutsu yobutsu": "Only Buddha and Buddha," a phrase from the Lotus Sutra as well as the title of a fascicle of Dogen's Shobogenzo. Yui means "only" or "solely." Yo means "and" or "together with." Butsu means "Buddha."

[14] See SR-70-07-11, p. 3 (fn. 4).

## 8 - Eko Lecture #6

Wednesday, July 15, 1970

Eko Lecture #6: The Fourth Morning Eko  
Tassajara

[This is the last in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-roshi on the four ekos chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Soto Zen temples and monasteries.

The Fourth Morning Eko:

Choka shido[1] fugin

Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa sambo, fushite shokan o taretamae.

Line 2. Jorai, Dai hi shin darani o fujusu,

Line 3. atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa,

Line 4. tozan bosu hokkai bosogya to kakkaku honi,

Line 5. kokka korosha sho shorei,

Line 6. tozan kechien shido no danna,

Line 7. gassan seishu no roku shin kenzoku shichi se no bumo,

hokkaino ganjiki ni eko su,

Line 8. onajiku bodai o madoka ni sen koto o.

Dedication for the Morning Service Ancestor's Sutra

Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and give us the true Triple Treasure.

Line 2. Thus, as we chant the Dai Hi Shin Darani,

Line 3. we dedicate the collected merit to

Line 4. this temple's deceased monks plus all deceased monks, each one dignified,

Line 5. all the souls of this nation's actual benefactors,

Line 6. this temple's members and supporters,

Line 7. this temple's priests and monks and all their relatives for seven generations, and all sentient beings in the realm of the true law.

Line 8. May they be completely enlightened.]

The last chanting will be the chanting for the-for monks, you know, or students who is related-who was-who passed away: student related to the temple or monastery. We, for an instance-last year Trudy Dixon passed away, and we had a ceremony-memorial service the other day. But not only [on] memorial days but also we recite sutra every morning for monks and students who passed away, and the parents or ancestors of we students, and our donors, and the people who worked for the country-for our country. That is-is the last service we have every morning.

[Line 1. Aogi koi negawakuwa sambo, fushite shokan o taretamae.]

And in its eko says: Aogi koinegawakuwa sambo, fushite shokan o taretamae. Aogi koinegawakuwa means: "Looking upwards to the altar, we pray or we-we ask for Three Treasure's presence-Buddha, dharma, sangha-and, with the merit of reciting Dai Hi Shin Darani, we dedicate for the-for the monks and students who is related to us and passed away. And parents or ancestors of every student, and ancestors-ancestors and parents of our donors, and the people who worked hard for the country. And what we wish is that by the merit of reciting sutra we-we can-we want to help their practice, and I want them to help our practice-encourage our practice." That is the meaning of the last eko.

In each-in Japan, this kind of, you know, custom or dedication started already [in] Buddha's time. If you read scriptures you will have [read about] many event. And on that occasion Buddha told his disciples to recite sutra or to make offering for those-for their parents. Maybe first event, as far as we know, the King Hashinoku-o[2] asked Buddha to [if he could] make offering to Buddha and to-to make-to give sermon on that occasion. That is the first event, maybe. After that, in India, there are-in India, it is a kind of a custom to make offering.

And offering is-there are two kinds of offering: alms-offering, you know, alms-giving, and dharma-giving. Those are two, you know, two kinds of offering. To give sermon, or to-to give-to recite sutra or to practice zazen is a kind of offering to the people and to the deceased too. And the best alms-offering was supposed to be to offer something-to offer-to make alms-offering to priest was the best offering. And for the priest to give in such an occasion, they would-Buddha would-give them-give

them some sermon. And later, we have, in alms-giving, we have incense-offering of incense, offering of flower, and offering of light, and offering of food. And those are, you know, most important offerings to Buddha.

To incense-offering means, you know, to offer incense, to ask Buddha to come is the meaning of offering incense. When Buddha, you know, know someone is burning incense, Buddha would go-Buddha would visit the family who is, you know, who make incense offering, and he respond to their wish, and he would give sermon.

So incense is sometime called "messenger," you know, not messenger from Buddha [laughs], but messenger from someone to-for Buddha to come. That is, you know, original meaning of offering incense. Later, incense offering means like is fragrant of incense pervades everywhere. Buddha's teaching and Buddha's wisdom or buddha-nature is everywhere. So it is the incense offering symbolize Buddha's inspiring activity. But originally, we think, incense is to invite, you know, to ask Buddha to come.

And flower-we, you know, offer flower in this way nowadays, but before, in India, they scatter flowers when Buddha come, you know. Maybe that is more Indian way. I don't know. I haven't been to India yet, but I understand they are observing-still observing that kind of rituals. In Vedanta society, you know, they, you know, they offer, you know, flowers to the altar. That will be the Indian way, but later in China or Japan, we offer flower in flower vase, like this.

Water-water also-when we drink water, all the thirst, you know, will go. All the flame of, you know, many desires will calm down [laughs]. So the water symbolize the wisdom-wisdom which will clear up our mind, wisdom which make our thirsty desire to calm down. So water means wisdom.

And light or candle also symbolize the wisdom which will break the darkness of the ignorance. And, as you know, we-when we offer light and flower, light is more-supposed to be more important offering. So we offer light left-hand side, and offer flower right-hand side of the Buddha. If I am Buddha, here there is flower, and this side there is candle. That is more usual. And we offer water and incense center.

Food-not only food-as you see in Lotus Sutra, there is four offerings or more: food, medicine, and wearing [clothing] or bed. Onjiki efuku. Efuku is-onjiki is food. Efuku is clothing. And gaku-gaku is bed. Those are also important alms-giving.

When we say hokuyo in Japanese, you know, we-in Japanese we say hokuyo itashimasho ari- [partial word]-or hokuyo or oniga itashimasho. Our member may come-would come maybe tomorrow, or the day-



week-"tomorrow is my mother's memorial day, so we want to have hokuyo-hokuyo itashimasho." Hokuyo means, you know, ku means "offering." Or "to offer" is ku. Yo means "to encourage," you know, their parent or their mother's spirit to practice more, and ask her encouragement for our practice is, you know, yo. Yo means "to-to give-to give some nourishment" or "to encourage" is yo.

In-and-when in Japan, you know, I didn't like so much, but [laughs] anyway, when they observe hokuyo or memorial service, and they would, you know, have a kind of-not party, but, you know, they provide various dishes for priest. Originally, you know, priest-they invited priest to give them some talk or to give them some sermon. And they would offer food for the sermon.

So still, in Jap- [partial word]-in China and Japan, whenever we observe-when we observe memorial service for their parents or their ancestors, they would give us food. A lot of food. If I cannot-if we cannot eat it, they give us, you know, too much, so we cannot finish it. If we cannot finish it, they would ask us to carry it back. When I was a little temple disciple, I had a very difficult time [laughing] to take them back to my temple. My teacher would leave as soon as he say goodbye. Yatomo gyatso animashte.[3] And wearing geta,[4] they-he would go-go back. And my duty was to, you know, to borrow some bags, you know, to put various food in it, and to carry his food and my food. And if I am youngest, you know, I would carry my older disciples' food too [laughs].

Sometime-and they may say, "As it is too hot, how about this watermelon? Please carry it back." [Laughs.] Sometime pumpkin. Pump- [partial word]-watermelon is, you know, good-still good, but pumpkin is awful to carry [laughs, laughter]. It is, you know, always rolling, you know, right and left on my back, this way and that way, because it is round. Watermelon is very smooth, so it doesn't hurt-didn't hurt my back so badly. But pumpkin is awful, you know, because it is [laughs] not-it is rough. And we say dekokoboko.[5] Boko is-this is boko [probably gestures]-V-shaped, you know, and M-shape is deko [laughs]. Dekoboko. Several time, you know, I was given pumpkin when I was coming home.

Anyway, in Japan we observe-in the countryside we observe memorial service in that way. It-they are very good people, and they observe it very sincerely without, you know, asking too-too much question. Yesterday someone was saying-what-what was the song-religion?-religion?

Student: "Give Me that Old-Time Religion."

Oh-"Old-Time Religion," yeah. "Old-time religion [laughs] was good enough." [Laughs, laughter.] It is exactly so, you know. They don't mind what it is. "Old-time religion is good enough for me" [laughs, laughter].

But it was not so happy with me, you know, when I have to do some-[partial word]-too much about it.

And-ohigan, you know. Ohigan-do you know ohigan? Spring and evening-autumn equinox day. We every-almost all the family observe big memorial service. And they would, you know-each family will make offering to my temple's Buddha [laughs]. You know, so, if my village is-if there-were eighty families in my village, eighty-from eighty families we would-Buddha would-receive eighty, you know, offerings. Sometime mochi.[6] Sometime dango. Dango is "rice bowl." It is originated in India, you know, and Japanese peoples still observe it, you know, Indian custom to offer dango, which is "rice bowl." You-you grind rice and steam it and make rice bowl and offer. So, you know, Indian people, as you know, when they eat they make bowl and eat it, so they-we still offer, you know, dango to the Buddha-one of the important offering to their-to the Buddha and their family shrine.

In Japan, actually, we are-we were too busy in taking care of memorial service or funeral service, and we actually didn't have not much time to practice zazen even. And around the temple there-mostly we have big cemetery, and to clean cemetery-cemetery of the family who is not-is not in village. Recently, you know, in countryside of the Japan, people give up their home and go to the city to work, to have more-to have better job.

So in the country, there are-there are many tombstone no one actually taking care of. So in ohigan or equinox day, we-we were pretty busy. This is for-I think hokuyo. Originally it is good-it has deep meaning, but if, you know, we depend on alms-giving or preaching too much, forgetting the fundamental-fundamental practice of zazen, Buddhism will be lost. I hope-I think in America we Zen Buddhist will not be involved in such a activity so much, I hope. But I think we should not forget our friend with whom we practice, and who encouraged us, and who had very good time with us. We shouldn't forget. But I don't think it is necessary to have big celebration or to have big memorial service for them.

As Dogen-zenji said: "If you," you know, "if you have-if you want to make alms-giving, the cherry blossom in the mountain will be good offering-will be a good offering." Even a cherry blossom in deep mountain will be a good offering-will be maybe the best offering. So to have this kind of sentiment is important, but we should not be involved in that kind of activity too much, I think.

That is-anyway, we-last dedication is for our ancestors and for priests and students who practiced with us, and for people who worked for-who worked hard for our country and society.

I think this will be, as I am going to visit Japan end of August, I must-I am leaving Tassajara the day after tomorrow, and tomorrow evening we

want to observe a kind of ceremony for our friend. So there will be no lecture. Accordingly, this lecture will be the last lecture for a while. If you have some question, please ask me. Hai.

#### Questions and Answers

Student A: Roshi, in a week or so the ordination-lay ordination of students will take place.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Oh, I see.

Student A: And some- [partial word: someone?]-a week or so ago,[7] someone asked you what your name meant. You said "not much," so you're not attached to your name very much.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: And though your name has much use-has many uses-we all see it and stand behind your name with our best effort. Buddhism is a name that many people attach to-many-though it too uses. So, as in the West, where-so as in the West, I believe in the East, as well, such names as Buddhism often do not have so much standing behind it. There are, perhaps, many people who are Buddhists who are not religious. And there are not many people who have never heard of Buddhism-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: -a practice that [2-3 words unclear]. You yourself once said that Buddhism, to use a term [3-6 words unclear]. Why then did you recommend last week [2-3 words unclear] lay ordination, and what is the difference that ordination will make? [Sentence may have finished.]

Tape ends abruptly.]

---

—

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and Eko Study Book by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican 11/24/99.

[1] Probably shidoden (Jap.): The memorial service hall in a Zen temple, which contains memorial tablets for lay practitioners and their families. Memorial services are also performed here, at the request of lay practitioners, for their relatives and friends.

[2] Hashinoku-o: Prasenajit, the king of Shravasti in central India, born

in the same year as Shakyamuni Buddha.

[3] Poor phonetic only.

[4] Japanese wooden clogs.

[5] dekokoboku (Jap.): uneven or bumpy surface.

[6] mochi: Japanese rice cake.

[7] See SR-70-07-08.

## **9 - Japanese Way, American Way, Buddhist Way**

Sunday, July 19, 1970

Japanese Way, American Way, Buddhist Way  
City Center, San Francisco

After-after forty days of my leaving from here I feel I am a stranger to the building, not to you but [laughs] to the building and my cups and [laughs, laughter]. I forgot where is my-where was my things. Each time I need something, I have to try to think about "Where is it? Oh! There." [Laughs.] Something like that.

I am thinking about now, at the same, time Dogen-zenji's teaching: "There are people who is in enlightenment over enlightenment and delusion in delusion." You know, enlightenment over enlightenment [laughs]. It does not mean after attaining enlightenment he lost himself, and he-that he became a hermit or something.

"Enlightenment over en- [partial word]-over enlightenment" may be too much enlightenment [laughs, laughter] for you. But "enlightenment over enlightenment"-maybe tr- [partial word]-my translation is wrong, but I don't know how to translate it.

"Enlightenment over enlightenment" means to forget enlightenment after attaining enlightenment. Such people, you know, because they have no idea of enlightenment anymore because they already have gone through enlightenment, so there is no trace of enlightenment in their mind. So they have, you know, they do not stick to enlightenment anymore. They do not stick to Buddhist way anymore. So they are quite common. And you-common enough-to be a ordinary person.

So he [Dogen] says-delusion-in delusion-meichu umei, gojo tokugo.[1] Goshō tokugo means "enlightenment-after enlightenment" or "over enlightenment." And [meichu umei means] "delusion in delusion."

Many people ask me, you know, "At Tassajara you are practicing Japanese way [laughs]-Japanese Zen." What- "Do you think that is appropriate for us," you know, "to observe Japanese way of practice?"

Are we going to be a Japanese [laughs] after," you know, "practicing zazen?" They ask me that kind of question.

Our purpose of zazen is, of course, first of all we should be-we should attain enlightenment or we should get through our practice. But after, you know, you become a real Buddhist, you know, then you should forget that you are Buddhist. Even though you wear robe, you should forget all about what you are we- [partial word]-wearing. This is very important point.

But I don't mean that you shouldn't wear robe after [laughs] you attained enlightenment. I don't mean that because you attained enlightenment there is no need for you to practice zazen anymore. You should, you know, continue your zazen practice. But in that zazen practice, you should have complete freedom even from zazen practice. There you have no idea of zazen, or eating-no special idea of oryoki, you know, eating-eating by oryoki or practicing in cross-legged position.

This is a very interesting point. And if you really get through our practice, you will enjoy [laughs] your robe, you know, because you have no idea. When we have no idea of robe-wearing robes or practicing zazen, people, you know, may ask you, "Why do you wear such a long-sleeved robe? Isn't it better to wear something simple?" Sometimes they may ask me, and sometimes they may say, "Oh, that is beautiful!" [Laughs.] "Let me see how long your sleeve [laughs] is-are."

Many people ask me various question, but, you know, for me, you know, it doesn't-my feeling and their feeling about my robe is completely different. I don't mind what I wear, you know. But people-when people become interested in what I am wearing: "Oh! Ohh [laughs]. My sleeves are very long!" [Laughs.] "Oh, this must be a very inconvenient!"-you know.

But when people think it is inconvenient, you know, if I don't feel, you know, inconvenient, this is strange feeling. "What-what am I wearing?" [Laughs.] You know, you may have that kind of, you know, feeling. And this is actually the secret of-secret of how to live in this world and how to be successful in your business. Is there some businessman [laughs] here? I don't know. I don't think so, but if there is some businessman, I want to tell him the secret of [laughs, laughter] how to be a successful [laughter] businessman.

Nowadays, it is not so much, but when I was quite young-young schoolboy, what we see in Yokohama City, where there was a big port, you know, Yokohama: It is big trading center, and there were many cups and pots and everything for ho- [partial word]-foreign countries to export. What we see there was not supposed to be Japanese article, you know. But to me, it was-to us, it was not at all Japanese, you know, things. It is things to attract, you know, foreigners as a Japanese article, but it isn't-it was not actually-they were not actually Japanese article.

They were too-maybe too much Japanese [laughs] or something.

Anyway, we felt very bad about-to see-about seeing that kind of article to be called Japanese, you know, article. When your understanding-when your practice is not good enough or very superficial, you will buy that kind of thing, thinking that they are Japanese article. If you really understand what is Japanese article, what you may buy is really Japanese, and which could be applied in-which could be very harmonious articles in your own room. Sometime you may not realize this is Japanese article, because it will be very-it will go with the furn-[partial word]-other furnitures or things you have there. That is, you know, what I want to call Japanese article.

There are many such articles which is really Japanese and which could be really American. That kind in-that kind of article is the article I want to introduce [to] you. And what that kind of, you know, Zen is I want to introduce to America. That is why I stick to robes [laughs]. Do you understand? Maybe not.

I thought at that time, when I saw many, you know, pseudo-Japanese articles, you know, in-in Yokohama, I felt very bad and I felt very sad to see them and to export that kind of a thing as Japanese article.

At that time I thought-I thought I might go to abroad after understanding our Zen completely to introduce real, you know, Zen Buddhism to some other countries. Buddhism I want to introduce to this country is, I think should be very, very Japanese in its true sense, and at the same time it could be, you know, completely applied in America too.

So I am very particular about, you know, about design of the temple or altar. I don't like, you know, too-too much Japanese things or too-not enough Japanese or seemingly too much, but in its real sense it is not enough Japanese, you know. When our practice is not good enough, we will stick to our practice. We have no freedom from our practice. When we understand Dogen-zenji's way completely, when he said: "no trace of enlightenment there," or "enlightenment-after enlightenment. Over"-not over-"after enlightenment."

I don't mean that, you know, I am completely Japanese or completely Zen teacher. I don't think so, I must confess [laughs] because, you know, I am very much, maybe, Japanese still, and I may stick to Japanese-Japanese way, maybe, still. But what I am trying to [do] is without changing my, you know, outlook, and to be completely-how to be completely Japanese or forget all about Japanese. This is not so easy thing. You shouldn't think this is quite easy. If you think it is quite easy, it is-will be a great mistake.

So at-at the same time, I do not accept so-called-it "American way" [laughs, laughter], as I don't accept Japanese way so easily, even

though this is Japanese, old, beautiful, you know, thing. "No," I may say, most of the time. So even though you say "this is American way," I don't easily accept that. Here there is real point of our practice in Tassajara and in City zendo: how to be real American-how to be, for us, how to be a real Japanese, without, you know, changing our original nature-original face. Before we attain this point for Japanese it was necessary, you know, to be a Chinese, and I think it is necessary, you know, for you to be a Japanese once [laughing], and forget all about American or Chinese.

Without this kind of, you know, determination, you cannot be a Buddhist in its real sense. Even though you do not actually attain this point-even though you don't attain this point, as long as you know the-how to be a real Buddhist, then that will be a great help for American culture, and not only for American culture but also for Japanese culture and some other culture, if you have eyes to see what is real, you know, human culture and what is not.

As it is, you know, already-as the day is already going shorter and shorter, and we already see the flowers in-flowers outside-autumn flower-some Chinese, you know, monk said: "Don't you see the flower of-red flower, on"-I don't know what do you call that tree you have a kind-it looks like-the trunk looks like a manzanita, you know, red trunk, and it is-it is not e- [partial word]-evergreen tree, and it has, in this time of the year, it has beautiful pink or most-red, you may say red-flowers. "You don't-don't you see the-that flower in-in-in that tree?" I don't know the name of that tree in Engl- [partial word]-in English. "Those," you know, "flowers, are result of hard practice of," you know, "successive masters. Don't you see that flower? That is result of various," you know, "masters' practice. It is," you know, "for-for-for the tree, it is not difficult to be that way."

Without fail at this time of the year that flower comes out in the same color, quite naturally. But for us human being, to be like that is almost impossible. But many successive teachers attained that kind of, you know, natural practice, which is free from everything, and which is quite natural to himself. And always helping people, without saying anything, just to be there in the corner of-of their garden is enough. But for us human being, it is after training after training, practice after practice our teachers attain that kind of freedom: "Don't you see the flower?"

Without knowing what is human being, what is the nature of human being, why we suffer so much, [and] what we are doing every day, we have no ground to talk about freedom. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... maybe help [?] you.

You may say-I think you can say that all the Budd- [partial word]-Buddha's teaching-power of teaching is-are all the [1 word unclear]

teaching about what is human nature. But [1 word unclear] with a great mercy and wisdom, he taught about our human nature. And he wanted to make us realize what kind of practice you should have-we should have, and what kind of understanding we should have.

Actually when you realize what Buddha meant, there is no reason why we sh- [partial word]-we should be just Japanese or why we should be just American. All of us should be a son of Buddha. When the various river flow into a big ocean, there is no names of river or water. When all of us become-all human being become Buddhist, there is no Japanese or no American people.

And yet, Japanese will be just Japanese, and American people will be just American people. We are now, and-practicing our way in Buddhist way, to forget the disti- [partial word]-distinction between Japanese, and Chinese, or Indian, or American. When we get out of the-those area, we will be real Buddhist.

I want you to trust me [laughs]. I don't try to force Japanese way to you. Actually, you know, I don't like stinky Japanese way [laughs]- which stinks like Japanese, you know. And at the same time, I want you to practice Buddhist way in its true sense and see what will happen to you.

If you have doubt in your practice-you cannot practice our way without having any doubt and, you know, involved in the practice in its, you know-with great confidence, or conviction, you can practice our way.

You shouldn't say "American way" or "Japanese way." If you say so, I must find out what you mean by that. I am very strict with that point. Since I am quite young, I was making a great effort on that point. Maybe that is why I came to America.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] mei (delusion); chu (inside or within); u (again); mei (delusion); go (enlightenment); jo (to put on top of); toku (get); go (enlightenment). From Dogen's Shobogenzo "Genjo Koan."

## **10 - Mudra Practice And How To Accept Instructions From Various Teachers**

Sunday, July 26, 1970



## Mudra Practice And How To Accept Instructions From Various Teachers San Francisco

This morning, I want to talk about our practice, as usual [laughs], especially when we have various teachers. So far we had Tatsugami-roshi[1] and Yoshida-roshi.[2] And you will be-you will have-your practice must be confused a little bit [laughs], this way or that way [laughs]. But actually for you there is only one practice. There is no need to be confused when you have right understanding of our practice of Dogen-zenji. But I don't say Dogen-zenji's way, this way, or that way.

For advanced students, what I want to talk about will be easily understood. You know, for an instance, when you, you know-about mudra you have in your zazen. Keizan-zenji,[3] you know, says: "Put your mind on your mudra, or in your palm." And some teacher-Yoshida-roshi says-say: "Put your thumb on your middle finger, like-over your middle finger." Some other teacher says, you know," put your thumb-have a vertical line by [between] your pointing finger and thumb, like this [presumably gestures].

Recently what-I notice that some-some of you [laughs] [were] doing this too much this way. Someone's finger-finger-thumb is not right over middle finger, you know. Maybe [laughs] like this. Going the extreme, you know, like this. That is not what Yoshida-roshi said.

This is too much.

We say if you-if your thumb is too much like this, it means that your mind will be contaminated, you know, too rigid and too narrow. [Loud sound of a falling object.] Uh-oh [laughs, laughter]. If your, you know, thumb is too much like this, you know, your mind is too open or too easy, or, you know, too much free, you know. So when-when your finger-thumb is like this, or just in right place, someone may say "this" or will say "this [that]," but it should not be like this, or should not be too-or inside.

The point is, you know, the point is, to let you-let your hands practice zazen and find your mudra-right posture, and let your mudra practice zazen, you know. When you practice zazen, you are not putting your thumb this way, or-outside or inside too much. Just find good place for them to practice zazen, for mudra [to] practice zazen, and it is not you are controlling your mudra. Let-let it have the right practice. That is the-how you adjust your mudra.

So when you do like this, when you practice zazen, your mudra is also practicing zazen, for your mudra is independent from your practice and your-as your practice is independent practice, including all the practice-all the practices-all the Buddha's practice, when you practice zazen, all

the Buddhas also practicing zazen.

And as your mudra is practicing zazen, you yourself is also practicing zazen, and every part of your body is practicing zazen. In-with this, you know, feeling or idea, if you practice zazen, that is real practice.

Here you will have some question. When actually your legs has pain, or when actually you find it difficult to have good mudra, you know, it-it may be necessary to have some idea controlling your mudra this way or that way.

Here, Dogen-zenji's-there is Dogen-zenji's answer for that. He says: "For the beginner, if there is no idea of this way or that way [laughs], that is not true practice," he says. For beginner-for beginners there must be some rules, or some idea of controlling, or having this posture or that posture, or which is right or which is wrong. There must be some idea of right or wrong, good or bad. If there is no idea of good or bad for beginner, that is not right practice either, he says. I think this is very true. I think for most of you it is necessary to-to force or to make some effort, you know, to keep right posture.

If you, you know, let your necks-neck or mudra practicing-practice zazen as they like [laughs], it will not be good practice either. So he says-Dogen-zenji says: "It is necessary to have some idea of practice, good practice or bad practice, but true pra- [partial word]-in the true practice, there is no idea of controlling or-controlling your physical posture. It should be quite natural with your hand, with your legs, and with your necks-neck, and every part-part of your body.

Here is Dogen-zenji's poem: [4]

Tide ebbed, tide ebbed, no blowing wind,  
an abandoned boat on the lonesome shore,  
the moonlight shining meets sky-midnight sky.

Tide ebbed, no blowing wind,  
an abandoned boat on the lonesome shore,  
the moonlight shining midni- [partial word]-midnight sky.

This is actually, you know, Dogen-zenji's, you know, Dogen-zenji-Dogen-zenji's practice:

Tide ebbed, no blowing wind,  
an abandoned boat on the lonesome shore,

the moonlight shining midnight sky.

The ebb tide, no blowing wind, an abandoned boat, and the moonlight. Those are one whole, you know, beautiful picture of seashore in-in a-in midnight-in a midnight. The moon-the moon is practicing zazen. A boat without anyone, you know [laughs] boat-abandoned boat-boat on the shore is practicing zazen, where is-where there is no wind and no tide coming. No wind disturbing his practice. No tide or wind is disturbing the boat, but above the sky the big moon is shining calmly. So you may say the moon does not control anything, the abandoned ship is not disturbed by anything. They are-each of them are practicing complete zazen. And those are-but this whole picture is also the picture of zazen practice or of whole world in the midnight.

But if you don't understand the point of zazen, you don't understand this picture in this way. You may put emphasis on the moon or on the abandoned ship. But if you, you know, see the abandoned ship that will be the point of this picture, but if you see the moon the moon will be the point of this whole picture. But actually both abandoned ship and the moon is-can be the point of this picture. But there is no two points [laughs], but one point. But that one point could be, you know, boat or the moon.

So your practice could be practice of the mudra. So I think that is why Keizan-zenji said: "Put your mind on your palm." Here, right here. At that time, the mudra is practicing zazen, not you [laughs]. But if you don't understand what Keizan-zenji really meant-"If you don't put your mind on your palm, that is not true zazen," [laughs] you may say. That is wrong understanding. When you practice real zazen, you know, actually, you know, the palm is-your mudra is practicing zazen. So naturally the mind of the mudra will be on the mud- [partial word]-in the mudra.

Keizan-zenji is not emphasizing some particular practice of putting mind on your mudra, and he does not say if you do not put your mudra on your, you know, hands, on your palm, that is not true practice. In the true practice, you know, actually mudra is practicing zazen with its own mind, and mudra is-practice-mudra's practice-zazen practice include your practice and practice of whole world.

So Dogen-zenji said: "If your practice does not include everyone's practice, that is not true practice." I am talking about actual feeling in your practice. I'm not [laughs], you know, I'm not talking about some particular practice of mind. When you reach-when you have that kind of, you know, feeling or interpretation of zazen, with its actual feeling, I think that is so-called-it Dogen-zenji's shikantaza.

If you practice, you know, in that way, you will not be confused by various teachers' instructions. Various teachers' ins- [partial word]-instruction has some, you know, purpose, some reason why he-why

they say so. If you understand why they say so, you will, you know- various teachers' instruction will help you. But if you bec- [partial word]- it is, you know, very-very usual for us to say: "This is the right posture, this is not right posture, he is good teacher, and he is not good teacher." But when you, you know, sincerely practice your own practice, you know, seeking for the maturity of your practice, various teachers' instruction will be a good food for your practice, and you will appreciate various teachers' instructions. And you will not understand-accept their instructions with hasty mind. You will carefully, you know, ask: "What does it mean?" And you will carefully show your way to him-to them, and ask their advice. Then you will have good instruction.

Actual zazen practice is not something which you can, you know, explain in some-in-in-in your book, you know, this way or that way [laughs]. That is almost impossible, because each one of us has different difficulties in our practice. That is why you must have your teachers, and you must have dokusan with your teacher.

So Dogen-zenji says: "The point of practice is practice of zazen, actual practice of zazen." And sanshi monpo [5]-dokusan-to ask instruction from your teacher. Both is necessary, he says.

I want you to, you know, to practice more carefully and more sincerely our zazen. Constant, you know, effort, constant careful effort is necessary for your zazen, or it is not zazen-actual zazen. As Sekito-zenji said: "Step by step," you know, "observing things, you should practice zazen, or else even though you practice zazen it will not make any sense. And don't say 'this way or that way.' And don't set up any rules. And don't be restricted by some rules."

So if you-when your-your practice is sincere enough, then, you know, you cannot be restri- [partial word]-restricted in some particular way of practice. Day by day, year after year, your practice will make some progress, and then-then your-your way of practice will be changed. So there could be any particular wa- [partial word]-actual way, actual-special way. [Sentence appears to have been finished. Tape turned over.]

... your practice is not sincere. Practice you are talking about is someone's practice [laughing]-maybe Yoshida-roshi's practice or Tatsugami-roshi's practice, and not your practice. Putting aside your practice and talking about someone's practice doesn't mean anything. If you-if some teacher said: "This is-will be the be- [partial word]-good way," then you should, you know, actually think if that is appropriate practice for you or not, and you should ask question. Then, you know, you will have your own practice.

Anyway, I am very grateful to have various teachers for-for you, and to have various instructions from various teachers. Actually we need more teachers, but unless you have, you know, real-unless you know how to

practice zazen, no one can help you. You know, in the heavy you know, rain may wash away the seed, small seed like sesame [laughs] when it has no root [laughs]. We should not be like a sesame without-without roots [laughs]-without its own roots. Because if you have no roots in your practice, you will be washed away. But if you have really a good root, even your sesame-your practice is like sesame-like-the heavy rain will help you a lot. So I want you not to lose our good-our good chance to practice our way.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (9/21/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Tatsugami Sotan Ryosen: Ino-roshi of Eihei-ji temple in Japan. Head of training at Tassajara in 1970.

[2] Yoshida Eshun. Teacher of okesa sewing in the lineage of Hashimoto-roshi.

[3] Keizan Jokin (1268-1325). Fourth patriarch of Japanese Soto Zen.

[4] Waka 19-J (composed in 1247):

Shobogenzo Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

Nami mo hiki In the heart of the night,

kaze mo tsunaganu the moonlight framing

sute obune a small boat drifting,

tsuki koso yawa no tossed not by the waves

sakai nari keri. nor swayed by the breeze.

From Steven Heine, *The Zen Poetry of Dogen*, Boston: Tuttle, 1997, pp. 36-37.

[5] San (visit); shi (master); mon (ask about); po (dharma)-Japanese.

## **11 - How To Understand Rituals And Precepts**

Tuesday, July 28, 1970

How To Understand Rituals And Precepts: Zazen, Rituals And Precepts  
Cannot Be Separated  
San Francisco

This evening I want to talk about some problems you have when you come to Zen Center. And you understand why we practice-zazen practice, pretty well. But why we observe this kind of ritual-rituals, is maybe rather difficult to understand why. Actually, it is not something to be explained [laughs] so well. If you ask me why we observe or why I observe those rituals, you know, without much problem is difficult to answer.

But first of all, why I do it is because-because I have been doing for a long time [laughs]. So for me there is not much problem [laughs, laughter]. So I-I tend to think that because I have no problem in observing my way, there must not be problem-so much problem for you [laughs]. But actually, you are an Amer- [partial word]-you are Americans, and I am Japanese, and you have been-you were not practicing Bud- [partial word]-Buddhist way, so there must be various problems [laughs].

So this kind of problem is almost impossible to solve. But if you, you know, actually follow our way I think you will reach-you will have some understanding of our rituals. And what I want to talk about is actually about precepts, you know.

But precepts for me is also include rituals. And when we say "precepts," it-it is actually another name of our zazen practice. For us, zazen practice and observation of rituals are not different-two different things. How to observe our rituals is how to observe our precepts. The way we observe, and the idea of observing practice or rituals are actually same. And our practice, especially as a-as Soto school, put emphasis on our everyday life, including rituals, or eating, or way of going [to] restroom, or bathroom [laughs] too. All those things are included in our practice.

So the way we practice zazen, the-the way we practice rituals, and the way we-way of life as a Buddhist or Zen student is fundamentally the same. But when we talk about our way of life or rituals, you know, actually you face to some rules. Rules of life will be, you know, rules of observing prec- [partial word]-ceremony is rituals. And rules of-in our everyday life is our precepts.

So we-we have, you know, here we have the idea of rules. When we say "precepts," precepts means some rules usually, but that is just a superficial understanding of rituals-precepts. Precepts is actually-expression of our true nature is precepts. And how we express our true nature is always according to the place or situation under which you live. So to practice zazen is to be yourself, you know, on your black cushion, and to observe our precepts is just to be yourself. And how we observe our rituals [is] to be with people in Buddha hall.

So as you have some way of sitting in-on black cushion, you know, we have some way of observing our rituals or ceremony. And spirit of, you know, in our prac- [partial word]-in zazen practice, the point is to get rid of thinking mind-to be free from thinking mind, or to be free from emotional activity. In short, that is the practice of selflessness. And in our rituals observation, the point is to be free from selfish idea-or the rituals-practice of rituals is practice of selflessness.

First of all you enter, you know, you bow. The bow means to-we say gotai-tochi.[1] Gotai is "our body." Our-to- [partial word]-tochi is "to throw away our body." It means that, in short, practice of selflessness, you know, to throw away our physical and mental being. And-or we offer, you know, ourselves to Buddha. That is our practice of bow. To bow-when you bow, you bow and lift your hand. That means to lift Buddha's feet, which is on your palm, like this, and you feel Buddha on your palm. So in this way, you-when you practice bow, you have no-or you shouldn't have-you are supposed not to have any idea of self, you know. You give up everything.

When Buddha was begging, his follower, you know, spread his hair on the ground, muddy ground, and let Buddha pass that place. That is-is supposed to be the origin of why we bow. And in ritual, you know, you bow and work. You do everything by some sign [laughs], you know, that is, you know, that kind of thing is-maybe the things you may not like so much [laughs]. Just-it looks like very formal, you know, to-to-to do everything by sign, by bell. Whether you want to do it or not, you must do it [laughs]. But it looks like very formal. And actually you-as long as you are in Buddha hall-hall, you should observe our way according to the rules we have here. But why we do it is to forget ourselves and to become one-to feel or to be, you know, Zen student actually in this Buddha hall. That is why we-we observe our rituals.

And this is very important point. To feel your being here, right in this time, is very important practice for us. And actually, that is the point of observing precepts and observing rituals and practice of zazen. To feel or to be yourself at certain time, in certain place. For that purpose, we practice our way.

So actual feeling cannot-could not be understood without observing it. When you observe it, you feel actual feeling of rituals. As long as you try to know what does it mean or why you do it, you know, it is difficult to feel your actual being on that place.

Only when you do it you will, you know, feel your being. To be a Buddhist is to do things like Buddha, like your friend do. That is actually, you know, to-how to be a Buddhist [laughs]. It does not mean, you know, when you are able to observe our rituals as your friend do, then you will be-you will have no problem in your everyday life. That kind of feeling or practice will be extended in your everyday life.

You will find yourself in various situation, and you will intuitively know what you should do. And you will react-you will have right reaction to someone's, you know, activity. When you, you know, you have-when you lack, or when you are not able to respond to the people without, you know, thinking how to-without wondering what he has in his mind or what-what is the reason why he, you know, force something to you [laughs], you know, then it-maybe sometime you can. But most of the time I don't think you will have right-you cannot have right respond, or you will not have most intuitive, you know, respond to the people.

So why we-you do it is, you know, I want you to do it until I think, at least, you know, he is-until I think-quite sure about his respond, you know, to other people. How he respond to others is very important point. As a teacher, you know, when we teachers see our students, you may be trying to be, you know, [to] act right, and try to understand people, but most of the time it is rather difficult to have-to be very-to have some kind of intuition. And for-if you have this kind of, you know, if you start to have this kind of intuition, you have big confidence in yourself, and you can trust people, and you can trust yourself. And so, all the problem-problems which is created by yourself will be no more. You will have no more problem-something, you know, almost all the people may have. That is why, you know, we have training or practice.

My, you know, master[2] used to say to us, you know: "If you stay with me for," you know, "for several years, whether you become a priest or not," you know, "if you become a priest, you will be a good priest, and you-if you stay-remain layman, you will be a good," you know, "layman or good citizen," he always said, "and you will have no problem in your life."

And I think that is-that was very true, you know. I was the six[th] youngest disciple when [laughs] I became my master's disciple. And-and two of us become a-became a priest, but rest of the disciples became, you know, remain laymen. And they are very good, you know, actually. When they come to my teacher they were, you know, some [laughs]-they had some trouble, you know. But all-most of-one disciple who passed away, you know, is exception, but rest of the people has been doing pretty well, although they are not priest. You may-so I think that is very true.

Anyway, this kind of practice is very-very good practice for you. You may think our practice is like a army practice or something [laughs], but actually it is not so. The idea is quite different. Maybe Japanese army, you know, copied our practice, you know. Maybe looks like so, but they couldn't copy [laughs] our spirit.

As you trust your innate nature, which is called buddha-nature, you should trust your innate nature. That is the most important point. And if you trust, you know, your true nature, you should trust your teacher



too. That is very important. Not because your teacher is perfect, you know, but because his innate nature which is same with-with you. The point that-point of practice between teacher and disciple is to get rid of, you know, selfish idea as much as possible and to trust each other. When you-only when you trust your teacher, I think you can practice zazen, and you can practice ritual, and you can act as a Zen Center student.

So to be always, you know, to remain always as a Zen Center student is very important point for you. And how you, you know, become a Zen Center student is to trust your true nature, and to trust your teacher, and to trust your zazen practice without, you know, saying why [laughs]. I think you should do it, as long as you come here. And if you don't want to do so-you do not want to do so, you shouldn't come here, I think. As long as you come here, you should follow our way, or else maybe you will waste your time and you will have regret, you know.

So in this way, I think, we can carry on our schedule. And how we carry on our schedule is how we observe our precepts. Precepts started by Buddha, you know, when he said "Don't do this-that, or don't," you know, "behave like that," you know. That was the origin of precepts. So in India, at Buddha's time, they have Buddha's precepts. And in China, they have more Chinese-they have precepts which is based on Chinese way of life. We have sixteen precepts, you know, but those precepts is the essential, you know, precepts which we should observe as a Japanese, as an American, as a-a-an Indian priest, you know, or layman. That is sixteen precepts.

And those precepts are the precepts which you can apply, you know, to various-apply to your everyday life. We say "Don't kill," you know, but "Don't kill" does not mean just don't kill flies or insects, you know. Actually it is too late [laughs], you know. If you-"Oh, here!"-if you say, "Here is a fly," whether you should kill it or not, it is too late! That problem is always with us, you know. Before you see fly, we have always this kind of problem. When you eat, what you will say, you know: "Seventy-two labors brought us this rice," you know. When we say so, you know, "Seventy-two labors" include, you know, to keep grains from various insects, you know.

So, you know, it is not just-not to kill insects. When you eat, when you say, "Seventy-two labors brought us this rice," you know, it include already the precepts-precept of "not to kill." But actually, you know, after making a great effort to protect corns-corn from insects, we can eat. So at that time we, you know, the way you, you know, observe-ho-[partial word]-the feeling you say "Seventy-two labors" is, you know, should be, you know, related to the precept "not to kill," you know. So "not to kill," precept "not to kill" is not any special-special precept.

To be-to exist here in this way is the result of, you know, sacrificing many animals and plants [laughs]. You are always sacrificing something

for your being. So as long as you are involved in dualistic concept, you know, it is not possible for you to observe our precepts.

So the point is how to be-how to get out of this kind of dualistic concept and fill our being with gratitude is the point of practice. So it is very foolish to say, "not to kill," you know, actually. But why we say "not to kill" is to point out or to-to understand our life from various point-pointing up at, you know, various points. "Not to kill," "not to steal," you know, "not to speak ill of others." Each of those precepts include the other precepts. And each practice or rituals we observe include the other. So if you know-if you have actual feeling of your being here, then it is the way-that is the way you observe precepts and the way you practice zazen.

So if it is not-if you understand how you observe our precepts, even one of them, you can observe the rest of the precepts and you can practice our zazen, you can observe our rituals. Zazen practice and observation of rituals or precepts cannot be separated. How to experience this kind of, you know, feeling, is, you know, why you-is how you understand our precepts.

So, actually, if you say it is difficult, it may be very difficult. But, you know, it cannot be so difficult thing if you say, "I will do it." That's-that's-that is how you observe precepts, even without thinking, you know, whether I can con- [partial word]-observe it or not, you know. "I will do it" means, you know, "don't kill animals." "Yes," you may say-you can say, because originally it is not possible to kill anything [laughs]. You think you-you killed [laughs], but actually, you-you cannot. Even though you think you killed, but they are still alive [laughs]. Even though you eat, you know, something, it is still alive in your body. If something leave your body, they are still alive.

It is not possible for anything to be killed. So only way is to-to be grateful for everything you have [laughs]. That is how you, you know, keep our precepts without, you know, having dualistic understanding of precepts.

Then you may say, "If so, there will not be no need to have precepts." But unless you make yourself quite sure, you know, you cannot feel your presence, you don't feel your being, you do not feel you are alive here. You do not have any gratitude of-or joy of life or gratitude for everything. So, you know, you may-you can easily say: "No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't kill anything." But it means that you will not sacrifice anything-sacrifice yourself for anything. You will be just you. You will not be caught by dualistic, you know, understanding of yourself, and you will feel yourself, as you feel yourself in your zazen.

It is rather difficult to explain [laughs], you know, but that is actually how we observe precepts. So Dogen-zenji says: "Even though we do not try to observe precepts," you know, "and like a-like a-scarecrow

[laughs], "you know, "no evil come to you." It is strange, you know [laughs]. When you have, you know-when you feel your being, you know, in its true sense right here, no, you know, evil come. You cannot viola- [partial word]-violate any precepts, and whatever you do, that is expression of your true nature.

You will not say: "I shouldn't say so" [laughs] or "I shouldn't do that." You will be quite free from that kind of regret or arrogance of observing something-observing some special precepts. That is how you observe precepts.

To-to repeat precepts is to knock [?], you know, or-or to chew your brown rice [laughs]. Without chewing your brown rice, you cannot eat it, you know. Only when you chew, you know [laughs], for pretty long time, like this, you will, you know, you will appreciate the taste of brown rice. When you say, "Oh this is awful! [Laughs.] How many times should I," you know, "chew it before I swallow it down?" That is, you know, very foolish way of chewing brown rice or eating brown rice. If you say, "Oh, sixteen precepts!" [Laughs.] "Awful," you know, "to be a Buddhist!" [Laughs, laughter.] Then, you know, you have no chance to have a real taste of Buddhist way. If you do it one by one, that is how you chew it-how you chew brown rice and how you practice our way.

And pretty soon you will have ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... you may say.

Hmm. I have not much things to say for tonight, but as you may have various, you know, not doubt, but you may have many questions on this point, I try to explain why we observe our rituals and our precepts.

Precepts observation is just to say HAI! [Loudly.] [Laughs.] That is how you observe precepts, you know. You-you shouldn't care-"Hai!" [Said without pause between "care" and "Hai!"] [Laughs.] Shut your eyes. "Hai!"-you should say. That is how you observe your precepts.

When flies come, you know, you should, you know, kill him-kill them. Wsht! [Laughs, laughter.] But you are always prepared, you know, for doing something wrong, maybe, you know. Even though when you are eating you are prepared for it, you know-"uh-oh" [?] [laughs]. You are not eating your rice carelessly, you know. You, you know, you are reciting from your bottom of heart, "Seventy-two labors" or "Sevent- [partial word]-[laughs]-"Seventy-two labors" or something incredible [laughs, laughter]. Anyway, you will say: "Seventy-two labors." That is actually how you bow here, you know. There is no other way [laughs], as long as you live here.

If your practice doesn't reach, you know, so-so far, it is not real practice. That is how you feel, you know, eternal life in, you know, in-

with the mortal body. When you say "Seventy-two labors," there is, you know, Buddha, already, where there is nothing happens, you know, even though many things happen. But that is a part of, you know, Buddha's mercy.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (9/28/00).

[1] From gotai (Jap.): "the five body (members)"-head, two arms, and two legs;

tochi (Jap.): "prostrating one's body."

[2] Gyokujun So-on.

## **12 - Sesshin Meeting**

Friday, July 31, 1970

Sesshin Meeting  
San Francisco

... [laughter]. What he-she meant is if you stand up, you know, with painful legs or sleeping legs, you will [laughs]-it will be dan- [partial word]-dangerous [laughs, laughter]. That is why she said so-so, you know. I think that is very important, you know, and even though you feel your legs, okay. But it is better to make it-make them sure [laughs], rubbing, you know, your knee.

Student A: I thought what she was saying was that once we stood up, we were supposed to stand there without-before we started walking.

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me, I don't-

Student A: I thought that, you know-

Suzuki-roshi: -I don't know what she said, you know, so it is difficult [laughter].

Student A: I just won't move [laughing] until the person in front of me leaves.

Suzuki-roshi: When you make kinhin, you know, walk, you know, so that you give them- You know, if you walk too slowly or if you have too much, you know, distance, between you and someone ahead of you,

that will make other person difficult to walk, so you should be careful, you know, abo- [partial word]-about distance between you and a person ahead of you. So keep certain, you know, distance. And if, you know, someone like me, you know, walk-naturally I walk slowly, you know. That will give others some difficulties. And as I walk very slowly, we-I will have big distance from [laughs] a person who is walking ahead of me.

So if you-if you have too much distance in between, you know, catch up to the person. That is, you know, very small things, but that kind of small things is pretty important to-to have good feeling in our practice.

Maybe do you have something more to say? [Apparently addressing a student who had spoken earlier.] Ah.

I am so-so much encouraged to see so many students, old and new. I hope we can sit together with good feeling.

The purpose of sesshin is to have more stable practice for us, especially those who are involved in busy, everyday life. It is good occasion to resume our true nature and to open our mind for various circumstances you may have in your everyday life.

And it may be incredibly important to-to practice with the students who you-whom you [are] acquainted with. Even though you do not communicate by words, you know, just to be with them, you know, will be a big encouragement. Verbal, you know communication tend to be very superficial, but when you don't [laughs] speak, you know, your communication between you will be very much encouraged, and your mind become-will become very subtle. And your intuition will be open by staying [in] silence. This is very-just to stay, without saying-stay here without saying anything for five days with you is already very meaningful. That is why we do not talk.

We, you know, when we [are] involved in some superficial interesting matters, because of some special interest, your true feeling will be covered by the-some special feeling. So to open your innate nature, and to feel something from bottom of your heart, it is necessary to remain silent, and that kind of practice will-through this kind of practice you will have more, you know, intuitive understanding of teaching, and your intuition will be improved.

"Not to talk" does not mean to, you know, to keep you in deaf and [laughs] dumb, you know. Just to improve your intuition, we practice silence during sesshin time. And so same thing is true with your reading. If you read something interest-interesting, because of something you become interest-interested in it, your intuition will be-it will be the disturbance of your [ability to] to open your intuition. That is why we don't read.

So if you-it doesn't mean to, you know, to confine yourself in dark, you know, room [laughs]. It means that, you know, you-to encourage your intuition or to encourage your-to open your, you know, true mind is why we do not read. In zazen, we do not think, you know, even.

If-some of you maybe Rinzai student who is practicing koan practice. If so, he can, you know, practice koan practice-practice too. But in koan practice it is not necessary to speak or to read.

Of course, for-especially for beginners it may be difficult to stay silent or not to read even newspapers. You may be very-you may be very-very much bored, so-[laughs, laughter] [sounds of nearby hammering]. You know, in that case, you should ask Kyo-san [?]. Do you know what his [1 word unclear]? If you do so, someone will hit you.

And that kind of thing [door slams nearby] will be taken care of mostly by old students, you know. In, you know, in sesshin, usually, everything will be taken care of by old student, and old student help, you know, new st- [partial word]-must help new students to practice more. And so old students, you know, take care of many things: serving meals for you, and giving some instructions, and carrying sticks. Those things will be-should be well taken care [of] by old students.

Try anyway. Sit [laughs], you know, and see what will happen to you [laughter]. And try to keep right posture according to the instruction. Important things is to follow the rules, you know. This is very important. "To follow rules" means to find, you know, to let you find your-yourself, you know. If, you know, there is no rules, it is difficult for you, you know, to find yourself because you don't know whe-[partial word]-where you are. [Laughs.] If there is food, you will know what time is it, and when we should eat, and which way we should walk [work?] [laughs].

If there is no rules, you know, and no one taking care of you, it is rather difficult to practice. And it will be a great help. It is much better than to have no rules and sit in one corner of the room five days, you know, without doing anything. So rules is something you should understand. Rules is something which you-which help you, you know. That is rules. Instead of, you know, restricting you by some, you know, cord.

If you have some question, I think I can answer.

Student B: During the sesshin should we still go on counting our breath, or would you recommend some other form of zazen?

Suzuki-roshi: There are various kinds of practice. Following breathing, or counting breathing, or ko- [partial word]-koan practice. But I recommend you to, maybe this time, you know, following breathing practice.

Student B: Followingbreathing-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: -or counting?

Suzuki-roshi: If-if, you know-when you find it difficult to count, you know-no, no, to follow your breathing, counting breathing will, you know, may help you because if you count your breathing, you know exactly what you are doing. Or when you-your practice get lost, immediately, you will, you know, know it. So that will-will be a-it-that will help you. So-but following breathing is good.

Student B: Just following breathing, but then you can't, you know, go in too deep [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. And at that time, don't, you know-don't make too much effort in, you know, in making your breathing slow down or, you know, making faster or anything like that. Just-if you just follow your breathing, then naturally, your-your breathing will be good, you know, appropriate for your practice, without-even though you don't try to make it slower, if your breathing is fast-too fast, the breathing will be slowed down.

Student C: For dokusan do you sign up every day for that day, or do you sign up Sunday for the whole week?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe better to sign up, you know.

Student C: Every day?

Suzuki-roshi: Not every day. Hmm? What-what-what was-?

Dan Welch: Just-there'll be a list, and just sign up once, whenever. Recommend that you sign up early-soon as possible. If there's nobody on the list, there will be dokusan, so-

Student D: Dan, will Suzuki-roshi be giving dokusan, do you know?

Dan: He'll be giving a few.

Student D: Will there be a sign-up sheet?

Dan: No.

Student D: So-

Dan: I can take care of that.

Suzuki-roshi: If you send me some patient by ambulance [laughs, laughter], I will see the patient [laughs, laughter]. Do you have some

question? Hai.

Student E: This is a beginner's question, but do you-in your last lecture you said if another roshi had said: "You can put your mind in the palm of your hand." And I didn't really understand, but I-I tried that, and [laughter]-it was very-very calming. It made me feel very calm, and I'm wondering if that's alright to do that, to calm your expiration [4-6 words unclear]. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Actually then, I created one more problem [laughter]. I said, you know, so that you-you may not be, you know, you may not be caught by some particular practice. Do you understand?

Student E: They are to do nothing but follow your breath.

Suzuki-roshi: And, you know, we have various-you will listen [to] various instructions, you know, but what I am saying is instruction will be given to you so that, you know-to help you, you know, to help your practice. That is why we give you instruction. We do not give instruction so that I can force some practice, special practice, on you, you know. Or it does not mean you should do this or you shouldn't do this. You know, you may have various intr- [partial word]-instructions, but if you, you know, think that will help, then you can do it. So that is up to you.

Student F: Where do the services take place? In the zendo also-

Dan: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: -or the Buddha hall?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, in zendo. In sesshin time we do everything in zendo. Some more questions?

Student G: What is the form for taking dokusan?

Dan: The ha- [partial word]-before you go-for those of you who have never had dokusan before, the jisha, right, the person you-the attendant for the roshi during sesshin, she's-LauriePalmer will do it this time. He will instruct you before it's your turn to go.

Suzuki-roshi: Some more questions maybe?

[Suzuki-roshi whispers with student (probably Dan Welch) for 2-3 sentences.]

Dan: Okay, uh-

Suzuki-roshi: Thank you very much.

Dan: -if you all know where your seats are, located in the zendo. We'd



like to go down and sit last [3-4 words unclear].

-----  
Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican  
(3/30/00).

## **1970 augustus (10)**

### **1 - Sesshin Lecture #1**

Saturday, August 01, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #1  
San Francisco[1]

In this sesshin, I have been explaining the context of our practice and, at the same time, the meaning of rules and precepts. But for us, precepts-observation of precepts and practice of zazen is same thing, you know, not different [just] as our everyday life and practice, zazen practice, is one.

After sesshin, we will have ordination ceremony for Paul [Discoe] and Reb [Anderson]. And-and then we will have lay ordination ceremony for the students-all the students who has been practicing zazen who-who has practiced zazen for three years before 1967. And so that is why I explained the meaning of our practice, zazen practice, or way of our zazen practice, referring to the precepts and rules-rules which you may like [laughs]-you may not like so much [laughs].

But if you know what is the precepts and what is rules, you-whether you like it or not, it is something with you, always, before-even before you are born-you were born. So we say: "If there is something, there is rules about it or in it." [Laughs.] There is nothing without rules, you know. That something [is] there means that some rules is there. That is rules. But before we, you know, know our true nature or some truth or rules which is always with you-you, you know, you think when-when someone explain how you exist or what is, you know, your true nature, then that is Buddha's teaching, not mine [laughs]. Nothing to do with me.

"If I am Buddhist [laughs], maybe we have to observe Buddha's precepts. But I am not Buddhist," you know, "I am not yet Buddhist, so that rules is nothing to do with me. But fortunately or unfortunately, if I go to Zen Center, you know, to listen to lecture [laughs] we have to, you know, behave like other students be- [partial word]-behave. That is rules." You may understand in that way. But where Zen Center exist, there is Zen Center's rules.

As you have your true nature, and, you know, to-to be ordained or to

become a Buddhist disci- [partial word]-Buddha's disciple is to receive precepts. But that precepts, as I explained-actually precepts you have-which you have essentially-which you essentially have, originally have. But before you know yourself, you know, through practice pretty long time, you don't know your true nature.

When you-for an instance, when you cook rice for the first time [laughs], there is rules how you, you know, cook rice. So according, you know, to the way or rules, you know, to cook rice you can, you know-first you wash rice, you know, rice and-soaked in water maybe four, five hours or-no, no-wash it and take it in basket to get rid of water, and keep in the basket, you know, for-for [four?] five hours, and adding 20% more water to the rice, and burn it for maybe twenty minutes or more [laughs, laughter]. Then [laughing] you will have a beautiful, you know, well-cooked rice!

So we know that, you know, if you practice zazen [laughs], if you observe precepts, you will be a good person, you know, like Buddha [laughs]. But the-but if you have no experience of cooking rice, you know, and on-even though you know how to cook it, but when you cook it for the first time, if I-if you-you dip it in-if you, you know-after you wash it-is it-to wait two-three hours before you cook, oh, that's terrible! [Laughs.] To wait two-three hours before we start to cook!

And even though you start to cook, you know, you will worry, you know-you know, before you see well-cooked rice. And is it-is the water enough? May- [partial word]-maybe [laughs], and it may want more water, you know. Or then someone will tell him-tell you: "No, don't add any more water. That is okay." "No! Water [laughs] is not-I think water is not enough, so maybe I want to add some more water. " Yes, no, yes, no. [Laughs, laughter.] That kind of problem arise.

It is same thing with our practice, you know. If you just practice zazen, you know, according to the instruction, you will be a good person anyway [laughs]. But because you have no experience of, you know, perfect prac- [partial word]-practice, you worry, you know. That is, you know, you will have some doubt in your practice, and if your teacher says, "Don't move." [Laughs.] "Continue practice," you know, then you may say, "Oh my! That's awful!" [Laughs.] That is same thing [as when] you, you know, feel uneasy before you see the well-cooked rice.

When you make soup, you know, if you make soup according to the recipe-how much shoyu sauce or salt to put [in], you know, you will have good soup. But, you know, you-perhaps you want to make it sure, so you will taste the soup. "Oh, oh, this-it will not be-we may need some more salt. Maybe better to put some more salt!" Or you may think it is better to add shoyu sauce too-little bit [laughs]. Recipe says no shoyu sauce, but maybe better to put some [laughs] shoyu sauce, and you will taste it. "Oh. Not-maybe we'll need [laughs, laughter] more salt." While you are tasti- [partial word]-you know, tasting, your tongue,

you know, get accustomed to the salt [laughs, laughter]. So [laughs, laughter] are they salt tasting [does the dish taste salty]? I'll add to it-a little bit more salt. [Laughs.] And finally you will have terribly salty soup.

That is, you know, excessive, you know, practice, you know. To make a great effort in your practice is good, but you should-even though you make a hard discipline, it is same thing, you know. Or sometime, you will-your practice will be lost. So from the student's side, you know, it looks like rules. From the Buddha's side, teacher's side, you know, there is no problem.

So for a student, as I said, something which looks like rules, or precepts, or prohibitory rules is not, Dogen-zenji says, true Buddhism. At first, all de- [partial word]-all the precepts looks like rules, but we must have it, you know.

So ordination ceremony is to trust Buddha. Or trust-to trust Buddha's precepts. Or to trust your teacher, even though you don't-because you don't know exactly, you are not get through Buddha's practice.

So it is necessary for you [to be] trusting Buddha, and for some gurus to you. That is necessary, for you, for a student. But Buddha may say, "I am not forcing anything," you know. "The rules you should observe is essentially-something you have essentially. Originally you have rules." That is what Buddha may say.

We say: "If you practice zazen, there is, you know, there there is Buddha nature, true nature. That is just expression of true nature." To observe-when you observe precepts, there there is your true nature. But if someone, you know, watch-see our practice, it looks like teacher is forcing some rules to many students. Here is, you know, bamboo sprout, you know, growing every day. Before bamboo become bamboo, you know, it will be a bamboo sprout two feet long or three feet long. It is growing very rapidly. But even though, you know, bamboo sprout is completely-looks like completely different, very, very different from bamboo, but bamboo is-even though it looks like very different, you know, bamboo sprout is really bamboo, and when-before it become bamboo, it should be in that shape, you know. It cannot be big, perfect bamboo, as you use.

But if you don't sit, you don't know bamboo through and through, you know. You may say-someone may say, you know, "He is fooling us," you know [laughing], "telling us this is bamboo. But this is not bamboo. Bamboo is more taller and with leaves. But this ha- [partial word]-this has no leaves! [Laughs, laughter.] Moreover, it is covered by something, some funny thing. [Laughs.] This cannot be a bamboo!" [Laughs.]

But when it is young, you know, there is-there must be some form, you know, even though-which is different from the mother bamboo. But no

one actually forces bamboo sprout in that way, you know. Naturally it is in that way and growing in that way. But most people say, without understanding bamboo through and through, they have some idea of bamboo. We have some idea about our way of life and human nature, but unfortunately most of us do not know human nature through and through, like Buddha understood human nature.

You may say Buddha's teaching is the teaching of human nature. He will be a man or sage who had enormous understanding-unusual understanding about our human nature. So that is why, you know, he set up that kind of precepts. So from Buddha's side, it is our true nature. But from our side, it looks like something funny, you know: Buddha treating us, you know, forcing us to be a [laughs] bamboo sprout. [Laughs.] You may understand in that way. That is the trouble. How we solve the pro- [partial word]-this problem is for us, you know, to trust the precepts, and to join his practice. And for Buddha, you know, acknowledging student's quality or true nature, which is same as Buddha. And help students to be a Buddha. That is, from Buddha's viewpoint, that is his way.

Actual-our zazen practice is called practice of-practice [of being] one with enlightenment. It mean that from Buddha-from Buddha, it is enlightenment. From us, you know, it is practice. But actual practice is-actually, for us it is training. For Buddha it is expression of true nature. Actually it is so.

That is, you know, the-if we say, "our practice is expression of practice," you cannot agree with that. But if you say, "our practice is training to be a Buddha," Buddha will not agree with your understanding. And both is true, you know [laughs]. For you, it is training, that is true. For Buddha it is expre- [partial word]-expression of Buddha-nature, and he accept our practice whether it is perfect or imperfect.

When you-so for you, how to become a Zen student is-even though it is not so, you should, you know, receive precepts. You-even though you cannot accept it through and through, trusting him you should accept it. As you cook a rice according to the, you know, instruction. If you can do it just, you know, according to the instruction, that is best. But even though you, you know, you are confused, you know, while you are cooking, it can be-it i- [partial word]-it may be okay.

But anyway, you should start our way, and you should try to, you know, try to trust our instruction, our precepts, our zazen practice. This is, you know, actually to-how you join our practice, why you receive our precepts.

When I was working [laughs]-I was working on a stone with student at Tassajara, you know. He will ask him-I asked him to hit, you know, a stone, to cut it, you know. The stone has naturally-originally some, you know, layer, you know-stripes or layer. I know if he continue to hit it, it

will be, you know, broken in two-two pieces. But, you know, I-if- because my student didn't, you know-haven't-didn't have the experience of cutting it, you know. So while he was-he became tired of hitting it [laughs], but I-I-I was quite sure, you know, he will cut it [laughs].

It is same thing, you know. The teacher knows, you know, it will-it will be cut, but student doesn't know, you know. So he doubt. But-but at last, you know, it was cut all of a sudden in two. Phht! [Laughs.] That is, you know, practice. It is not so easy, you know. It looks like almost impossible, sometime. But after long, long experience, you know, of various teacher, not only Dogen-zenji, you know, or Bodhidharma, you know, we know what kind of stone a human being is. So if we continue to practice in this way, he will be clearly, you know, cut. We know that. That is, you know, Buddha's-Buddhist way, and Buddha knows that. But even though you don't know it, if you continue to do it, it will work.

So to, you know, to start to trust, you know, the way, Buddhist way, is how-why you join our order, actually. And we say when you join the order-order, and started to hit it, hit the stone, [in the] same place over and over again. And when it is broke in two, we don't know, you know, why-by the last one, it was broken, or by the first one it was broken. You know, it is difficult to know. Anyway, first hit is-was working, that is clear. So we say even though our practice is not perfect, as long as you are practicing our way, that is enlightenment itself, that is how you cut the stone, how you become a buddha.

And for Buddha, you know, if he become a buddha, you know, even though he become a buddha, he cannot stay [in the] buddha stage. He will naturally start to help others, and he will continue his practice forever. Knowing-because he knows hu- [partial word]-human nature, and because he knows, you know, almost all the people does not know human nature so well, so he cannot trust their own true nature. And they will be confused.

So for Buddha, he cannot help starting to practice with others, and he cannot help helping others too. And in that way, you know, Buddha start again our practice, join our practice. He will practice with us always. So Buddha become student, and student eventually become a Buddha. And Buddha and we student is always one. That is the picture of our practice.

To have this kind of relationship between Buddha and you, or teacher and discip- [partial word]-disciple is very important, or, without this relationship, you know, Buddhism cannot survive or exist. Buddhism is not just moral code or is not philosophy or story, you know. Buddhism is actual way to become human-for human being to be human. So Buddha's teaching is how to be human being-human, and how to [for] Buddha [to] be Buddha. Although there are two names, human being or sentient being, or Buddha, but actua- [partial word]-essentially, it is

one. Who knows human nature is Buddha; who do not have-do not know human nature through and through is sentient beings.

In ordination, when-when you join our order, you know, we-you will receive a robe which was designed by Buddha and which was weared by Buddha. And to receive this robe means to trust him. It is so important that to have Buddha, that we, you know, to encourage our way-seeking mind, to be free from our doubt, to have strong faith in our way, or to encourage our way we wear robe, which is set up by Buddha and used by Buddha. But nowadays, it is a symbol: symbol of teaching, symbol of his precepts, spirit, and-and it express by its color and by the material we use and size we decide, you know, we express Buddha's teaching too. Not just symbol, but to understand teaching, which is expressed in robe, is also necessary. So for-for us it is the teaching itself, and it is the Buddha's spirit itself, even though we cannot use it to protect us from cold or from hot weather.

You may say, you know, recently, knowing that it may be difficult to understand-to accept Buddha's teaching, I, you know, I am talking about it without any-without changing or-or without any modification. Between our superficial understanding of human nature, and his deeper-deep understanding of human nature, there is big difference. It is quite natural for us to accept the teaching is difficult. For you, may be difficult and for-for us, too-for us Japanese too. You may say Japanese people [laughs]-Japanese culture is, you know, already ninety-nine [point] nine percent Buddhism, so it may be easy. But, you know ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over. Side B of original is recorded very poorly: severe pitch distortions for the brief remainder of tape.]

... for you to, you know, understand Buddhism or for Japanese to understand Buddhism. Japanese people, you know, their life is based on Buddha's teaching [laughs]-on ninety-nine percent Buddhism. And your-your, you know, way of life is very very different from [laughs] Buddhist way. I don't know which is, you know, [more] difficult.

This kind of thing is, you know- I think you will find it easier to understand Buddha's teaching than Japanese may do because, you know, for an instance, if someone make a robe for you, you know, or if someone make a robe or dress there is suits for you, you know. If you do it from the beginning [laughs], you can do it very [2-3 words unclear]. But if someone sewed, you know, all the [6-10 words unclear] [laughs] it is very difficult [3 words unclear] ... [Tape ends mid-sentence with severe pitch distortion.]

---

Sources: City Center transcript by Meg Brown. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Re-transcribed by Nigel Edmonds, December 1999. Checked against tape by Bill Redican (12/23/99).

[1] The date of this lecture is uncertain. It may or may not be the first lecture of the sesshin.

## **2 - Sesshin Lecture #2**

Sunday, August 02, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #2

True Practice As Expression Of Buddha-Nature

San Francisco

In Japan, a terrible fire broke out, and some hotel was burned down, and many sightseeing people killed in the fire. And recently in Japan, they had many sightseeing people even to Eihei-ji, where monk-only monks practice our way. Uchiyama-roshi[1]-Uchiyama-roshi said in his book[2]-if you open the book, he says recently, "Everything is going like that" [laughs]. Because we have so many sightseeing people, [laughs], so many years of hotels is built as one building after another. So the building is very complicated. So once something happens [laughs], they don't-it is difficult to figure out which is entrance and which is fire escape [laughs]. [Coughs heavily.] Excuse me.

I am very much interested in Uchiyama-roshi's remark, and it-it is something like that happening to us too [laughs]. Zen Center become bigger and bigger [laughs], and people-students who come here will find it very difficult which is entrance and which is fire escape [laughs]. I, you know, I thought maybe he is teasing me [laughs]. But what he said is very true, I think. The world situation is something like that.

But we should know, you know, the right entrance for zendo. Dogen-zenji says in Shobogenzo, right entrance for the Buddha hall is zazen. Zazen practice is right entrance. So everyone should, you know, enter the big right-from the big wide entrance. Because no-no Buddhist-there is no Buddhist who does not practice zazen. So all the teaching comes out from zazen, and what we obtain by practice of zazen is transmitted mind from Buddha to us. So when we practice zazen, all the treasures transmitted to us will come out from our transmitted mind. And how to open up our transmitted mind is practice of zazen.

So to talk about-to discuss about transmitted mind or true mind, or to express our true buddha-nature is through our practice. That is "Sesshin sessho,"[3] about which I talked last night. Why, you know, streetcars and bus and airplane is so crowded is there are too many people who seek for, you know, some special sightseeing place. Why we-our way is mixed up or confused is because we are practicing sightseeing zazen [laughs].

There is actually-this is not word I made up-"sightseeing practice."  
Some Chinese people say "sightseeing practice" [laughs]. Or Dogen-  
zenji says, "Why do you give up your own seat and wandering about  
various countries?"

So we should not involved in hasty idea of attainment. We should not  
practice to achieve something-to attain something. Step by step,  
appreciating, you know, our everyday life-day by day, step by step is  
our way. When we cannot see what we are doing, where we are, it is  
useless, you know, to put ourselves in hard practice.

If you, you know, if you invite, you know, some kabuki player [laughs]-  
kabuki-how do you say?-kabuki dancer or player from Japan, it costs a  
lot of money [laughs]. If you-even though you invite a first-class monk,  
you know, or even you can invite archbishop from Japan [for] the same  
amount of money [laughs].

So many people, you know, go to Japan and to study something about  
Zen, but it is rather difficult, you know, to study Zen in Japan. Many  
people ask me, "Could you introduce me to some monastery?" But I  
have no idea, you know. So I may say, "Maybe why don't you stay at  
Zen Center?" [Laughs.] And almost all the people say that, "I thought  
that will be your answer." [Laughs, laughter.] He knows very well. They  
know very well but, you know, why they go to Japan is to encourage  
[raise?] hotel, you know, money [laughs] to build some more new  
buildings.

They may be very happy to see you, but it is the waste of time and  
money for you. And you will be very much discouraged because, you  
know, you couldn't see any good Zen master. It is almost impossible to-  
even though there is-there are good Zen masters, but it is difficult to  
meet him. And it is difficult to underst- [partial word]-study under him.  
You may figure out why it is so quite easily.

But practice of zazen and watching our step-steps, one after another,  
this practice is actually true zazen practice. We say our practice should  
be like, you know, a cow, you know [laughs]. Our practice should not  
be-our steps should not be like a horse. You-you cannot gallop, you  
know. You should walk slowly, like an elephant or like a cow. And if you,  
you know, if you can walk slowly, without not much, you know, gaining  
idea, then you are already a good Zen student. There is no other way to  
follow our way.

At the end of Sung dynasty, [4] we have many Zen masters. And most  
Zen masters encourage people to attain-to have enlightenment  
experience. You know, that is, you know, why they encourage, you  
know, people to attain sudden enlightenment, with some psychological,  
you know, way, is to meet the people's-student's desire-to satisfy  
student's, you know, desires. They provided that kind of technique or  
trick [laughs]. It may not be trick-I shall be scolded if I say "trick."



[Laughs, laughter.] But I-I feel-my feeling about, you know, that kind of practice is, you know, something like a trick, you know.

So Zen masters will be a good friend of psychologist [laughs]. And they will help with each other [laughs] how to, you know, explain-or how to explain enlightenment experience. And psychologist will explore some new field in psychology, but Zen or-Zen is, you know, originally Zen is completely different from that kind of practice.

Actually Dogen-zenji, you know, point up-point out this point very sharply. In "Sesshin sessho," in Shobogenzo-in chapter of "Sesshin sessho," he referred to another story. Tozan-daishi,[5] the founder of-actual founder of Soto school-oh, no-I [already] told you about the story between Tozan-daishi and Mitsu Shihaku.[6]

He referred to another story about First Patriarch of China and the Second Patriarch in China. The First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, told the Second Patriarch, Eka[7]-he said: "If you-if you want to enter our practice, you should stop-or you should cut off your self from outward objects. And you should stop your emotional and thinking activity within yourself. And when you become like a brick or stone wall, you will be-you will enter. That is how you enter our way."

That was what, you know, Bodhidharma said to the-to his disciple Eka. But it was actually-for him, it was very difficult practice, as you must have experienced [laughs]. Even to stop your mind is [laughs] difficult enough. It is so for the Second Patriarch. So he, you know, tried very hard, but he couldn't, you know, understand what he meant actually.

So the Second Patriarch, after trying very hard, he thought, you know, he could, you know-he could understood what he meant, at last. So he said to him, "Perhaps I understood what you meant." When he said so, Bodhidharma thought, "Oh, this student must have understood what I meant." So he did not ask any questions. "Okay, you must have understood." [Laughs, laughter.] That is what-all what Bodhidharma said to him.

x

But he said, "Is it," you know, "Is it-is there cessation in your," you know, "way? Is-is there a break," you know, "in your sesshin?" [laughing]-twenty minutes' break or thirty minutes' break. "Is there some break in your practice-in your sesshin?" he said-Bodhidharma said.

And Eka said, "No break, no cessation in our practice." Bodhidharma said, "Then who are you? [Laughs.] Who has," you know, "constant practice? Who are you?"-just, he said-"Who are you?"

Eka said, "Because I know myself very well, so it is difficult to say who I

am. [Laughs.] Because I understand myself so well, so I cannot say who I am." And Bodhidharma said, "That's right. You are my disciple." Do you understand? [Laughs, laughter.]

Our zazen practice is not-is not to attain enlightenment actually-rather to express our true nature. Even though, you know, you don't feel you are expressing your true nature, but actually you are expressing your true nature when you practice zazen. And that something is, you know, according to the Tozan-daishi, it is someone in front-back of the building [laughs]. Someone is talking something-backyard of the across the street. What are they talking about, you know?

That someone is actually not a particular-not any particular person. That someone means, you know, our true nature. So always, you know, true nature within ourselves is talking about Buddhism-discussing about Buddhism. And whatever we do actually [is] expression of buddha-nature.

So at last, you know, the-Eka-the Second Patriarch, understood, came to this point. So he said, you know, "I think I understood what you meant-what you meant by to become a stone wall [laughs] or brick [wall]. I understand. The stone wall itself is buddha-nature, and brick are also-bricks are also buddha-nature. Everything is expression of buddha-nature, so now I understand what is buddha-nature. Before, I thought after attaining-after I attain enlightenment, we will know who is in backyard of the-of a-of the house. But there is no special person who is talking some special teaching. There is no special person," you know, "but all things we see, all what we hear about, is expression of buddha-nature." [8]

When we say buddha-nature, so buddha-nature is everything. We say buddha-nature is our innate true nature which is universal to every one of us, or even to various being: sentient beings or animate or inanimate being. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... special nature which you can understand. How you understand the universal nature is through everything. There is only one way to-to have approach to the universal, so to say universal nature. So only way, you know, to-to realize our true nature is to know who I am-who is doing constantly something.

So he said, when Bodhidharma asked him, "Is there cessation in your true practice, after you enter or even before you enter, or before you join our true practice-is there any cessation?"

He said: "No," you know, "even before Buddha there is no cessation in the prac- [partial word]-in our practice, because our practice is Buddha's practice, which has no beginning and no end." So he says "no cessation."

"Then who is practicing that kind of practice, or who are you? Which is, you know, "which join this kind of practice?"

You know, he-he may be-he may be Eka-personally he may be Eka, but actually what he-he is doing is constant, permanent, ever-lasting practice which was started beginningless time to-and end in endless time. So, you know, it is difficult to say who-who is practicing [laughs] our way.

So Bodhidharma said, "Various-every patriarchs practicing same way as you do. I am practicing that way, and you are practicing that way." First of all, you know, when we practice zazen-when you practice zazen, you should know this point clearly. So you cannot waste your time. Even though your zazen is not so good, but it's-but that is zazen. Even though you will not-you may not understand what it is even, someday, sometime, you know-someday and someone will, you know, accept your practice. Only when you practice, you know, right here without wandering about, without being involved in sightseeing zazen, so I say why don't you sit here, you know.

It-it does not mean, you know-what I mean is, if you don't give up sightseeing zazen [laughs], you have no chance to join our practice. If you understand this point, you know, even though make a-make a big, big trip, that is not sightseeing zazen. That is real practice for you.

So point is to have-to have good start and to join the real practice which is always true and which has-which has no danger in your practice. So our practice, you know, not-is not necessary be hard one, you know, or good one. Good or bad doesn't matter [laughs]. If you sit with this understanding, and if you do not waste your time, or if you have conviction in your buddha-nature, then sooner or later you will find yourself in-in amidst of great Zen masters.

When you read, you know-especially young ambitious people read Zen books, you know, or when you listen to various Zen masters talk, they will talk about-about their masters who is very strict with him, or hardship he had in their-in his young age. And, you know, and he may say it is very difficult to be a good Zen master [laughs]. And we haven't so-so many good Zen masters so far, and maybe more difficult to have Zen masters-good Zen master in future.

So, you know, you will be very discouraged, you know. It means that you cannot be a Zen master [laughs]. But when you understand real practice-what it is, you know, this is-you will never be involved in such a foolish, you know, problem like Sengai.[9] When-maybe 6-7 [years ago?]-2-3 years after I came to America, I went to Fields Bookstore, and I saw Sengai's picture, you know. And, you know, it was something like calendar [laughs]. And frog was on the calendar. And Sengai said, "If frog," you know, "if someone can be a buddha, I-maybe I can be a buddha too." [10] [Laughing.]

Frog was sitting like this [probably gestures] [laughs, laughter]. "If people can be a buddha by practice of sitting, then I can be [laughs]-soon I will be a buddha" [laughs]. For the people who knows what is actual practice, you know, even though they don't experience enlightenment experience, if he sees someone who, you know, who is sitting to attain enlightenment [laughs], we think he is like a frog sitting [laughs].

Actually their sitting is much better than [laughs, laughter] our zazen. I always admire, you know, their practice-much better than my practice. They never get-they never be sleepy, you know. Their eyes is always open. [Laughs, laughter.] Tatsugami-roshi[11] will admire him very much, I think. "Open your eyes!"-you know. But there is no need, you know, for him to say so if we are like a frog [laughs, laughter]. And they do something very, you know, appropriate intuitively and [in an] appropriate way. You know, when something-when something come, they go like this-chomp! [Laughs, laughter.] [Sounds like he is snapping at something with his mouth, like a frog catching a fly.] Never-they never miss anything, but they, you know, are always calm, you know [laughs, laughter], and still.

I always think "I wish I could be a frog." So Sengai says, you know: Moshimo-Zazen shite moshimo hotoke ni naru naraba,[12] you know: "If by practice," you know-"If by practice we can be a buddha-" you know. He doesn't say anything more [laughs], and he draw a frog [laughing]-sitting frog.

This kind of, you know-if you understand what Sengai is feeling when, you know, you see a picture of a frog, you are already, you know, Zen-you have already understood what is Zen. There [is a] lot of humor in it, and there is good understanding of our practice. Even though our practice is-is not better than frog, you know, we will continue to sit. And we can accept a frog as our good example of practice.

I think that is a kind of enlightenment, but if-you should know how you, you know, actually understand a frog. Sengai, you know, drew-after, you know, practicing pretty long time [laughs], you will, you know, partly laugh-laugh at someone who is involved in wrong idea of practice, and partly you will, you know, laugh at yourself [laughs] who is sitting always [laughs] without doing anything-without making not much progress. You will laugh at yourself. When you can laugh, you know, at yourself, humorously, then there is, you know, enlightenment. But still, your zazen is beginner's zazen or sometimes worse than beginner's zazen [laughs].

Sometime I [am] ashamed of myself when I see someone-some student's practice which is very good. "Oh, he is very good." You know, I think-I wish I could be as young as-as he is once more. But it too late.

But anyway, our practice cannot be better than sitting of a frog. So it is okay. But to see someone who is practicing good zazen is very impressive, not only to me but also for everyone. I think that is-if your zazen is good enough to give good impression to others, your zazen is pretty good. Even though you don't think so, it is actually very good zazen. But even though you think your zazen is very good, and you think you [are] proud of your enlightenment experience like this, you know, if he doesn't impress anyone [laughs], his zazen may not be wrong practice.

I think, you know, there are several important points or factor in our practice. One is to-not to-we should not [be] involved in hasty gaining idea in our practice. We say, you know, we should not practice zazen for sake of others or sake of yourself. Just practice-just practice zazen for zazen. It means you should just sit. You should not sit for fame or profit. Just practice zazen.

We, you know, we say many things-not to do this, you know-or we talk about precepts, but the point of practice-observing precepts is there is no need not to do something bad. There is no need to try not to do something bad, but if you do good thing like zazen, you cannot do bad thing at the same time [laughs, laughter].

So if you, you know, continue, you know, positively something-continue to do something good, that is how you observe our precepts. So the point is just to sit, forgetting all about fame or profit. Just to sit for sake of zazen. That is one point. And that-that kind of attitude is also the attitude to-to have real way-seeking mind. Way-seeking mind means, you know, to find out inmost desire.

At first, you know, maybe you will-first step will be, you know, to know what is good and what is bad. Like when you go to shopping, you know, you will-it may be difficult to know what-which material you choose. For an instance, if you go to draper's shop, you know, all the materials-there are various color-there are various quality of material in various color, and it is rather difficult to choose, you know.

Starting from that kind of practice, you know, you should brush up your intuition. How to buy or get something good is, you know-if you try to compare one to the other [laughs], you will-even though you spend two-three days, you will not get something appropriate for you. And after trying two-three days [laughs], what you will get will be something which is not at all appropriate to you, and you should visit the same store again. If they change it for someone or something else, you are lucky [laughs].

Don't say this kind of practice is useless. It is actually first step to our way. But how you, you know, get-how you practice good practice and how you buy something appropriate to you is same. When you are not involved in it, you know, shopping too much, you can get something

appropriate.

So what-after you know the secret of intuitive, you know, activity which is free from various restriction, you will, you know, find our way in your everyday activity. Until, you know, you, you know, you understand why we practice zazen and what is actually true activity, intuitive activity, free from various desires and restrictions, it is difficult to figure out, you know, what is good practice, what is, you know, what kind of-how you practice zazen. But it is okay. If you continue it, eventually, little by little, without knowing how you acquired that kind of intuition-intuitive activity, you will-anyway you will get it.

So it is rather foolish, you know, to-to be involved in some particular hard special practice. Our practice is hard enough [laughs], so don't, you know, seek for some special enlightenment, and don't seek for some special practice-way of special practice. Dogen-zenji said there is no Buddha who attained enlightenment-real enlightenment, who gave up our zazen practice. Only through our zazen practice various teachers attained-there is no other word, so I say "attained enlightenment" [laughs]-became Buddhist, real Buddhist. [Sentence finished. Tape changed to Tape 2.]

By the same way as you do something else, our pra- [partial word]-the-our practice is very different from usual practice. You know, you have book Zen and Archery,[13] you know, but when you understand our practice, you know-because the author understand real practice, archery can be, you know, Zen, but only for him it is Zen [laughs]. If you don't understand how [to] practice archery in its true sense, even though you practice very hard, that is-that-what technique you acquire is just technique. It doesn't help-help you through and through. You will be-you can hit a mark without fail, but without bow and arrow you cannot do anything. If you understand the author's point, when archery is-could be Zen, then maybe, you know, without bow and arrow the archery will help you. How you get that kind of, maybe, power or ability is only through right practice.

So, you know, we should make, you know, right practice-we should have right understanding of practice so you should have-to have right understanding of practice you should have right teacher who has right understanding of practice. So you should not have any gaining idea in our practice. And follow your teacher. And you should understand completely what is right practice. So Dogen-zenji says, you know, right practice and sanshi monbo. Sanshi monbo is "to have good teacher" and, you know, "to receive right guidance in your practice." [14] Or else you will not understand, you know, what is Zen.

And one more thing is, you know, maybe, we say Sozoku ya tai nan. [15] Sozoku is-"to continue our practice is very difficult thing," maybe the most difficult thing. If you continue it, having right understanding by good teacher, and if you practice it without any gaining idea, and

continue right practice or fundamental practice-the only one practice,  
which is fundamental to various practice is the most important thing.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar (1997).  
Translation of Japanese terms kindly provided by Shohaku Okumura-  
sensei. Checked against tape by Bill Redican (5/25/00).

[1] Kosho Uchiyama-roshi: (c. 1912-1998): Disciple of "Homeless" Kodo  
Sawaki-roshi and sixth abbot of Antai-ji Zen temple in Japan.

[2] Possibly Modern Civilization and Zen, Administrative Office of Soto  
Zen, 1967.

[3] "Sesshin sessho": "Expounding the Mind and Expounding the  
Essential Nature," a fascicle of Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[4] Sung dynasty: 960-1279.

[5] Dongshan Liangjie (Tozan Ryokai): 807-869. Ch'an master of the  
T'ang period and co-founder of the Soto school of Zen (with his disciple  
Sozan). "Daishi" means "great master."

[6] Mitsu Shihaku (Shinzan Somitsu): dharma brother of Tozan. "Mitsu"  
is the last character of his name; "Shihaku" means "uncle teacher."  
Tozan and Mitsu traveled together for twenty years.

[7] Dazu Huike (Taiso Eko): 487-593. Dharma successor of  
Bodhidharma.

[8] It is not clear to the transcriber where Suzuki-roshi intended the  
quote of Eka to end.

[9] Sengai Gibon (1751-1837): Japanese Rinzai master.

[10] Literally, "If a man becomes a Buddha by practicing zazen-"  
(Sengai Gibon, "The Meditating Frog," in D. T. Suzuki, Sengai the Zen  
Master, Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1971). The frog  
is pictured on p. 94.

[11] Sotan Ryosen Tatsugami-roshi: Soto Zen master and ino-roshi at  
Eihei-ji for many years. He was head of training at Tassajara for several  
practice periods.

[12] Suzuki-roshi is quoting Sengai's one-line verse: Zazen shite  
moshimo hotoke ni naru naraba-

[13] Eugen Herrigel, Zen in the Art of Archery. New York: Pantheon

Books, 1953.

[14] Literally: sanshi = "visiting teachers"; monbo (also monpo) = "hearing the dharma" (Jap.).

[15] Literally: "continuity is very difficult" (Suzuki-roshi is quoting Tozan Ryokai).

### **3 - Right Teaching and Right Practice**

Monday, August 03, 1970

#### Right Teaching and Right Practice

In our practice two important practice is zazen practice and to listen to pure teacher, or right teacher. This is just like two fields of \_\_\_\_\_. Without practice, you cannot understand teaching. You cannot listen to your teacher and without practice, without listening to your teacher, your practice will be, cannot be right practice. Right practice, by right practice we mean practice, fundamental practice from which you can start ... from which various teaching will come out. So from right practice, if you have right practice you have already right teaching there. So right practice is the foundation of all Buddhist activity. Right practice. It is--it cannot be compared to various practice or training. There are many ways of Zen practice. There are many practice, zazen practice, meditation practice, but our practice is, cannot be compared to other practice. I don't say which is important or which is better but anyway without foundation various practice does not work. So if you practice some particular practice which has no foundation, your practice--you will eventually, you know, fall into a pit hole. You will be caught by it and you will lose your freedom. But if you have--if you have the foundation to your various practice, the various practice will work and will help you. Right practice we mean that kind of foundation of practice. It is not--it is more than practice. So when you have foundation to your practice even though your practice is not perfect, it will help you. That is right practice. And what is--if you want to know actually what is right practice, as I told you, it is necessary to practice with right teacher, who understands what is right practice.

And right practice is also foundation of precepts. Precepts. When you do not have right practice, you will hesitate to accept precepts, but if you have right practice you can accept precepts. Whatever precepts may be, you can accept. So precepts for the people who have right practice is called "bodhisattva precepts," in comparison to some other so-called-it "Hinayana precepts," which is quite different. The way of observing is quite different. Last night I talked about--little bit about it. I said if you do something good, you cannot, you cannot--you have no time to do something bad. That is how you keep precepts.

Why we say "bodhisattva precepts" is--it is based on bodhisattva mind. As you know, bodhisattva mind is to save others, all sentient beings



before you save yourself. That is bodhisattva mind. To save others is first and to save ourselves is next. Or we say, bodhisattva mind, bodhisattva mind ... bodhisattva mind is spirit, to devote ourselves in serving others.

How you then, how you arise bodhisattva mind will be the next point. You will ask me how you arise bodhisattva mind. You-many people ask me about this point. How they, you know, question will be something like this:

"I have various problems, and you say, you always say you should not try to attain enlightenment. You should not be involved in selfish practice. If so, to try to save others is also, you know, gaining idea because you have some purpose or some idea of doing something. So that will not be actually bodhisattva mind."

Actually we will have this kind of question always. To practice purely you start to try to do something, to help others. But you may wonder whether you are doing something to help others or to help yourselves. It is very difficult to know which. I think you may suffer on this point a lot, as I did when I was young. Whenever I try-while I am trying continually doing something, more and more, I feel lose my confidence. For instance, if you clean restroom as your everyday task ....

#### **4 - Sesshin Lecture #4**

Tuesday, August 04, 1970

Sesshin Lecture #4  
San Francisco

In-in everyday life, to observe precepts and, in our practice, to continue our zazen looks like different, but actually it is same. In actual zazen, whether-even though your practice is not perfect, if you practice our way, there there is enlightenment because originally, you know, our practice is expression of our true buddha-mind.

Because you-your-because of your discrimination, you say your practice is not good. But if we do not, you know-if we do not discriminate [in] our practice, that is really the expression of the-our true nature, which is buddha-nature.

And in our everyday life, if we observe precepts even for a moment with this-with our mind-with our mind which is changing always, then the momentous change-on the momentous changing mind, real, you know, moon of the buddha-mind will appear: bodhi-mind will be there. So actually there is no difference.

So the point is, you know, moment after moment we satisfy our practice and without discrimina- [partial word]-without criticizing your mind too

much, to do something which is good is only way for us. And if-when you understand way-seeking mind, or buddha-mind, or bodhi-mind in this way, actually everything is encouraging us to have buddha-mind or bodhisattva-mind, which is to help others before we help ourselves. When you, you know, try to help others, everything you have will be-will give you chance to help others. So whatever it is, the things you see, things you hear will give you chance to help others.

So that mind to help others will give you a big opportunity to treat everything [as] a Buddha-Buddha's gift. And when you say "before we save ourselves, we will get-we will be free from selfish idea," when you give up selfish idea, there there is chance to have buddha-mind. The world is, you know-if you say "before we save ourselves, to save others" looks like dualistic. But our understanding of bodhisattva-mind is not dualistic. It is, you know, extended. Understanding of oneness of giving something-someone who give and someone who receive-this is the characteristic of our way. Practice and enlightenment is one, you know. Someone who save and who is saved is one. So there is no problem in observing this-our way.

The precepts is also very clear. There is no precepts to observe, you know, or no one who is observing precepts-no problem at all. Precepts-if you say "precepts," you are precepts itself. And if you say "you," you know, you have, you know-"you" are already precepts. And there is no precepts or no one who observe precepts. In this way, we have to observe our precepts, and we have to arise bodhisattva-mind, and we have to practice our way.

It is not, you know-Dogen-zenji says it is not because of your power of practicing zazen or power of, you know, bodhisattva-mind that you attain enlightenment, that you become buddha. It is not [through] power of practice or it is not, you know, power of arising bodhisattva-mind that you become buddha. And he says even though you attain enlightenment, you have to practice zazen. Even though you attain-you become buddha, you have to have-you have to extend bodhisattva-mind. Even though you become buddha, you have to observe precepts.

That is actually, you know, why he said before you save yourself, you should save others. So, you know, this idea is beyond the idea of attainment-to be buddha or to observe precepts. Usually, you know [laughs], you think, you know, why you practice zazen is to attain enlightenment, why you arise bodhisattva-mind is by power of bodhisattva-mind, [and] you will, you know, be a buddha. By observing precepts you will-you can practice zazen and you will become a buddha. You will understand in that way.

But Dogen-zenji says, you know, it is not because of the bod- [partial word]-observing-because of arising bodhisattva-mind that you become buddha. And even though [laughs] you arise bodhisattva-mind, you should try to, you know-you should continue the bodhisattva way.

Before you save yourself, you should save others. Even though you attain enlightenment, you know, you should continue it. Do you understand? You should continue it. After-even though you have, you know, acquired-you have attained enlightenment, you should continue it.

So bodhisattva-mind is not the way to attain buddhahood. Just-bodhisattva-mind is mind which should be continued forever, whether you attain enlightenment or not. Whether you are a buddha or not, anyway, bodhisattva-mind is the mind which buddha and someone who is not yet buddha should continue.

So you may say bodhisattva-you may think bodhisattva-buddha is, you know, highest, and bodhisattva is next, you know. And pratyeka[1] and shravaka[2] is, you know, will follow. But [laughs] when we understand bodhisattva way in that way, or when we understand our practice in that way, which is important for us, enlightenment [laughs] or practice-which is important? Which is, you know, better? Bodhisattva or buddha [laughs]? Very difficult to say. In one way, maybe, bodhisattva is. You know, buddha-if you become buddha, if that is the end of the practice or end of everything, you know [laughs].

So after you are-become buddha, what you will do [laughs, laughter]? Then that buddha will not exist forever. And if there is somewhere to go, it may be [that] you have to start again from [laughs, laughter]-. Bodhisattva way is the way which we should continue anyway. So we say, "before you save yourself," you know, "you should try to save others." The meaning is very deep. And the meaning, you know, will provide a very easy approach. But very easy, but it is so lofty idea. There is no end, you know, in bodhisattva way.

So we transmit, you know, bodhisattva precept to you [laughs]. We do not say, you know, "buddha precepts." We say "bodhisattva precepts." We-I don't want to discriminate, you know, Theravada way or Mahayana way-so-called-it "Mahayana way," but true spirit of Buddha is actually in Mahayana way. And by Mahayana practice we could-Buddhism could survive for a long time.

So four vow we recite every day is very important.[3] And the precepts we transmit from Buddha to us-transmitted from Buddha to us is very important. And to express the meaning of Buddha's truth-meaning of Buddha's precepts, we call it, you know, "bodhisattva precepts" instead of calling [it] "buddha precepts." We can say "buddha precepts," but if we say-to make this point clear-non-duality of-idea of non-duality and idea of true duality, we use "bodhisattva precepts."

Even though we say "bodhisattva way," we do not discriminate bodhisattva way or Hinayana way. But if we call it-call our precepts "bodhisattva," you know, then you will have much clear[er] understanding of precepts. And you will find out easier to observe. And

you will find the deeper meaning of observing precepts.

So for us, even though we have, you know, we are the son-all of us is descendant of Buddha-son of Buddha, but we call, you know, all successive patriarchs "bodhisattva," you know. Buddha is a bodhisattva. And for us, you know, we understand in that way. Bodhidharma is a bodhisattva. And Eka[4] is bodhisattva. Dogen is bodhisattva. And the precepts you will have, you know, in lay ordination is called "bodhisattva transmission of precepts."

For several nights, I am concentrate-my talk is, you know, concentrated on this point of, you know, why you have-you receive bodhisattva precepts when you, you know, are [receive] lay ordination. Recently I did not put emphasis on Dogen-zenji's zazen practice, which is shikantaza. But shikantaka-we do not say even "shikantaka." But we just say "zazen."

In comparison to the zazen, to attain enlightenment, we call it shikantaka because we have no gaining idea in our practice. And in our practice, practice and enlightenment is one. When you practice our zazen there is enlightenment. We rather put emphasis on, you know, practice rather than enlightenment. Front, you know-front gate is-for us is practice. And, you know, our precepts-Zen precepts is, you know-all Zen precepts is bodhisattva pre- [partial word]-is called "bodhisattva precepts."

And precepts you will receive in lay ordination-precepts transmission you will receive in lay ordination is [one] in which it says there is no difference between Rinzai precepts and Soto precepts. It is bodhisattva precepts. This is very important point. Not dualistic precepts. And the precepts always one with you. And always should be kept by you. Even though you do not try to keep it, it is there.

So that is why I said last night[5] you should say "yes." There is-you cannot say "no." [Laughs.] My lecture was, you know-the point of my lecture was this point: bodhisattva practice-bodhisattva precepts.

So on okechimyaku [6] it says, "Busso shoden bosatsu daikai." [7] Bosatsu is "bodhisattva" in Japanese. And after you receive it, you know, the most important thing is to continue it, you know. Moment after moment, you should say, "Yes-yes I will." [Laughs.] Moment after moment. And you should continue our practice, even though you experience enlightenment experience. You should continue it. That is golden rule for all Zen student, whether you are Rinzai student or Soto student.

I don't want to repeat same thing over and over. I think you have understood. I think I have some more time, so if you have question, please ask me. Hai.

Student A: You said if you come to zazen in bodhisattva-mind, it's not the way to enlightenment.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.]

Student A: I think I [1 word] that.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Many times, yes.

Student A: What is the way?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe so, you know, but, you know, as I said right now, you know, if, you know, Zen is way to attain enlightenment-if you take, you know, literally, you know, you will misunderstand our practice-bodhisattva practice, you know. Bodhisattva practice-bodhisattva way is the way which, you know, regardless you are buddha or not, you should-way you should continue forever is bodhisattva way.

If you say, you know, "buddha way," if you become buddha that will be the end. So to, you know, to make the meaning of our practice clear, we say zazen is not to attain enlightenment. Do you understand? You will be mistaken by saying you practice zazen to attain enlightenment. So when we practice zazen, that-so we say beginner's mind is everything, you know. When you arise bodhisattva-mind, there is already buddha-mind. And it is everything. So, you know, I don't know which is more appropriate word: bodhisattva way or buddha way. I don't know. Maybe, you know, better to call it "bodhisattva way" rather than "buddha way." Buddha way is something like "dead way." [Laughs.] Not active-not alive. And looks like very-we are not buddha. When we say "buddha," we are sentient being. So there is big gap between buddha and sentient being.

But bodhi- [partial word]-when we say "bodhisattva," bodhisattva include all sentient being. And bodhisattva way is especially for sentient being. Do you understand? You-we-you know-[laughs] to make our way clear, you know, I said "our way is not to attain enlightenment." But we do not reject enlightenment experience. We welcome [laughs, laughter] to attain enlightenment. But if we call, you know-if we say in that way, you know, you-"Oh, I had a great experience! So my practice is over. [Laughs, laughter.] I have done it!" [Said in an ironic voice.] If you say so, you will actually lose your enlightenment.

So if you shouldn't say so, maybe-I think maybe you shouldn't say so. It is better not to say so. And it's better to continue bodhisattva practice. Hai.

Student B: Is there a meaning-a concrete meaning for "saving all sentient beings," or is doing zazen saving all sentient beings? Is there some other way to understand what that means?

Suzuki-roshi: Sentient? All, you know? Save sentient being-to help, you know, you can say "to help." You can start, you know, very, you know-to save sentient beings, you know, is not just to give something to others, you know: to almsgiving or to help people when they are in difficulty, you know, materially or spiritually. But it is, you know, to make freeway or to work on factory is actually to help others. But it does not mean, you know, only to help others just materially or spiritually. It is-the spirit is-the meaning is greater than that. But we-to begin with, we should try to help others in various way-easy way. And while you are doing, that is practice. While you are doing, you will find out how difficult it is, you know. Then you will, you know, improve the way to help others. Naturally, you should practice zazen. Hai.

Student C: Is there a reason-or what is the reason why we should [6-10 words.] Does it have something to do with the consciousness [1-2 words] or something [1-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Ahh. No. Here, you know, we practice in that way. But it does not mean you should, you know, continue to eat, you know, as you eat here. It is a kind of practice-training, maybe.

Student C: Is it a discipline to try to deprive yourself, say, when an urge to eat certain food [1-2 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student C: -if you wanted to eat it. Like, you [1-2 words]-can that help your practice or something [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, yes. Nondiscrimination is very important in our eating practice. [Laughs, laughter.] We Japanese people do not like, you know, raw vegetables so much. Especially we don't eat beans, you know, without cooking. The smell is so strong [laughs, laughter]! But in San Francisco zendo, as long as I am here [laughs, laughter], I have to eat, you know, raw beans and [laughs, laughter]-which have strong smell! All salad looks like, to me, you know, green bean. If you cook it, it has not much strong smell. Good flavor [laughs]. But if you don't cook, all the salad will-looks like to me green bean [laughs, laughter]. But, you know, we should not discriminate [laughs, laughter]. Non-discrimination is very important [laughs, laughter]. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, why do we eat the banana and throw away the skin?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] I don't know. [Laughter.] Maybe very difficult to eat. I tried [laughs, laughter], but it was too difficult. And actually, I think if you eat it, you know, your tummy will stop, you know [laughs, laughter]. You will-you will have hard time in your restroom next morning [laughs, laughter]. So that is too much. Hai.

Student E: Roshi, did you-did I understand-last night did I understand

you correctly when-getting back to the business of helping others-trying to help others-that it shouldn't-it shouldn't be with the conscious mind? It should just be what it is-just don't bother with it [?]-a sort of natural thing [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, you know, it is like-when you help them, you know, you don't have not much problem because you are a man who is helping someone. But those who are helped, you know, there will be some problem there. If you receive something from someone, if you change your position, you will find out why. And it-if you-if you are conscious about giving something, you know, then it will be-it will create some problem unnecessarily. In this point, American people are very good, I think. If you give [something to] someone, that's all [laughs]. I find many things, you know, outside of my room. I don't know who gave it to me. They just give it to me. So, you know, I appreciate their kindness in its true sense. But if you-if I know who gave it to me, you know, I-I have, of course, no bad feeling, so I don't mind so much whether I know who gave it to me or I don't know. It doesn't matter so much. But I think it is better, if it is possible, if you can do it without dualistic idea of giving or "I am giving something to others." Hai. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over. First part of student's question not recorded.]

Student F: ... in practice. In this context, I'd like to understand effort, because it's also said that the way is effortless.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student F: The way is effortless.

Suzuki-roshi: Way?

Student F: The way, or-

Suzuki-roshi: Wave?

Student F: Right practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Ah. Right practice. Yeah.

Student F: That's what I'd like to know. Is right practice effortless?

Suzuki-roshi: Effortless?

Student F: Yes. With no effort.

Suzuki-roshi: No effort of, you know-no effort with gaining idea. Effort to, you know, maybe to give up gaining idea. Effort to continue it without, you know, dualistic idea: just to do it. That kind of effort is necess- [partial word]-always important. Hai.

Student G: Roshi, would you say something about shila-the Bodhisattva concept of [1 word].

Student H: That was Sanskrit.

Suzuki-roshi: Bodhisattva?

Student G: Shila-morality. [6-8 words] bodhisattva way.

Suzuki-roshi: In contrast to-in Sanskrit [laughs, laughter]? I don't know Sanskrit. "Bodhisattva" is Sanskrit, I know, but- I am sorry.

Student G: The bodhisattva concept of morality.

Suzuki-roshi: Ah, concept of morality.

Student G: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Morality-morality is, you know-it is more than morality. Morality is-if you underst- [partial word]-if you see our precepts, it is exactly morality, which you should observe as a human being. But bodhisattva way is more than that. That is why I have to explain it, you know, why I explained so far. If it is morality, you know, if you read the precepts, you know: "Don't kill," you know. "Don't steal." Or, "Don't speak ill of others." If you read in that way, literally, that is morality. And actually, we are observing-most people are observing morality to some extent. That is morality.

But bodhisattva way is the way when, you know-bodhisattva way include morality but more than that. If you, you know, observe it in dualistic sense, it is morality. If you understand bodhisattva way deeper than that, it is, maybe, religious activity. So moral world, religious world, there is-there are two or more.

Maybe your question is arised because I said, you know, intuitively, you know, or without any idea observing it. But it does not mean to ignore the moral code-codes. Okay? Hai.

Student I: What is suffering? What is that relieves suffering?

Suzuki-roshi: Suffering is, you know, in short, to expect, you know, something which you cannot expect is cause of suffering-in short, you know. We want to live longer, but, you know, we cannot live so long. Maybe one hundred years or-mostly less than that. But we want to live more than that. There we have suffering. We want to meet someone who you love [laughs], but, you know, it is not possible-always possible. Some day you have to be separated from someone who you love. And, you know, you will meet someone who you not like so much [laughing]. That is very true, you know. You say you don't like him or like her. But may say-you must ask her how she feels. Then it is very difficult, you



know. Even though you love her, she may say no [laughs, laughter]. That is cause of suffering. So in short, you know [laughs, laughter], the things does not go-do not go as you expect. That is suffering.

And so, how to get out of suffering is to have, you know, quiet mind. That you can eat green pea [laughs, laughter] is how to get out of suffering. You know, if you-if your mind is calm and very soft, you know, you can eat it, and actually it is very good, you know [laughs, laughter]. So we say:

Jiki ni oite to naru mono wa,

ho ni oitemo mata to nari. [8]

You know-you-a man who does not discriminate food

will be, you know-will not discriminate in our dharma too.

You-you will not say, "I cannot observe this precepts. But this is very good precepts [laughing, laughter]. Very convenient for me." To criticize someone-we use precepts to criticize someone, you know: "'Don't speak ill of others.' You see? What did you say now? You shouldn't criticize me [laughs, laughter], because precept says don't criticize anyone." That is not how we observe precepts. Hai.

Student J [David Chadwick]: Sometimes when I've heard definitions of suffering by Rahula in What the Buddha Taught,[9] and that doctor who spoke at Zen Center a couple of years ago-Dr.-

Student K: Conze [?]?

David: No, no. That young guy who went to Ceylon.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

David: They define suffering in such a big way, you know-it was like-do you-do you-do you think of suffering as-it-is your understanding of suffering including everything: good and bad, happy and unhappy-all experiences?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, suffering covers-teaching of suffering covers almost whole Buddhism.

Student K: Burns.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student L: Burn. [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Yeah. Dr. Burns, yeah.

David: Could you-could you repeat what he thought-what he thought on [2-4 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I cannot. My mind is not so explicit, you know, to, you know-it is big, you know, topic to speak about. I know that much. But, you know, in one word, that is how we suffer. But that teaching covers almost whole teaching, you know.

Duhkha, sukha-you know, in-our life could be divided into renunciation from suffering and suffering. But it is actually one, you know. Because it is one, the teaching of suffering covers of-covers teaching of enlightenment.

Student M: I thought you said that we should begin by practicing as if we were shopping-as if we were shopping for things?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student M: Would you-how did that fit in with buying the rotten vegetables? Would the bad vegetables be what you would buy [?]??

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] No, I-when-at that time I have no idea of buying something, you know. It is a kind of-my special practice, maybe, you know. Not-but I didn't-I-that is my habit or feeling, you know. When you-when I see it-good, you know, fresh vegetables and fresh apples and, you know, old, you know, rotten apple, I feel if I don't buy it, if I don't eat it right now, you know, it will be-no one will buy it, so he must throw it-throw it away. So if I buy it, you know, that apple will save-will help us. But if I don't, for that apple there is no chance to serve its purpose [laughs, laughter]. Immediately I feel in that way, so I cannot help buying bad ones first and leaving good ones for someone, you know, because many people will like it, you know. Maybe if you work in the kitchen you will have that kind of feeling, you know.

Student M: Wouldn't you then always buy bad things [?]??

Suzuki-roshi: No, not always.

Student M: Bad [1 word], bad [1 word].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] No. No, not always, you know, especially food, you know. If it is some-if it is-if I buy a motorcar, I want to buy a brand new perfect ones [laughs, laughter]. But the more you have knowledge of something, you know, you will be, you know, like me when I buy something-some apples or something. Before you have not much knowledge about it, you will, you know, buy something good first. If you have good knowledge of, you know, car, even though it doesn't look like so good, but you know how to-because if you know how to mend it you will buy it, you know, because maybe it is cheaper. And you

know how to make good use of it. So if your mind is very kind and very clear, you will observe in that way without having superficial discrimination. Some question? Hai.

Student N: When you say "attaining enlightenment," are you saying gradual enlightenment always? And when you talk about enlightenment experiences, do you mean experiences that are an encouragement to our practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Why I say so is, you know, because you say "enlightenment." But mostly it is not great enlightenment. It is, you know, many small enlightenments-not big one which covers various-every experience. Enlightenment, like Dogen-zenji describe, is the enlightenment which covers everything, you know. You cannot-no one cannot get out of his enlightenment [laughs]. It is so big, you know.

Student O: Can you explain the difference between koan practice and shikantaza practice?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't know koan practice so well, you know. But for us, koan-koan is-"koan" originally means official statements or rules-issue, you know, from the government. So which is something which you observe-absolute rules or statements of enlightenment, you know, for Zen. So how you find out the absolute truth in each story of Zen story is koan practice. But for us, you know, our everyday life is already big koan, you know [laughs, laughter]. So, you know, we, you know, we do not stick to some traditional special koans. Some question? Hai.

Student P: [3-4 words] the difference between the bodhisattva-mind and the buddha-mind? [4-8 words.] Is the buddha-mind something that occurs only after death?

Suzuki-roshi: No. In its true sense, buddha-mind-there must not be any difference between bodhisattva-mind [and] buddha-mind, you know. Should be same. But, you know, for a long time, you know, Buddha-Buddha's-Buddhism was mistaken or misunderstood. And, you know, when-after a long time they found out the true meaning of precepts-sutra. And they started to use "bodhisattva"-word "bodhisattva" instead of "buddha." They put emphasis on bodhisattva stage rather than buddha stage, which is perfect. Bodhisattva stage which is not perfect. But in bodhisattva-in idea-idea of buddha is also fully included-maybe more advanced buddha [laughs] in term-in-the meaning of words is-may be deeper when old Buddhist called Buddha "Buddha."

Student P: In what sense, then, does our zazen heal others?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student P: In what sense, then, does zazen help others?

Suzuki-roshi: Help others? Yeah.

Student P: I was assuming that it only helps-

Suzuki-roshi: -yourself.

Student P: -yourself.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. No. No-definitely not. Maybe, you know, as I said right now, you know, because, you know, you do not know yourself so much, you know, and you don't know what you are doing to others so much, but you know what others do to you, you know very much [laughs]. And actually, you are doing same thing to others [laughs, laughter]. If you realize that, you know, you will think [laughs].

Student Q: Is it necessary to accept freedom as a form of suffering?

Suzuki-roshi: Freedom-

Student Q: Is it true?

Suzuki-roshi: Freedom. The idea of freedom or-?

Student Q: The experience of freedom.

Suzuki-roshi: Experience of freedom.

Student Q: Yes. Is that also suffering when you [2-4 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: I think so. Freedom-you may say freedom is also cause of suffering because you have, you know, fear of losing freedom. So you [feel that you] should protect your freedom [laughs, laughter]. Then, you know [laughing], freedom will cause some trouble for you. Hai.

Student Q: Isn't that the original discrimination-freedom versus-or enlightenment versus non-enlightenment or freedom versus non-freedom? Isn't that the original discrimination?

Suzuki-roshi: Freedom. Yeah, freedom-maybe so, you know. You know, the-something which is-some idea which is dualistic, you know, is, anyway, cause of problem because, you know, it is-it makes pair of opposites, you know. So there is no words which mean something without any opposite idea. So if you stick [to] one side, you know, you will cause trouble-stick to one side. So when you are in the position which include both side, or understanding which you include-which you can-which you can include both side, that is how to be free from, you know, suffering. Hai.

Student R: The Theravadan scriptures talk about many different levels of meditation. Does zazen include all of these, or is it different?

Suzuki-roshi: "Include" is, you know, very vague, you know. But it is-at least it is-our practice is foundation of those practice. Without, you know, our practice, you know, it doesn't work. It will, you know-if it is actually, you know, stepladder-like practice, you know, it will create problem. And it should be one practice, you know, and it should be a different experience of one practice. Then, you know, those various steps will work-will help. So if you open your eyes, you know, and if you understand our practice and see those stages of attainment, it makes sense.

Mmm. Just a moment. I-I think I have-I haven't time any more. Do I have some more time?

Student: 9:10 [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Okay. Thank you.

---

Source: Original City Center tape transcribed and checked by Bill Redican (11/29/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] pratyeka-yana: attaining enlightenment by and for only oneself, the end result of which is becoming a pratyeka-buddha. It is one of the three vehicles (triyana) that can bring one to nirvana: shravaka-yana, pratyeka-yana, and bodhisattva-yana.

[2] shravaka-yana: seeking personal enlightenment by listening to the dharma and gaining insight, the end result of which is becoming an arhat.

[3] "Beings are numberless; I vow to save them.

Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them.

Buddha gates are boundless; I vow to enter them.

Buddha's way is unsurpassable; I vow to become it."

[4] Dazu Huike (Taiso Eka): 487-593. Second patriarch of Zen in China. Dharma successor of Bodhidharma.

[5] SR-70-08-03.

[6] okechimiyaku: a genealogy of Zen succession. (See also SR-71-06-09, p. 9.)

[7] Busso shoden bosatsu daikai-Busso: Buddha and ancestors; sho: "right" or "true" (as in Shobogenzo); den: transmitting; bosatsu: bodhisattva; daikai: precepts for monks and nuns. Hence, "great precepts for bodhisattvas correctly transmitted by buddhas and ancestors," or, more traditionally, "bodhisattva precepts of the correct transmission of the Buddha ancestors."

[8] Jiki (food); ni oite (about); to (absolute or equality); naru (become); mono wa (person), ho (dharma); ni oitemo (about); mata (also); to (absolute or equality); nari (end-of-sentence marker). Suzuki-roshi is referring to Dogen-zenji's "Fushuku-hanpo" ("The Dharma for Taking Food"), from Eihei (Dai)Shingi, Line 1. See T. D. Leighton and S. Okumura, Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community, Albany: SUNY, 1996, p. 83. [See also SR-70-08-15.]

[9] Walpola Sri Rahula, What the Buddha Taught (Bedford: Gordon Fraser Gallery, 1959).

## **5 - Priest Ordination Ceremony: Paul Discoe And Reb Anderson**

Sunday, August 09, 1970

Priest Ordination Ceremony: Paul Discoe And Reb Anderson  
San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally): [1] ... Paul Discoe and [1 word unclear] Reb Anderson, who have come here to be ordained as a disciple of the Buddha. Listen to-listen calmly and attentively.

Due to surpassing affinities, this ordination ceremony become possible. As Buddha's disciple, you have acquired the opportunity to receive the teaching transmitted from Shakyamuni Buddha through the patriarchs to me and to manifest the Buddha's way forever.

Even the buddhas and patriarchs cannot help but admire you who are earnestly seeking the Buddha's path in this world. With sincere belief in his dharma and practicing his way with [2-3 words] for all sentient beings.

It is rare indeed to receive a human body in this cosmic world. However, since we cannot avoid the reality of birth and death, we must deeply and gratefully appreciate how meaningful and marvelous this present existence is. There indeed is the opportunity to listen to the dharma, and the appearance of Buddha in this world is our great joy.

Embracing Buddha's teaching, we seriously accept-sincerely accept the buddhas as our parents. And moment after moment we endeavor to live the life of enlightenment which transcends greed, anger, and self-delusion. Thus, Paul and Reb reflect on the circumstance that have

made this ceremony possible and considered deeply the innumerable blessing of your family and friends.

The great deliverance bestowed upon you by your father is higher than a mountain. And your mother's love is deeper than the ocean. It is my sincerest wish that you return at least a small part of this parental kindness, and with your whole life express your gratitude to all those who have cared so much for you.

[After 50 seconds, the recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

The last hair is called shura. Only Buddha is able to cut it off. Now I will shave it off. Do you allow me to do this?

Paul: Yes I will.

[Wood clappers (kaishaku) are struck twice.]

Suzuki-roshi (chanting):

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha with immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha with immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha and immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering-having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally):

Nyoho[2][?]. Paul Discoe, your name-your Buddhist name will be Daiho Zengyu. And your friend will call you by name of Zengyu. August Ninth, Nineteen-Seventy.

Nyoho[?]. Reb Anderson, your Buddhist name will be Tenshin Zenki. And your friend will call you by name of Tenshin. August Ninth, Nineteen-Seventy.

[After 35 seconds, recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally): Do you want to receive Buddha's precepts? You should make confession. There are two ways-there are two meanings-two meanings in confession, but there is a way for confession transmitted from the Buddha through the patriarchs to us. Recite after my words.

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): All the karma ever created by me-

[Clappers 1X.]-

Ordinands (chanting): -since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it. [Clappers 1X.]

All the karma ever created by me since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it. [Clappers 1X.]

All the karma ever created by me since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it.

[After seven seconds, recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally): Now we should receive the Triple Treasures. [Clappers 1X.]

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): I take refuge in the Buddha.

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the Buddha.

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma.

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): I take refuge in the sangha. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the sangha.

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take ...

[Recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-roshi (speaking formally): In the Buddha realms, in all directions, the earth trembles and flower fall-flowers fall. What is the meaning of such an extraordinary sight? Buddha says in this world of [2-3 words], for us [?] who want to receive the precepts, having received true [?] discourse on bodhisattva's precepts, revealed [?] by their teacher who had previously received them from his teachers, are allowed to receive the Buddha's precepts, and now they are sure to be buddha. Therefore, the universe manifests such a joyous omen. From hearing this, the bodhisattva bow to them and said [?], if so, we have



now accepted the precepts and by keeping them with the spirit of Shakyamuni Buddha, the great teacher and sage.

Our study and practice are accompanied by innumerable bodhisattvas. This is due to the perennial and diamond-like element of the bodhisattva's precepts. Due to ripening [?] of this great opportunity, their bodies are resting in the dharma world. And all the world are involved in those bodhisattva precepts.

In the realm of the great observance of bodhisattva precepts, who are practicing the precepts for whom [?] as the great precepts practice-to whom it may [?] are going, the observance of the pure bodhisattva precepts, there is no subjectivity or objectivity and no merit-it-no merit even in pure practice. Thus, our practice continues forever. We should preserve the good fruit of those true merit of bodhisattva precepts and mutually share the true buddha way with all sentient beings.

Here we have Zengyu and Tenshin, and bodhisattva's precepts have been transmitted to them, and they have joined our order of Buddha. It is our heartfelt desire that they will be mindful of those precepts and manifest the precepts in their everyday live.

[Brief conversation off-mike.] [Clapper 1X.]

Suzuki-roshi begins to chant in Japanese:

Sesshi kai ziki ...

[Recorder stopped for unknown interval.]

Suzuki-roshi (speaking informally):

I am so grateful to have [name unclear]-sensei and Nishima [?]-sensei for the ordination of Zengyu-san and Tenshin-san. And I'm so happy with all of your friend to have-to have this ordination ceremony.

I have-I want to say just thank you for our teachers and your friend, who make this occasion possible for us. It is, of course, not only our effort but also especially for the-of the patriarchs and-patriarchs and originated from Buddha's enlightenment.

If-but if one attains enlightenment, all the sentient beings will be enlightened. The-there is this kind of truth which we-which is difficult to accept, but that is very true. And to have a disciple who will attain enlightenment is the most important thing for our society. Your parents raise you so that you can contribute some good element for our society. First of all, we all should be very grateful for Zengyu-san's parents and for Tenshin-san's parents, who raise you with this spirit.

Everyone has the spirit to save others. That spirit is always inside with

us. Our true mind is always the spirit-mind to save all sentient beings. In your happiness, or in your adversity, or even in critical moment of each one of us, the things-the mind which is-which comes out always, in such a moment, is the mind who want to contribute something to our human work. This is the mind Buddha found out in its true sense. After leaving various things behind him, he found out this truth. He found out true mind, which to- which is a spirit to save all sentient beings, and became Buddha.

On this point, if you think about the true spirit of saving others, which is bodhisattva-mind and which is buddha-mind too, we will realize how important it is to have someone who will be the good example of our human being which has-which have the true spirit of saving others before-even before save themselves. When we think and reach this point, we cannot help extolling this ceremony of ordination, which means to join our order, to save all sentient beings.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for Buddha, for our teachers, for your parents, and all of you, and all sentient beings in the world.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center original tape. Transcribed by Katharine Shields 6/6/00. Checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/29/00.

[1] Opening words are missing on tape.

[2] Presuming nyoho is correct, it means "to act in conformity with the regulations prescribed by the Buddhas and patriarchs" (Y. Yukoi, *The Japanese-English Zen Buddhist Dictionary*. Tokyo: Sankibo, 1991, p. 510).

## **6 - Open Mind**

Sunday, August 16, 1970

Open Mind  
San Francisco

[The first part of the lecture was not recorded.]

... restore the Buddhist teaching in its original way.

So that you don't know anything about Buddhism is very good [laughs]. We have no trouble to-to make you piece by piece [laughs].

So here, you know, and-American people has very open-minded-is very

open-minded. So for you, it is accept the teaching, you know, without trouble. That is my feeling.

And one more point is because your mind is open, and we have not much prejudice, you know, you know-you see things clearly. And if the teaching is not pure enough, and-then you will not accept it. But there is-of course there is some danger. The danger is, you know, you will easily, you know, [get] caught by some wrong teaching too. You-you-someone said, you know, American people are like a sheep [laughs]. There is that-that danger. And if you meet with some ambitious person, you will be easily, you know, involved in wrong activity. That is one danger. But for sincere teacher, American people is maybe the best friend.

Anyway, this evening, I wanted to make our practice clear from two viewpoint: from student's viewpoint and from teacher's standpoint. And when we have mutual trust, then the student's way will become teacher's way, teacher's way will become one with student way. And, we will have-there we will have Dogen's way of practice, which is called "practice based on original enlightenment."

I am so grateful to-to have-to finish this sesshin with this kind of warm feeling.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center tape. Transcription by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (checked March 16, 2000). [The original tape continues with what appears to be a different complete lecture, which has been cataloged as SR-70-08-16B.]

## **7 - Push Yourself Into Some Very Strong Hard Rule**

Sunday, August 16, 1970

To Be Honest And Sincere In Its True Sense It Is Necessary To Push Yourself Into Some Very Strong Hard Rule  
San Francisco

[This is the second of two lectures with this date. This lecture began mid-way on Side A of the original tape after a prior lecture ended. It appears to be complete.]

The meaning of our practice [is compassion?] way of life-way of life, or your life ... [inaudible] ... because you like to sit on the floor more ... [next few paragraphs inaudible]. Instead of sitting on chair, Buddha said please sit down here and relax and talk more with calmness of mind and \_\_\_\_\_ carefully. Let's sit on the ground or floor. It is of course easy or

convenient to live on chair. If you sit on the floor, you should adjust yourself to the ground and you should make effort, physical effort, to sit down, to stand on the floor. If you use chair there is not much \_\_\_\_\_ in sitting or in standing up. Moreover, you have wheels. I am very interested in the chair with wheels [casters?]. It is very easy to fall. I thought it was too convenient. In that way we will become, we will lose our faculty of adjusting ourself to the nature.

Recently, maybe the basic idea of our way of life, basic thought, or philosophy of our modern life is to conquer nature. And another element will be to develop our desires. To achieve something, and to gain something by something may be like (war) ... when that something develops some technique to conquer nature, so ... to extend our \_\_\_\_\_, to conquer nature. Instead of adjusting our self to the nature or appreciating nature, or to become one with nature. We, most of the people, I think, you realize already how human beings have been living in this world, that may be \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. But one more thing that is missing is how we should develop our desires. That will be the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, and maybe already realize that we have to go back to a more primitive way of life than civilized way of life. That is what we have realized already. But, here there is something which is-which our long practice suggests. That is how we adjust ourselves to that nature. Here there is something which our Zen practice suggests-that is how we adjust our self to that nature. Nature ... [inaudible] ... And which direction our desires should be directed.

You may say the practice of zazen-you will understand why we practice-which pretty well, but you don't understand why we use our oryoki. But actually when we use oryoki many people find some feeling about \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ and some feeling of paying attention to many things you have or you handle. In \_\_\_\_\_, that is the way we clean up, but if you use oryoki, you wash one by one, carefully, without making noise-that is our practice. Then we have a kind of feeling of engagement [?] in this world, with everything.

Our desires may be extended more \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ even in our physical feeling. In that way then you \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. In ritual, when you recite sutra you should find out, and you should hold sutra card in some certain way ... \_\_\_\_\_. This kind of practice in comparison to your usual practice is-to sit wherever you want and reciting whatever you want to do, you may feel good in that way, but feeling-when you feel in that way, you don't have much chance to feel your (being). When you find yourself at some exact-that is already to feel your being. And to do something in some certain way, you will feel the feeling of your teacher, and patriarchs and Buddhas. Doing something in the same way, you can really have the feeling our teachers had, our ancestors had. It means that you truly find yourself in the history of long, long practice. And to practice with people in the same way you will feel yourself in the ... \_\_\_\_\_. You will find yourself (time and space this time). That is being one with everything.

If you sit and-if you sit and realize yourself, that is enlightenment. Realize yourself on this point right now, all the Buddhas will attain enlightenment with you, and all the teachers will attain enlightenment with you. That is what we said and what we meant.

To practice our traditional way-in that way-you may think that you will be enslaved by the tradition of \_\_\_\_\_ traditional way. But actually, purpose of practice is realization of our being. If you lose this point, our practice doesn't mean anything and your everyday life doesn't mean anything. As I said, even though we are in Tassajara or even though you practice in the big mountain, you cannot separate it from this world. You are all-you are in the destiny [?] of being enslaved-by our practice ... As human being has particular nature as a human being-we must have, we must think about what is our nature. By \_\_\_\_\_, we will not find out our way, that is actual Buddha way.

Actually the Buddha was the one to notice this point and to establish this kind of practice for us. But Buddha said before you-there was the Six Patriarch, maybe-time-wise we don't know ... [inaudible] ... it means that this is ... to find yourself right now means to find many beings in \_\_\_\_\_ and to find many ancestors-many descendants after him. So his confidence was-I already met the teacher who-whom I met, and I already saw the people who will appear in this world even though I haven't met them. I haven't met them, yet I save all sentient beings. If-or whether I save them or not, actually they are saved. Actually they are living with us, with you. It is very simple teaching and the fact that he points out-the enlightenment he attains is very not special, very \_\_\_\_\_ and plain. But as Zen teachers say-if you do not practice your enlightenment doesn't make any sense. If you do not use your oryoki, and push forward, pushing backward [?] this world does not make much sense. We cannot feel our being in this world.

At Tassajara, here, you know, my teeth was not so good. So I didn't like to chew brown rice or some hard vegetables. But by chewing-after [unclear] my teeth completely, and chewing them carefully, and-I found some special, you know, taste. I feel as if I have perfect kitchen, you know [laughs, laughter], within my mouth. And I appreciate to put something in my mouth-after cooking it very well and carefully, I ate it.

But this kind of [ 2 words] usually I-I thought-my wife is cooking-someone else is cooking-and my way is just to eat [laughs, laughter]. That was my way of life, I thought. But now I have and I am cooking my food by myself. Because I cook by myself, I appreciate the taste of the food. That is actually how I feel, you know. ...

So I think what we are doing is-something great is coming out from our life in Zen Center. And so I think if you observe your practice or your

way of life and observe your feeling, against this \_\_\_\_\_ world ... the feeling you have is a more (precious) life. You will find out many treasures for human being. We should rather to walk slowly and understand ... If possible we should fly with our arms [laughs]. ... If you fly big airplane as I ... more feeling of ...

[Sentence not finished. End of Side A. Tape turned over.]

... if I could fly, you know, with-with my arms like this, that is wonderful. When I studied at Eihei-ji with my teacher, you know, this is- I forgot [i.e., SR forgot train of thought]-any-anyway, if I were a bird, this is fantastic [laughs, laughter]. I wish I were a bird. This is fantastic! Right now we are flying by big birds-airplane, but according to the earth, you know, there is many-you can appreciate moving. You will have big sail [?]. ... And you will enjoy many things and beautiful. [inaudible]. It doesn't make much sense [laughs, laughter].

We are so serious, you know, in one way. Why don't you try to fly by your arms, you know? Even though you cannot, you should work, I think. Then you will feel your being completely. Even though you are ... , if there is some way of feeling yourself even though you do not think or because you do not think anything you have full feeling of your being on the practice. Usually because you think of some philosophical thing-I think, therefore I am-you as-I don't think, therefore I am! Even though your own practice there is a way to feel completely-that is not religion or mysticism. It is actually thought. When you find out the way how to live ... When you practice our way-we should forget everything and try to find out-try to find yourself in your \_\_\_\_\_. That is why actually we must be strict-we have strict rules. Unless we have-our human nature is very sneaky. Without some strict way we will go this way and that way. Even though [inaudible] ... we are very sneaky. We are \_\_\_\_\_ very clever. To be very honest and sincere in its true sense, it is necessary to push yourself into some very strong hard rule. Maybe that is not good enough. Unless you want to find yourself in it ... you find out yourself in such a strict, such an iron box, maybe easiest way to feel yourself end in everyday life to feel yourself is more, much more difficult. But the first step may be to find yourself in strong iron box.

But as long as you are trying to force into iron box, it is not possible-it is like to read instruction about practice. There are many instructions about our practice. But if you actually do it, it will take just one minute. For an instance, if you want to describe how I drink a cup of water, I don't know whether you can describe it very accurately. But if I-maybe better in this sense-we put emphasis on strong \_\_\_\_\_ trust you to be ready to do it and to \_\_\_\_\_ actual experience of practice, getting rid of \_\_\_\_\_ complications. We will have more practice under Tatsugami-roshi or some other teacher, some others teachers from Japan. But the point of our practice is how to feel under various situations and circumstances-how to adjust yourself to the \_\_\_\_\_, and how to make right effort as human being for many

centuries, several centuries. Making wrong efforts, so we should resume right efforts in developing our human life.

Thank you very much.

[Chant follows.]

## **8 - Lay Ordination Ceremony**

Sunday, August 23, 1970

Lay Ordination Ceremony  
Sunday, August 23, 1970

San Francisco[1]

[Sound Problem]

Tape operator (possibly Yvonne Rand): First part of Roshi's address here is inaudible on the original tape.

Suzuki-roshi:

... and obtain similar to result according to [1 word unclear] like our [1-2] bodhisattva way. [2-3] bodhisattva spirit. [3-4] of our practice. And how you, you know, actually practice may be in [1-2]. You say "Hai!" That is the point of practice. When you say "Hai," you are one with your "hai." One with your Zen. One with your [1]. And one with your [1].

So when you say Hai!-or when you say "Yes, I will!"-then there is true mind of helping, you know. And if you cannot say "Hai!" from the bottom of heart, with all of your strength, that practice doesn't work.

[5-7] start with this practice of "Yes, I will!" That is the fundamental practice of bodhisattva practice. And to have complete perfect understanding of how important it is to say "Hai" is your whole life's practice.

Thank you.

[Inkin bell rings twice. Tape recorder is stopped and restarted after an unknown period. Then kaishaku clappers are struck three times.]

Suzuki-roshi: [2] If you want to be [1-2] and practicing our [1] precepts, you should start with pure practice of confession. There are two ways and two meanings in the Buddhist way of confession. However, you have the way of confession transmitted from the Buddha through the patriarchs to you. Reciting after my words:

[Clappers 1X.]

Suzuki-roshi (chanting): All the karma ever created by me-

All ordineses (chanting): -since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which has no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought ... [Tape recorder was stopped and restarted after an unknown interval.][3]

Suzuki-roshi: ... and pure [1] and pure heart. This ordination ceremony is [2-3 words]. This is actually the second time-second ordination ceremony for Zen Center, because while we didn't have lay ordination ceremony [2-3] because I didn't want to give you some special idea of Zen Buddhist. Bodhisattva way-according to bodhisattva teaching, every-actually every sentient being is bodhisattva. Whether or not they are aware of it, they are actually disciples of the Buddha. As this is our conviction, we didn't-I didn't want to give you some special idea of Zen Buddhist. But time has come for us to strive for more sincerely to help others.

As we have so many students here, inside and outside of Zen Center, we need more help. And I decided to have lay ordination for you just to help others, but not to give you some special idea of lay Buddhist, because all of us are Buddhists actually. This is not [1-2] idea. This is the idea or spirit for [2-3 words] Buddha's way.

Accordingly, our way is like Avalokiteshvara Buddha-Bodhisattva. When he want to save ladies, he take-he will take the form of lady. For boys, he will take form of boy. For fishermen, he will be a fisherman. More sophisticated Chinese expression is "to be like white bird in the snow." White bird in the snow. When people are like snow, we should be like snow. When people become black, we should be black. And being always with them, without any idea of discrimination, and we can help others in its true sense, without giving anything-any special teaching or material. This is actually bodhisattva way.

We are-how we actually-this kind of freedom from everything and this kind of acting [?]-this kind of soft-minded-this is true practice [1-2 words: "already"?]. You may think we are forcing you in some form-forcing some rituals on you, or forcing some special teaching on you, and forcing you to say, "Yes, I will!" But those things are provided for you just to be like a white bird in the snow.

When you [2 words: "go through"?] your practice, you will-practice doesn't [1-2], you will have [1-2] in spite of practice and point of helping others. This is why we had ordination ceremony today.

For all of us, included-including various great teachers, it is not at all easy to be like white bird in the snow. Somehow, anyway, we should make best effort to be like a white bird. No matter if previous teacher [1-2 words: "passed"?].



In this way, if you help yourself through practice, you can help others without anything. Just to be with people will be enough.

I am so grateful to have this kind of very very formal ordination ceremony. Without the guidance of Tatsugami-roshi [?], who came to visit Zen Center-and who came just to visit Zen Center-just to help our practice. [1] we have this kind of very formal ordination ceremony here at Zen Center.

After sewing your robe, in spite of busy everyday life you live [?], I think this is also good example of the Buddha. So even [though] we are busy, there is a way to practice the most formal practice. Even though humans-all human being in the city are busy, there is no reason why they cannot practice our way to be like Avalokiteshvara [?]. If all of us practice pure [?] way [3-4] and practice our way and doing our practice of bodhisattva, the result will be great.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: Original tape transcribed by Bill Redican (28 June 2000). The second part of this lecture was printed in an edited form in Wind Bell, Fall-Winter 1970-71, Vol. IX, No. 3-4, p. 9-11. Sound problem: Level and quality of the original tape are very poor. This lecture should be audio-enhanced if possible.

[1] According to Zen Center records, this lay ordination was performed on August 23, 1970. The 36 ordainees included Carl Bielefeldt, David Chadwick, Katherine Thanas, Jerome Peterson, and Yvonne Rand. The original tape was labeled 7/23/70, but August is correct. The date was confirmed on the back of David Chadwick's rakusu in SR's own hand.

[2] The following several paragraphs are similar to the priest's ordination ceremony that Suzuki-roshi followed for Paul Discoe and Reb Anderson earlier in the month (see lecture SR-70-08-09).

[3] The following text appears to be the original lecture upon which the edited Wind Bell lecture was based. Earlier fragments printed above were not included in the Wind Bell lecture.

## **9 - Leaving for Japan**

Tuesday, August 25, 1970

Leaving for Japan

[One of two lectures for this date.]

San Francisco

As some of-some of you may know, tomorrow I am leaving San Francisco for-for a while and coming back December first or second. I'm not so clear yet, but for three months I shall be in Japan.[1]

I feel very sorry for-for you-not to be with you, but there there is something I must do for Zen Center. First of all, Dick Baker will receive transmission.[2] And I am hoping that we can-Dick and me-can do something, you know, for-even a little bit of important-important teaching. If we can translate it into English, it may be one step for Zen Center practice.

Those, you know, teachings is not-is not something which we talk about for-for people in general. Only, you know, who is ready to receive transmission, you know, can study because it is pretty difficult to study. But at-it is, I think, it is important for us, you know, for you to know what kind of idea we have in-about our practice, or about our everyday life, or about our zazen. Without this kind of fundamental understanding, it is pretty difficult to make the purpose of our practice clear.

It is-usually, you know, when someone receive transmission, we had-we had, you know, lecture for some selected people-ten or more people, you know. Only for the-for that kind of lecture, only yellow-robed person could attend. It is-it is called Zenka-e,[3] you know, or Shitsunai sammotsu-hiben koa.[4] I attended several times. Still [laughs] it was pretty difficult to figure out clearly, you know-clear my understanding. It was pretty difficult, especially when it is written in Chinese. It is very difficult. We can read it, but it is difficult even to make question about it. Maybe this kind of study will be our whole life study. And it [is] worth [it] to study over and over again. But it-it may be necessary, you know, to explain it-to translate it, you know, as much as possible.

This kind of thing I have in my mind, but I myself is very busy in Japan, and he will be also busy. And he has to go to Eihei-ji. So I-I cannot promise you whether we can do it or not. One by one, whenever we, you know, have yellow-robed monk or student, you know-little by little, if we can contribute something for us will be-eventually result will be great, I think.

This not something which we can do without many people's help-many teachers' help. More and more we will be concentrated in this direction to make-to make our practice, you know, stronger and clear. Fortunately, Dogen-zenji's way of study is not just, you know, study of Zen. Its study covers all-all the Buddhism. So it may take pretty long time, you know, to understand him, but we-if you-we make effort little by little, then I think we will have very good understanding of our way: not only Zen but also all Buddhism.

So for us it is necessary, you know, to study-intellectual study is also

important. But one person cannot do everything. So according to your background, you can, you know, share our study. So we have-you have various chance, you know-various possibility in our study. Those who are interested in some other teaching, they can study some other teaching. Those who are interested in practice of Zen, they can prac- [partial word]-study practice of Zen. Those who has good understanding of some other philosophy or some other cultural study-they can-you can comp- [partial word]-contribute for our study.

So you don't have to, you know, afraid of anything, you know. You cannot-I-almost-it is almost impossible for you to get out of our study. Whatever you study, it will [laughs] contribute [to] our study. So we do not discriminate Zen or other teaching. At the same time, for us it is not so easy, you know, to organize or to, you know, to organize our study. First of all, we should be very friendly with each other, without insisting some-someone's own way, you know. We must have very wide generous mind, and we should understand with each other. That is, you know, actually why we practice together.

Although our study is very wide, but we have-fortunately we have center of the study. That center, you know, will be realized by your-by your practice of Zen and by your teacher. So, you know, teacher's responsibility is to give you the center of the study and to give you the center of your life. And for you, you know, it is important or it is indispensable to have the center of your study. When you have center of the study, you don't afraid of anything, because you can, you know, always-there is no-because you have, always, you know, some conviction in your study. The intellectual study is very superficial and sometime is-it is very stimulating. And sometime it is very strong.

So if you don't have center, you know, you will be always shaky, you know, like this [probably gestures]. But when you have center, you know, even though you go this way [probably gestures], back and forth, but you don't lose yourself. That is flexibility. Because-without the center of study, you will be easily get into some sectarian or fanatic, you know, religion. When you have center, you know, you know, you have-you don't have to, you know, rigid, or you don't have to be even stronger-strong, you know. You will stay quite flexible.

Some-someone said, "Dogen-zenji went to China," you know, "just to get flexible mind. That is why he w- [partial word]-what he studied, you know, what he studied in China. But that is-because of his, you know, strong conviction-because of-because he had center in his study, according to him that is transmitted, you know, way or spirit, he-he had, you know, flexible mind. And he didn't afraid of anything. He didn't cling to anything, and he said when he come-came back to Japan he said, "I came back with nothing." [Laughs.] "And I found out our eyes is [horizontal]-and our nose is vertical. That is what I have learned [?]"[5]-what he found out in Japan-in China.

That kind of, you know, conviction will-you will have that kind of conviction if you really, you know, understand what is the center of practice. Zen Center, you know-we, you know-we call ourselves "Zen Center," but "Center" is important. Zen Center Cultural Center or, you know, you can call us, you know, in various way. But "Center" is very important anyway.

We have, as you must have noticed already, we have started some formal and rigid, you know, practice. Maybe it looks like so, maybe. Why we do this is just to find out, you know, the center of our practice.

We have, you know-the meaning of, you know, or why we have-we started Zen Center is because our practice is-more and more our Zen practice bec- [partial word]-losing our center. And so, naturally, we Zen student will be involved in idea of Soto or Rinzai, you know, without knowing what is Rinzai or what is Soto. And especially, you know-I am sorry to say so, but especially in Japan, you know, Zen is not so healthy. And they are involved in various, you know, unnecessarily covered or, you know-covered by old, you know, old tradition-traditional way. Although we are, you know, practicing very rigid-rigidly practicing something, but our way is, you know-if you say "old" it is old-older than, you know, this-way of practice in Japan become popular. We are going back-we are-we don't-we want to study original, you know, old, old pure way of Dogen.

So the way we are studying is Dogen's way, which was not so popular when he started. He confronted with, you know, various way of practice which was popular at that-at his time. So to get rid of that kind of, you know, popular way of study, he rigidly, you know, practice something sincerely with few students. And that kind of way, you know, more and more developed. But at the same time, when Soto school become popular, you know, our way, you know, became more and more impure. So we want to go back to the original way just was-just-which was practiced just by Dogen and his students.

And through this kind of pure st- [partial word]-practice, we want to understand or realize his pure way. As we are, you know, we have started this kind of group here, we should-we think we should not introduce, you know, something which is not so important. We want to introduce you something which is pure and which is easier to understand, which is even beyond cultural background.

I think if we introduce, you know, the way which was, you know, established by him when he-when he did not like, you know, the practice which was going [on] at his time. So in this sense, you know, to introduce his way-his pure way here means, you know, to introduce something which is more appropriate for American new generation. That is why, you know, we started Zen Center.

And another point was in Japan, you know, only priest are practicing

Zen, you know. If you go to Eihei-ji, you know, no layman cannot practice Zen with monks. This is, you know, wrong. Here in Zen Center, you know, monks and city people or whatever they are can practice our way in the same place. Even though you listen to teaching of Dogen, if you don't practice it is impossible to find out why he, you know, left that kind-why he practiced his way in that-in such a way.

So for us the most important thing is practice. And to practice with people is the motto of Zen Center-not just priest. With, you know, everyone to practice zazen is the most important point of our practice here, especially in city. And that is also bodhisattva way. And that is the only way to-only way for religion to survive.

If, you know, Buddhism-when Buddhism owned, you know-is understood just by priest, it doesn't, you know, help people. It doesn't survive in that way. In its true sense it doesn't survive. Rejecting various purpose of propagating our way, without nothing-without anything, to be with people and to help to practice with them, and what will result is real help for the people. With-when we practice our way with this spirit, I think true Buddha's spirit will be actually here.

I have no special, you know, purpose of-oh, you cannot hear?-I have no purpose of my trip to Japan this time, but I want to be, you know, with Dick and with my close friend as much as possible. And I don't want to try to, you know, explain what we are doing here, you know. But for some people it will be a good stimulation, you know. For the sincere person what we are doing will be, you know, will be good news. And more teachers like Yoshida-roshi[6] or Tatsugami-roshi[7] will come and help us, I hope.

Actually, he-they will be also helped, you know, st- [partial word]-you know, by you, you know, as I am very much encouraged by your sincere practice-sincere pure practice. And we feel, you know, a kind of responsibility. You do not come to Zen Center-you didn't come to Zen Center to be a priest or to be a, you know, to-to have some special, you know, status. You just, you know, came and studying something which we have here. And you are-you are sticking [to] our way for many years, now. And you don't leave Zen Center [laughs]. It is, you know-it is awful thing, you know, to see [laughs, laughter]. You know, it is terrible thing. And I myself don't know what to do, you know [laughs, laughter]. But anyway we are-here we are doing something.

Some time I feel very bad, you know, because I am losing my physical, you know, strength more every day-each year, you know. When you are growing fast, you know, maybe as long as you keep that-this kind of, you know, sincerity in your study-study of yourself, then I think you will have naturally good teacher from everywhere. This is, I think, something amazing, you know. And we-and at the same time, we should be very grateful to come across this-this kind of situation.

I don't think this kind of chance-I don't think human being will have this kind of chance so many times-maybe-many-once in many hundreds of years. I think we are now in very, you know, important-we came to very important time. Without this kind of, you know, understanding, you know, our-what we are doing doesn't make any sense.

You know, we are-we do not contribute our society so much, you know. But because of the world situation-our human world situation is like this, we have to do this. And because you feel you have to do something with this kind of situation, you are here studying. Not only ourselves: I think many and many people in America has same feeling, and even in Japan the younger generation, you know, is-has-have same feeling. Maybe, you know, crazy people, you may say, but in usual time, you know, if it is fifty years or thirty years ago, we are crazy people [laughs]-we are crazy. But now, you know, we are not crazy at all.

So I think we sh- [partial word]-must be very grateful to be here and studying something here, even though we don't know what-what is it [loud laughter]. I think something will, you know-if you believe in your buddha-nature within yourself, something must come out from us. Something must result from our activity or from our effort.

As long as you have this kind of pure effort, no one can fool you, you know. When you have some idea of study, you will be easily fooled by him, or someone. But when you don't care for anything, there is no way to fool you [laughs, laughter], even though, you know, he show you, you know, beautiful car, "Oh, I don't care for that." Even though someone, you know, give you so- [partial word]-a lot of money, you may say, "No, I don't-I don't care for money," you know. There is no way to fool you.

But there is some danger, you know. I-the danger I feel, you know, is when you-your-you start-you have involved in, you know, involved in practice of gaining idea, you know. That is one danger. So as Dogen, we should not practice our way for something else-not even for ourselves. We should study our way just for the way, not for anything else. Then no one can fool you. So eventually, you know, you-you- [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... some idea which is called truth, you know. You will be fooled-easily fooled by the word "truth." So even Buddhism will be, you know-the name of Buddhism will be very dangerous for us. That is, you know, our way, actually.

So we-we should-we must not give any chance, you know, for anyone to fool you, you know. You shouldn't be fooled by something. When he-Dogen-zenji said, "I found," you know, "our eyes is level and our-my nose-our nose is horizontal [vertical], and I am not fooled by anything, fooled by anyone." [Laughs.] That is, I think, very strong, and very strong conviction in his practice, you know, in himself. Even though I

don't understand anything, it is okay. Even though I am nobody, it is okay. Then no one can fool you. That is important.

So on this point, you know, you should be very strict with yourself. Don't be fooled by anything. Or don't try to be fooled by something [laughs]. You know, sometime I see many people who is try-who is studying, you know, Zen, just to be fooled by [laughs, laughter] someone. But it is, you know, it-if so, he is going opposite way.

When you have this kind of spirit, naturally you will be friendly, you know, and you will help with each other. And we can extend our way. Maybe three months will not be so long time. The end of December I will see you again [laughs], if I am not fooled by [laughs, laughter] something.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Bill Redican (12/26/00).

[1] This trip is discussed by Okusan-sensei [in her interview with Kazuaki Tanahashi reproduced at [www.cuke.com](http://www.cuke.com)] and in Crooked Cucumber, p. 358 et seq.

[2] Completed on December 8, 1970.

[3] Zenka: \_\_\_\_\_. -e: possibly realization.

[4] Shitsunai sammotsu-hiben: a work on the "secret transmission of the law," written by the Soto monk Man-jin, concerning three dharma-transmission ceremonies (shisho, daiji, and kechimyaku). koa (possibly also ko): lecture.

[5] Dogen-zenji, commenting on his journey to China: "I didn't go to many monasteries, but I happened to see my teacher and directly found that my eyes are vertical and my nose is horizontal. Then I was not to be fooled by anyone. So I came back with open hands" (Eihei Koroku, Chapter 1, translated by Thomas Cleary, Rational Zen, p. 45).

[6] Yoshida Eshun-roshi: Teacher of okesa sewing in the lineage of Hashimoto Eko-roshi.

[7] Sotan Ryosen Tatsugami-roshi: Ino-roshi from Eihei-ji who served as head of training at Tassajara for the Spring and Fall 1970 practice periods.

## **10 - Lay Ordination: White Bird In The Snow**

Tuesday, August 25, 1970

Lay Ordination: White Bird In The Snow  
[No tape.]

I am so grateful to have this ordination ceremony for you, our old students. This is actually the second time ... the second ordination ceremony for Zen Center. Because why we didn't have lay ordination ceremony more often was because I didn't want to give you some special idea of lay Buddhists. Bodhisattva way, according to Bodhisattva teaching, every ... actually every sentient beings are Bodhisattva, whether or not they are aware of it they are actually disciples of the Buddha. As this is our conviction, we didn't I didn't want to give you some special idea of lay Buddhists, but time has come for us to strive for more sincerely to help others.

As we have so many students here, inside and outside of Zen Center, we need more help. And I decided to have Lay Ordination for you just to help others but not to give you some special idea of lay Buddhists, because all of us are Buddhists actually. This is not conceited idea, this is idea of spirit transmitted from Buddha to us. Accordingly, our way is like Avalokiteshvara Buddha, Bodhisattva. When he wants to save ladies, he took, he takes the form of ladies; for boys, he takes form of boys; for fisherman, he will be a fisherman. More sophisticated Chinese expression is to be like white bird in the snow-white bird in the snow. When people are like snow, we should be like snow. When people become black, we should be black. And being always with them without any idea of discrimination, and we can help others in its true sense without giving anything, any special teaching or materials, this is actually Bodhisattva way.

And now ... how we actually ... this kind of freedom from everything, and this kind of asking, and this kind of soft-minded spirit is to practice our way. You may think we are forcing you in same form, forcing some rituals on you or forcing some special teaching on you and forcing you to say, "yes, I will." But, those things are provided for you just to be like a white bird in the snow. When you go through those practice, and when you practice zazen in this way, you have point of zazen and point of practice and point of helping others. This is why we had ordination ceremony today, all of us, including various great teachers. It is not at all easy to be like white bird in the snow.

But then, somehow, anyway, we should make best effort to be like a white bird. Remember that this is not easy task. In this way, if you help yourself through practice, you ... you can help others, without anything, just to be with people will be enough.

Ah ... I am so grateful to have this kind of very, very formal ordination ceremony. Without guidance of Yoshida-roshi, who came just to visit



Zen Center, and just to help us, help our practice ... we could have this kind of very formal ordination, lay ordination ceremony. After sewing your robe, in spite of busy, everyday life of yours, and I think this is also good example of the Buddhist, or even though we are busy, there is some way to practice the most formal practice. Even though we ... all human beings in the city ... are busy, there is no reason why they cannot practice our way to be like white bird in the snow. If all of us taking your way for good example and practice our way and join our practice of Bodhisattva, the result will be great.

Thank you very much.

## **1970 december (4)**

### **1 - Lecture After Trip To Japan: Zazen As Our Foundation**

Sunday, December 13, 1970

Lecture After Trip To Japan: Zazen As Our Foundation

In this trip,[1] I studied in Japan [laughs], you know, and I found out many things, and many things happened. Many things has happened since I visited Japan four years ago.

Can you hear me? [Laughs.]

Japan changed a lot. Not only various food and materials now is very high. Transportation changed, and the road is pretty good now. And people there are very busy, and they-their life is more now Western-style and busy. If you go from here to America [Japan?], you will be amazed how busy life they have in Japan.

Because of the easy transportation, their-the area they work expanded. For an instance, before they-be- [partial word]-four years ago, the station I went [to] was Yaizu station, but nowadays mostly I go to Shizuoka station, which is three times as far, or four times as far as-from-from-to go to Yaizu. So accordingly, they have to buy something driving car four times more.

It looks like Japan has no more old culture, but actually it is not so. But it looks like they lost old Japanese culture. But if you go to Kyoto you will see many Japanese young generation who are studying old temples and old traditional culture of Japan. So I think if you say Japan has completely changed, that is not true. But it looks like Japan-life of Japan changed a lot.

Meantime, as you may know, Yukio Mishima[2] committed suicide [laughs]. Did you know that [laughs]? He is a-he is a novelist, and he was a-one of the most famous, you know, writer. But he committed suicide in jieitai camp. He tried to appeal his feeling to the-not soldiers, but to the people who is-who are working at jieitai. Do you know jieitai?

I don't know-self--self-defensive, self-defense-not "army" but-[3]

Student: I think we call it "National Guard"-

Not-?

Student: -for the protection of the internal of the country. [2 words unclear: "Japan does" of "from vandals"?]

Uh-huh. Ah. Yeah. He expected jieitai will become-sooner or later will become a kind of army [laughs]. But jieitai didn't change. So-and he believed in former emperor system. But Japan did-has no sign of changing towards emperor system-old emperor system. So he was rather disappointed. But, on the other hand, he was a-a kind of romantist [romanticist].

Why he committed suicide is nowadays people talks about many things and write many things, but what they write or talk about is not much-things not much to do with his own life. He-they are talking about something in what he feels-what they feel or what they think. That is why-but he didn't like that. What he write was what he actually want-wanted to do. Peoples, you know, interesting is-people liked his work very much. But actually, you know, not much people take his art-take his work so seriously. So he-maybe he wanted to know how-how people accept his writing. He thought, you know, if he-if he has that kind of enthusiasm, people may change, you know, by writing something. But people didn't change at all. That is why he finally committed suicide. Maybe-I may be wrong, but I feel it that way.

When I compare, nowadays, life of Japan to the one you have in America, America has no tradition and no-no special culture. But they accept many cultures, as Japanese people, you know, accept various culture from abr- [partial word: abroad]-from Western countries. But as the land is so narrow, and, accordingly, as they have to work so hard, they have no time to, you know, to have-to have time to feel things, you know, while in America, you know, people has more time to think or to feel. Japanese people, you know, are always busy and always doing things in very fast pace. But in America no one works so hard as they do. Our life is not so busy here. So you have time to feel something from your bottom of heart. I think this point is very important.

You have time to sit and to bring your life right into your home. I think that is the meaning of sitting. So when you-it is necessary-I-I thought it is necessary for Japanese to spare [spend?] their time in sitting, forgetting everything, putting busy life aside. If they know how to sit, their life will change.

I think sitting is the bottom of our life. And everyday activity or intellectual study will be the other two side of the triangle. Japan-the most people has no bottom [laughs]. They have just, you know, two-

two side of the triangle. So the two side is not so stable, you know, because they have no bottom. American people, whether you know what is zazen, you have something like, you know, your life is-what you-your life is more or less has bottom, which-which is something like sitting meditation. In Japan, even though we talk about Zen, Zen is, you know [laughs], still two side of triangle. They think that is something which they should study, you know, intellectually. Or something they can find out in old, old, you know, classics, or something which could be found in Eihei-ji or various monasteries. They don't know actually what is zazen. But here you have no big traditional monasteries, but the life you have, you know, is more [or] less life with bottom of sitting meditation.

When I was, you know, writing something I thought it is easy to write something in nighttime rather than daytime. I could write many-many pages or ten or fifteen or sometime twenty pages at nighttime. But when I started to correct or to read what I wrote again, the part I wrote [at] nighttime, you know, more-more and more became less and less. [Laughter.] The part I wrote in daytime is very constant [laughs]. There was not much need to correct or to cross-to erase out [laughs].

So I felt it may be, you know, good for an artist, you know, to work in nighttime when your imagination, you know, is very strong. But for real thinker or for religious people, it may not-it may not be so good. Nighttime will not be so good time to work. Nighttime, I thought, we should rest. Daytime, you know, [we should be] with people and we should work more practically.

Advantage of the life of leisure, or life of-life with openness of our mind is very valuable. And that is what I felt, you know, in Japan, especially when I read Yukio Mishima's committing suicide. They didn't talk about his suicide so much, but people did not have so bad feeling about-about his-about what he did. Of course, you know, it is not our tendency to criticize people who passed away. Although they do not, you know, agree with him, they-they had a kind of sympathy. But that is, you know, just superficial influence of him over Japanese people.

Zazen practice is not, you know, a kind of formal practice which could be compare[d] with some other activity. The main point of zazen is to open our life for everything and to see things as they are and to feel things as they are, as they come, without any prejudice, without any special feeling, which could be the foundation of our life. That is zazen practice. So practice by itself does not mean anything [laughs], you know. But when something come [comes up?] or when you face to something, it-it will have the tremendous-the important meaning. By itself it is just plain water, but if someone-something come, the plain water will reflect-plain calm water will reflect things as they are. If you, you know, have no zazen practice, the things you see is just a picture of something, not actual reality. But only when you have zazen mind, things you have will become real.

We say, "The painted cake cannot be eaten." [Laughs.] You cannot eat painted cake, even though it is beautiful. If you have no zazen, you- what you see, what you eat, is painted cake. You cannot eat homemade bread. You will eat just, you know, white [laughs, laughter] bread. That is, you know, why we sit.

I felt very sorry for Japanese sincere students who are studying old culture, you know, without realizing-realizing this point. Whatever they study, it is, you know-without zazen it is, you know, just picture.

I think my trip this time was very valuable-give me very valuable experience. I was very busy in Japan, and main purpose of my trip is Dick Baker's transmission ceremony which took about-more than one month. He has-he had been working for that-not ceremony-but for transmission-accepting transmission from me. You may ask what does it mean [laughs], but you shouldn't ask [laughs, laughter] because, you know, you will have-you will have just a picture of transmission, you know. When time come for you to receive transmission, or when you realize something, you know, that is actual transmission. So we have-we say we have nothing to transmit [laughs]. What you have is-to realize what you have is actual transmission. On December 8th, we finished his transmission ceremony.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape by Bill Redican (12/23/99).

[1] In SR-70-08-25-A, Suzuki-roshi stated that he was leaving the next day for a trip to Japan lasting three months.

[2] Pen name of Japanese novelist Kimitake Hiroaka (1925-1970), who committed seppuku at the Ichigaya headquarters of the Eastern Army on Nov. 25, 1970, after unsuccessfully trying to rally his listeners to rise up to save Japan. His Shield Society (Tate no Kai) was dissolved shortly thereafter. Mishima's posthumous Buddhist name is Shobuin Bunkan Koi Koji.

[3] Japan (Ground) Self-Defense Force.

## **2 - What Is Self? What Is Our Practice?**

Sunday, December 20, 1970

What Is Self? What Is Our Practice?  
San Francisco

In my last trip to Japan I found out many things. The feeling I had there was-they were-you know, Japanese people nowadays are trying very hard, but according to Uchiyama-roshi,[1] you know-do you know him? He is in Kyoto, and he is practicing with students. And many Caucasian students were there. And when I went there they asked me to speak something [laughs], so I just saw them and talked a little.

Japanese people now-group, group-bo-kei: name="\_ftnref2" title=""> [2] group is group, but bo-kei means "lose themselves." Lose themselves in group. That is Japanese life now. Group bo-kei. Japan is a big family or big group. [Laughs.] They lose themselves [laughing] in group, so they don't know what they are doing actually. I don't say ma [partial word-"many"?] all of them, but most of people there lose themselves in group.

And, you know, some-some people who thinks themselves rid of Japan also has some confidence in their effort of making progress in every direction. But still they were involved-they were lose themselves, they are lose themselves in group, and they don't know. It is difficult for them to know what is-what are they doing. Even though they do not have any information from other countries outside of the countries, I think if their mind is calm enough to see, you know, to realize what they are doing [laughs], you know, it is not so difficult to see themselves.

But, unfortunately, they lose-they have lost themselves in group-big group of Japan. And Japanese-weak point of Japanese people is ecstasy, you know [laughs]. They, you know-when I was, you know, in junior or senior high school, our principal always told us you should not be in ecstasy [laughs]. If, you know, they become-they make some progress in something, they easily get into ecstasy [laughs, laughter] or, or, "How nice is it." [Laughs.] That is, you know, tendency of Japanese people.

And so, that is why, according to Dick [Baker], you know, that is why Japanese people who visit Japan find it very difficult to live in Japan. I think so too. And in comparison to the-that kind of tendency, I think in America there is opposite tendency, which is individualism. And based on individual, individual [laughs]-[He is struggling here with the pronunciation of the word "individual."]-excuse me, individual practice. If you practice our way, Buddhism will become Daoism [laughs, laughter]. The difference between Daoist and Buddhist is one is, you know, hermit. The Buddhist is more realistic, you know. That is the difference. So I think people in America has opposite, you know, tendency, which is-which makes good pair to Japanese people. One is this extreme, you know, making effort this way. The other is making effort the other way.

And so, that is why I think I have difficult time in San Francisco [laughs, laughter]. Knowing Japanese tendency and Japanese people's tendency,

you know, and your way of life, it is very difficult to, you know, to keep harmony. And while you are young it is okay, but even so, if you want to make real effort, real progress in your practice, you must have some base of the life or more deeper complete understanding of the practice and way of life.

This morning I want to talk about, you know, what is self and what is our practice. We have no-in Buddhism we use word "self" in some different way. When we say "self" it means always-it emphasize selflessness, you know. Because people has idea of self, you know, we use that word to express our-to explain our way. We use that word "self," but actually Buddhist has no such word as "self."

But using the word "self," we say selflessness. Selflessness means, you know, to see things-as-it-is. When we have no-we are not caught by idea of self we can see things-as-it-is, and things-as-it-is is selflessness. So as things exists as-they-are, we also exist as-we-are. That is selflessness. It doesn't mean we do not exist. We exist, but we exist as we are. And to know, to realize or to-not to know or not to realize-but to have that kind of mood of life is our purpose of practice.

So if we understand, we-if we can see, observe things in this way without not much idea of self, it is not individualism or it is not right life involved in only group, forgetting themselves. Forgetting themselves in group is big selfishness, you know. To encourage, or to-to encourage the idea of self, they enjoy the group self. So instead of small self, they have gr- [partial word-"group"?] big self.

Wh- [partial word]-in the country like Japan, you know, maybe it is difficult to-not to be involved in that kind of, you know, busy, you know, life. For an instance, right now, many people are building big cabin with big stone, like I do [laughs, laughter]. But idea is different. But they are doing. If you, you know, go to the suburb of small or big town, you will see big, beautiful Japanese building surrounded by big stones and beautiful bonsai-like tree. It may cost a lot of money [laughs]. If one built that kind of building in, in some place, some other person who see it will imitate it, you know. And they will build same building, or more beautiful one. And in that way [laughs], one after another [laughing] they build big mansion-like building and beautiful garden. To me that is, you know-I don't think they are enjoying their garden at all.

So if I go to, if I visit Japan, they invite me to their new house, new residence [laughs] and introduce me, you know, the garden, new garden they built. But it seems to me they do not enjoy the garden or building so much, so much as I do [laughs, laughter]. Maybe that is why they want me to see [laughs, laughter]. It is ridiculous, you know, to be involved in that kind of competition without doing [laughing] what they're building, you know. They just build it, and they are very glad if someone says he is very successful person or something like that, you know.

So, I-I told-I told them it is very beautiful, but in America, you know, rich people do not build so beautiful building. They have big, you know, property, but in which s- [partial word] very humble, you know, common building they have. This is-Japan may be now very wealthy, but anyway it is quite different. Our way of life in Japan is quite different from [what] they have in America. Now I am not-I haven't-I can say exactly how I feel, you know, because I am in, mostly I am in America [laughs].

This kind of tendency-it is pretty difficult for us to be free from that kind of life or tendency of life. If you-but as a Buddhist, if you think of, for an instance, Ten Grave Prohibitory Precepts, you know, you will understand what kind of understanding of life we have. "Don't kill," you know. We have to encourage our spirit to follow Buddhist way. We shouldn't be killed or we shouldn't kill real Buddhist spirit. We should not steal anything, you know, which does not belong to us. Why we steal something is because we don't know what is real value of things. Whether it belongs to me or to others does not make much sense.

When you steal something, you, you know, you-it means that you know your ego, but you don't know what the materials or things are. Don't behave or don't be indulge[d] in something, or don't act unchaste acts. It means that you should not be indulge[d] into something. You should not be caught by something.

I like old art objects [laughs], and my teacher would say "Don't-don't act unchaste acts." [Laughs.] To him it is unchaste act to be attracted by something, some antique or old art object is unchaste act [laughs] to him. It may be so.

So one by one, if you think of-think about what the Ten Grave Prohibitory Precepts are, you will know what is Buddhist life. Knowing this, you know, tendency of human life, I think you will find out what is zazen practice. To find or to realize what we are and what things are in its true sense is the main purpose of our practice. On your black cushion, if you find yourself, you know, in its true sense, you exist there. But that you exist there means that everything exist as you exist. Even though you do not observe things, you know, one by one, the way you exist on your black cushion is the way things exist on each position. So there is no need for us, when we sit, to be greedy or to be involved in useless competition.

When you act, you know, if your life is based on zazen practice, you will have always good harmony with your family, with your neighbors, and things you treat. You will not make, you know, excessive effort or you will not be idle. You will do exactly, you know, [what] you needed. That is, you know, feeling of zazen. You sit. So that you exist here is that Buddha exist, and that Buddha exist means that you exist here. There is no difference between Buddha and you. Buddha exist in that way, and

you exist in that way.

So, if you are Buddha, Buddha is, of course, Buddha and everything could be Buddha. Buddha is someone, you know, who attained buddhahood after making a great effort for many-six years. Before he make-attain buddhahood-before he realize this point, he was Buddha. But he realize what is Gautama Buddha himself. And when he found out himself, he realized everything exist in that way. So for him there was no problem. And according to the tendency of human being, he left his teaching because we make many mistakes. So the teaching was, you know, expressed-left, "Don't do that, don't be that way!" Because you are originally, you know, you will be happy if you are exactly as you are. So don't be that way or this way too much. That was Buddha's teaching, which is called Middle Way.

So only when you have zazen practice in your everyday life, you will be free from life of hermit or life of excessive busy life. We will know how we can help others only when we know how we should exist. I think that is why Zen Center should be in San Francisco and to make right effort as Buddha told us. So we must extend zazen practice to everyday life, and we must encourage zazen people, zazen practice, to many people. In this way, having right practice in our everyday life, I think we can help others in its true sense.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joan Amaral and Bill Redican 9/28/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Uchiyama Kosho-roshi (c. 1912-1998): Disciple of "Homeless" Sawaki Kodo-roshi and sixth abbot of Antai-ji temple in Gentaku, northern Kyoto, Japan. Disciples include Shohaku Okumura-roshi.

[2] bo (to forget); kei (lineage or group of origin).

### **3 - Come Back to Emptiness**

Wednesday, December 23, 1970

Come Back to Emptiness  
Introduced by Jakusho Kwong-roshi

Mill Valley Zendo

Zazen-zazen practice, for us, more and more become important.



Nowadays, as you may feel, we are human being. We came to the point where we must start-maybe it is too late but, even so, we must start some new movement. In America it is not so-so bad, but in Japan it is very bad because the land is so narrow. And what people did for [to] their own land is awful. Soon they will not have anything to eat. And I-we think, even though we die will come to-to the earth. And everything, you know, which appeared should come back to the earth or in its wide sense it-it must come back to emptiness. But something we human being did for [to] our earth or land is pretty difficult to go back, to resume its old home of emptiness.

We human being appeared on this earth and did many things to the earth. And as long as we could, you know-everything resume to emptiness, it was okay. But now it is not-what we did is pretty difficult to resume to emptiness. If you raise, you know, vegetables-vegetables contain something harmful to you. If you eat something, if you breathe air-everything, you know, has already some poison for us. And poison we made remains on the earth almost looks like forever. It cannot be forever, but for human being it is-it is almost forever.

People talks about this kind of thing, but they do not feel so deeply or bad about this. I feel-if I could, you know, after death become emptiness, I feel very good. But what we did, as Buddha says, is, you know, create karma-awful karma.

We-how we create karma is because of the ego. So we should try to-try to get rid of ego as much as possible. So, as Buddha says, egolessness is the most important point for our practice, for our life. When you have not much ego, we feel eternal life for us. Even though we create ego, that ego is strong enough to support yourself, not more than-create problem-unnecessary then. In other word, if we go back to emptiness it is okay. Even though we create something bad, that karma should be reduced to emptiness [laughs] as soon as possible, as soon enough for human being to live on this earth.

This kind of life should be based on zazen practice. If we do not practice zazen we accumulate ego-centered activity, one after another. And we have no time to see, to realize what we are doing. But what-only when you start your activity or your life from zazen then you will-you wouldn't create so much karma-bad karma. And even [though] you create some karma, you know what you are doing and you can control yourself. And you have-you are sensitive enough to feel what you are doing. And when you see something growing naturally and beautifully you will appreciate it. But when you are-your life is involved in awful karma, without seeing anything, without appreciating anything, without feeling anything good, then your-your life is nothing but the karmic life. I don't say I'm not creating any karma, but I can see actually what we are doing here.

I have- I came back from Japan and realized the difference between the

life in Japan and in America. There is big difference. In Japan- Japan is Buddhist country, but Japan is already covered by big karma. But here in America, we have some chance to start something new. Maybe Japan is a kind of factory where people create very bad karma, but in America I don't think so. I think the people who is-who live in America has some responsibility to save all human being. And people who live in such country like Japan should be-should have bodhisattva's mind to sacrifice themselves for human life, human activity, or human being. Even though they themselves cannot have real way of Buddhist life, but they should accept it-their own karma-and they should help people in their own activity, for an instance. If Japan is big factory, they should make something good and help people. But here in America, I think you must have more human like-life, and you must have real practice here. And you must set up some new way of life without creating not much karma, without spoiling the beautiful land you have.

How you can do this is to practice zazen-not all day long, but at least one hour or two hours a day. And you should start your life, you should renew your life, you should go back to emptiness and start your life again and again. Then you will have real Buddhism way of life.

My temple in Japan [Rinso-in], when you would drink water from the stream-you know, not stream, but big and small, small spring. But the water we-they drink now in that temple, I don't think it is good enough; it is not pure enough, I know. And people may know what kind of water they're drinking; but they give up to talk about it. If they talk about it, you know, what they feel, you know, what they have will seems [?] like a bad feeling. and [there is] no way to, you know, purify the water. There is no way.

The earth itself is already not good for human beings. It's terrible, you know. The vegetables they raise is not good enough, I don't think. And I thought what will be the way to eat good vegetable, good water? But no way to get pure water. No more place to raise good vegetable or water.

I didn't talk about this, you know, when I was in Japan. It is so cruel to talk about this kind of thing.

People who take-make trip by fast train. When I was young I would, you know, I-we were very happy to see Mount Fuji. But people now, instead of looking, instead of seeing Mount Fuji, they see the other side of the train where there is many factories and pollution, polluted water. And they talk about how bad it is without seeing Mount Fuji [laughs]. It's awful condition. Last time I visited Japan, four years ago, it was not so bad, but in four days-in four years it changed a lot. But we must be, the-I think we forget, we human being, does not-do not realize what we are doing and what is our karma.

So I-we should encourage people to sit and go back to, you know, emptiness. When you sit instead of, you know, having some gaining

idea of attaining something, you should go back to emptiness on your black cushion, and start-to start something new. Where your practice is involved in some gaining idea of attaining something, it means that you are encouraging ego. As long as you have too much ego, your life will be karmic life. This point should be remembered. And you should know what is pure zazen, what is true zazen transmitted from Buddha to us, which include Buddha's teaching which is the foundation of various teaching of Buddha, which is a way to observe our precepts. When-only when you practice true zazen it is possible to observe Buddha's precepts.

This morning you repeated Prajñāparamita Sutra three times. That is very encouraging. We should repeat, you know-for ourselves we should, I think, practice zazen with silence, with calmness of our mind, with empty mind. But maybe for others, you know, let them know what is Prajñāparamita Sutra-what does it mean to us, over and over again, until they understand what is Prajñāparamita Sutra-and how important it is to practice zazen for us, for human being. It is our practice now. It cannot be just for Zen Buddhists. It should be for all human being. And this is not religion any more; this is something we should do. Even though it may be too late, but we should try our best. If we really awake-if you-we are really awakened, it cannot be too late. I think we must have more positive, you know, practice too for people. Let us sit with people and let us recite Prajñāparamita Sutra with all human being.

I couldn't, you know, express how I feel, but I think you must have understood what I mean. I'm so glad to see so many people in this zendo. Encouraging, you know. Young, small students. We must, you know, try very hard.

Thank you very much. Okay.

-----  
Source: Original tape provided by Sonoma Zen Center, marked "Mill Valley Zendo, Suzuki Roshi, Shingyo, Teisho, 12/23/70." Transcribed by Jeffrey Schneider (July 1999) and checked against tape by Bill Redican (30 August 1999). Mill Valley Zendo was under the direction of Jakusho Kwong-roshi.

#### **4 - Sickness and True Practice**

Sunday, December 27, 1970

Sickness and True Practice  
San Francisco

Dogen-zenji said sickness does not, you know, destroy-destroy people, but no practice will destroy people. Sickness does not destroy people, but no practice destroy people. What do you mean [laughs]? What does

it mean? "No practice destroy people."

If, you know, we have no idea of practice, sickness-even sickness does not mean anything, you know, because when we cannot practice, we call it sick- [partial word]-sickness. But, you know, if you have no idea of practice, what is sickness? Maybe for the people whose purpose of life is to enjoy life, you know, when he cannot enjoy his life, it is sickness. But it is-that idea is self-contradiction, you know, because sickness is also a part of [laughs]-part of life. Maybe because he want to enjoy our life, he want to enjoy in its-enjoy in its more common sense-common sensitivity-enjoy our life. When you cannot enjoy our life, it is sickness [laughs], but, you know, sickness also, you know, [is] a part of life, especially when you become old. You will be al- [partial word]-almost everyday you will be sick [laughs]. So that-that does not, you know, mean anything to the old people.

So how to enjoy our old life is, you know, to have the idea of practice. When someone cannot [laughs] practice, you know: "Oh, I am sick." [Laughs.] "It means something." But even in their bed, you know, they have, you know, something to do: to have more better practice or more formal practice. So they-they will try to, you know, keep up more ordinal [ordinary?] way of practice, having medicine or-or something. Anyway, he will try.

That is a part of practice. That kind of-when-so when we have idea of practice, you know, we-we will not-we don't lose ourselves. But when you have no idea of practice, in its true sense, you will be-you will lose, you know, your meaning of life. Here you will find out that idea, you know, if you-if your purpose of life is to enjoy your life, there is some, you know, something is missing there. It is not complete. The joy of life cannot be a complete, you know-perfect purpose cannot be a purpose of life because [?] only the true idea of practice wi- [partial word: will?]- can be a purpose of life.

Without any purpose of life, we cannot live, and if, you know, even though you have purpose of life, the purpose-when purpose of life is not good enough or perfect enough, then you will lose yourself. You will lose your meaning of life. So when-only when you have complete purpose of life, you-you can survive-you can have a life-have a true joy of life, wherever you are, whenever it-it may be: in sickness, in adversity, or whatever happen to you, you will still have joy of life. You can enjoy sickness even.

So to-to be ill means, you know, to have another practice there. This kind of life-the life with purpose or practice-that practice will be the practice which help themselves and which help others. To do things with people-not-not just help himself-to help others-this kind of practice-if you-if your purpose of life is to help yourself, to help others, then whenever you are, you will have chance to practice.

When I was young, I have my teacher-I had my teacher. But when I was thirty-two, I lost my teacher. He passed away.[1] So I had not much chance to, you know, practice under my teacher. But-under my master [corrects "teacher"], but I-I had some other masters. So I could practice-I could continue my practice. But it is important for you, you know, to have more intimate relationship with your teacher, which you don't have here. [At] Zen Center, we have too many teachers, so I am sorry we haven't [laughs] give you this kind of, you know, practice.

But that is very important. But if you have true, you know-if you understand true-what is true practice or purpose of true life, wherever you are, even without teacher, you can practice pretty well, as I did after [age] thirty-two. [Laughs.] For an instance, you know, when I was [at] Soko-ji, as some of-I told you many times [laughs], but still I want to talk-tell-I want to talk about [it] again-because I found, you know, tremendous joy of practice when I was-each time I went to the grocery store-grocery store to buy some vegetables. I would choose, you know, the fruit which is, you know, almost, you know, almost going to, you know, rotten [laughs]-soft, you know.

If grapefruit is soft, it is-it mean it is not already so good, you know. Grapefruit is sour, but soft, you know, grapefruits with-with-even though it-it has no mold on it, it taste bitter, you know [laughs]. Do you know the taste? Fresh one is only sour, but old one is bitter. I will choose, you know, that kind of soft grapefruits or vegetables with lead [red? dead?] leaves already on it. I found there my practice. When I divide something, you know, one grapefruit with someone else, you know, I give the top part to someone-someone, and the bottom part I take. Top part is usually better than bottom part, even though top part is small, you know. Maybe you will take [laughs] top part, don't you? [Laughs, laughter.] But I take bottom part. You may feel strange [laughs], you know. If I explain my way, you may feel very strange. But I found there, you know, a kind of practice when I eat.

So it is not matter of "That," you know, "practice is good or bad," you know. When you say, "My practice is wrong," you [laughs]-your purpose of life is, you know, something different from me. That is why you say, "Oh, that practice is very poor," you know, "very strange," you know. But to me it is not strange. That is, you know, my practice.

Of course, you cannot be-as long as you live in this society, you cannot be always like that [laughs]. You cannot be always like that but, you know, if the purpose of life is established within yourself, you will make your best, and, you know, when it is possible, you will do it. When it is not impossible-you find it difficult or impossible, you-you will not do it. But even why it is, you know, why it is difficult to practice is because our society is sick [laughs], you know. Sick. So we cannot practice it.

But "sick" means something, you know. When we sick-when we say our society is sick, you know, that "sick"-that idea of sickness is based on

true practice. When [laughs] your, you know, understanding what you mean by, you know, sickness is based on some idea of purpose of life, then you have to fight with society, you know. You will be very much disappointed with society, as you don't feel so good when you are sick.

So "sickness," we say, but real meaning of sickness, you know-if you think about the sickness more, according to the person, the real meaning of sickness will [laughs]-will-will be quite different.

Buddha left us the teaching which could be real medicine of true sickness. So Buddhist, you know, has-knows what is sickness for each one of us, and what is sickness for the society. So we know how-what is the remedy, or how to, you know, confront with the sickness we have. That is why we call him a good doctor. Buddha-another name of Buddha is Good Doctor.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Bill Redican (January 5, 2000).

[1] Gyokujun So-on Suzuki is said to have died on May 3, 1934. Suzuki-roshi was born on May 18, 1904, so there is some discrepancy in dates.

## **1971 (49)**

### **1971 januari (5)**

#### **1 - Universal Self, Individual Experience**

Sunday, January 03, 1971

Universal Self, Individual Experience  
San Francisco

Last Sunday I remember I talked about our surrounding, which is civilized world and busy world, and world of science and world of technique. Although I couldn't talk about fully about those things, but I tried [laughs] anyway. And I talked about something about practice or why we practice zazen. But I did not talk about self-who practice zazen-who practice zazen.

What is self is a big problem, you know. Unless we don't understand what is self, unless we don't reflect on our self, whether our everyday life is self-centered or a life of selflessness, we cannot, you know, have right practice: the practice to settle oneself, you know, on self. That is,

you know, [Dainin] Katagiri-sensei's [laughs] word: "to settle oneself on the self." You cannot understand what does it mean.

So most people, I think, you know, especially the people who are here, are the people who knows who, you know, who has pretty good prospective [perspective] to our surrounding, to our modern life. But, you know, I don't think you understand what is self fully. And those who are more, you know-in Zen Center, I think, there are two kinds [laughs] of students, if I classify, you know. One type of the student is a student who practice a hermit-like practice [laughter], and other is, you know, the other group of people are the people more radical and intellectual.

But-so-and one type of, you know, people seek for self, you know, practice to attain something or to more like individual practice. So instead of going to deep mountain, they come to Zen Center. And, you know, tentatively or-they come to Zen Center because there we can practice, you know. They will be free from busy world-a kind of hermitage, you know, -like practice. And that is, you know, still they don't forget, you know, they don't know how to be free from self. Still their practice is based on gaining idea: to attain some, you know, trance or some attainment. Instead of using LSD [laughs], they practice zazen [laughs]. That kind of practice, you know [laughs]. That is not our practice, actually, but you can practice that kind of practice in Zen Center too. So that is why, I think, you come to Zen Center. But actually this is not our practice. Our practice is quite different from that kind of practice.

Those who work hard, you know, in Zen Center-staying everyday here, watching our everyday activity in Zen Center-I don't think they [laughs] understand fully what is our practice. It is not so easy to understand, unless you have more- It needs more study, and we need more practice until you understand this kind of practice to settle oneself on oneself.

Of course, zazen practice is a kind of human experience which is quite different from the experience you have in modern life. So we must know, maybe, what kind of life we have in this actual society, in this "civilized world," so-called it "civilized world." To settle oneself on oneself, you know, to settle oneself on oneself, you know-that "oneself" is not universal self. The purpose of our practice is not to settle oneself on universal self. This point is, you know, very important. Modern life is so-called-it "scientific world"-world of science or technique is the world. The science, you know, already based on universal self. The experience you have in scientific world can be repeated over and over again. The truth which is true to someone will be, at the same time, true with, you know, someone else. So this kind of experience is universal experience. So this kind of communication we have between people is communication, you know, on the base of universal self. When one, you know, understands, when one thinks, "that is true," is true to someone else too. So that kind of truth is maybe scientific truth.

But there something is missing still. Universal self will create some natural role, you know. "Natural role," we say, but it is not actually natural role. It is based on universal self. The universal self cannot be at the same time always, you know, individual experience-cannot create individual experience. Actually, something you experience is only true with you only, you know. It cannot be true with someone else. When you think it is true, you know, you think the experience you had is true with someone else, at that time you are forcing your experience to others [laughs] actually. But there is some reason why you, you know, think in that way. The reason why is the universal self make you, you know, make you false-your experience to others. In that way, you know, universal- When we live in universal self, you will lose your actual, you know, self, or big self [laughs].

It is very strange, you know. When you talk about big self, you talk about universal self [laughs]. So, you know, it is opposite to me: Universal self is not true self. It may be scientific truth, which is based on universal self or science, scientific truth. It looks like you can repeat your experience over and over again. So that kind of people, when he has some kind enlightenment, you know, kensho, he wants to repeat it again [laughs]. If you lose it, you feel very, you know, very sorry. But true, you know, enlightenment experience cannot be, you know, repeated again. Only experience-or scientific fact could be repeated over and over again. So the more you emphasize big self, the more you lose the true self. That is actually what we are doing.

We can discuss something, you know, with people. Or we can discuss about Zen Center rules [laughs]. But [laughs], you know, that is just rules, just, you know, picture of our Zen Center life. But actual Zen Center life is not to follow the formality, to follow the rule we set up. So even though you faithfully, you know, obey Zen Center rules, that is not true practice which we mean. Our practice is practice to settle oneself on self, you know, which means to have always new, fresh, you know, experience with your, you know, true self. But it doesn't mean- Real practice is- Even it is so, as long as you live in Zen Center, you should follow our rules.

And while following our rules, or in its wide sense, you know, living in this actual life of science, how to develop our practice is the point of practice. We know how, you know, we can develop Dogen's practice in Zen Center, in group practice like this. Our practice is individual practice; at the same time, it is group practice. And our practice is hermit-like practice; and at the same time, our practice can be practiced in this modern world. This is the characteristic of Dogen's practice. That is true meaning of "to settle oneself on self," you know. Even though you are in this modern society, you should not lose, you know, your fresh experience moment after moment. We should not be caught, or we should know the fresh vitality within ourselves.

Yesterday two teachers [laughs] came to me and talked about their



experience, you know. I was very much interested in it. Both of them were good teachers. And what they said was sometime, you know, a student-sometimes they find students, you know, very agitated [active?] (what was the word?) lazy-lazience-you know, in lazience, very responsive.

Student: "Disoriented."

Mmm? Disoriented. Who are you[laughs]talking about? [i.e., himself?] [Laughs, laughter.] Disoriented. Sometimes they didn't, you know. Why it is so is they lose true self, you know. That is why, you know, when student find his teacher like a machine [laughs], he-they will never, you know, respond-give him good response. When they are real, you know, teacher, or self-acting, you know-when they are based on real self, you know, when they are settled on true self, you know, they quickly respond to them.

Why this kind of difference happens to the same person? It is not matter of just when they are in good condition or some other reason-even though, you know, I know that kind of ex-how it happens. Even though we are sick, you know, students give you very good response. When a teacher is sick, you know, they will worry about him very much and give him very good response.

There is some point which we must understand. For instance, we observe ceremonies very formally and strict way, even though we observe ceremony very formally if, you know, that is just formal ceremony, the people who practice it will not enjoy the ceremony, and people who see the-to attend that ceremony will not be interested in it.

Kitano-zenji[1]-when I was at Eihei-ji, the abbot of Eihei-ji was Kitano-zenji. When he come, you know, to hatto [2] [long pause], we had, you know, special feeling with our practice. He observed our ceremony very strictly with good spirit, but when he bow, you know, he is so old that when he bow it looked like it is impossible to stand up again, you know [laughs]. He had very difficult time to stand up again. He almost looks like sick person who is going to die. And when he stand up [laughs], and [not] showing any, you know, agony [laughs] with joy he stand up, but actually it was terrible effort for him. You know, that is very fresh, you know, very, you know, strong, you know, fresh activity. It is not just formality which is based on his, you know, spirit of Zen.

We practice zazen in zendo, but we understand that it is rare opportunity to sit in zendo. Morning after morning we feel in that way, you know. Why we practice Zen is not to establish Zen Center or to, you know, observe the formality of Zen Center. Or we do not practice zazen to attain something or to have a special, you know, experience about Zen. To go back to the life activity which is the foundation of all our activity, and to settle every activity we take on that activity of practice is the purpose of practice.

[Kosho] Uchiyama-roshi, you know, Uchiyama-roshi wrote [drew] a manga (you know manga?) [laughs] comic [laughs], and on the person, his head is, you know, picture of his head is (I should brought it to show you, but-) it's various activity you have in your mind. In that picture, you lose yourself on this mundane world. And you lose yourself in religion [delusion?] [laughs]. Many people are losing themselves in religion. They cannot find out true self in their religion. The more they believe in religion, they lose true self, you know, in religion. They cannot-that is why, maybe, they practice, they believe in religion: to lose themselves, so that you can forget all about our modern world. That is why you believe in or you practice some religion.

But that kind of, you know, picture is its head, and his body is sitting [laughs] on, you know, to settle oneself, you know, to settle all those, you know, activity on zazen is our practice. I couldn't [laughs] explain it so well, but the point is, you know, that kind of- So point is, you know- Anyway, point is to practice zazen, you know, true zazen, every morning, and to organize or to feel yourself in everyday life, whatever life it may be-Zen Center life or city life or in deep mountain, you should not forget the true foundation of your life. That is, you know, actually our practice.

Maybe it is necessary to explain what is our universal self more. This is very important for Zen Center, because Zen Center become bigger and bigger. And Zen Center looks like, you know, now, a kind of company [laughs, laughter], but there is some difference [laughs], some difference, you know. [Sentence completed. Tape turned over.]

You know, if you know clearly, you know, what is our framework of society now, you will find out the difference between Zen Center and some company in San Francisco. You should understand it. Maybe because you don't know what is, you know, the framework of our society, you don't know what is our practice. You hate it, that's all [laughs]. You don't like it. That is good [SR said "good" tentatively and humorously], but [laughs, laughter] if you hate it, you know, before you hate it you should know what it is first of all.

Maybe so it is necessary, you know, for us to study more, to talk about more about our framework of, you know, our society, modern world, and what kind of, you know, mistake we have been making for maybe from 1800, after Industrial Revolution. Is that correct? Yeah. After Industrial Revolution. I talked about Japanese militarism, you know [laughs], but, you know, it is not only Japan. All over the world that kind of idea was going. That is our life after 1800. And what kind of base we had? How we lost- At that time already we started to lose ourselves, and we lost the foundation of zazen practice.

Perhaps, you know, it is maybe useless to explain it, you know, but our understanding about it is a little bit different, you know, from usual

understanding of our modern world.

Anyway, I think we should try hard to extend our practice in our organization, and in our practice and in our everyday life or in city life.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 9/13/99.

[1] Gempo Kitano-zenji (1842-1933): The 67th abbot of Eihei-ji.

[2] Dharma hall.

## **2 - Right Concentration**

Sunday, January 10, 1971

Right Concentration  
San Francisco

... [1] were given about our practice referring to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva? What is, you know, who is Avalokiteshvara? I don't mean a man or a woman [laughs]. He is, by the way- He's supposed to be a man who take sometime figure of a woman, you know. In disguise of a woman he help people. That is Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. Sometime, you know, he has one thousand hands-one thousand hands-to help others. But, you know, if he is concentrated on one hand only, you know [laughs], 999 hands will be no use [laughs].

Our concentration does not mean to be concentrated on one thing, you know. Without, you know, trying to concentrate our mind, you know, without trying to concentrate, concentrated on something, we should be ready to be concentrated on something, you know. For an instance, if I am watching someone, you know, like this [laughs], my eyes is concentrated on one person like this. You know, I cannot see, you know, even it is necessary, it is difficult to change my concentration to others. We say "to do things one by one," but what it means is, you know, without [laughs]-ah, it may be difficult-maybe not to try to explain it so well [laughs]. Nature [of] it is difficult to explain. But look at my eyes, you know. This is eyes, you know, I am watching someone [laughs]. And this is my eyes, you know, when I practice zazen. I'm [not] watching anybody [laughs], but if someone move, I can catch him [laughs, laughter].

There is your- So- Mmm. From old time, the main point of practice is to have clear, calm mind. In short, that is our practice, and that is our, maybe, faith, you know, belief. By "belief" we don't mean to believe in

something. Our practice should not be something like fanatic, you know, practice. Or infatuation is not our practice, you know. Just, you know, to always to have calm, serene mind, whatever you do, you know. Even you eat something good, your mind should be very calm to be ready to appreciate, you know, the labor of making food and the effort of making, you know, dishes, and chopsticks, and, you know, bowls, and everything. And we, you know, we should appreciate each vegetables, you know-one by one-its own flavor. That is, you know, how we make food, you know, and how you eat food. So we don't put so much seasoning or flavor to food. We rather appreciate each, you know, food. That is, we say, "calorie." Calorie is not flavor. Flavor is, you know, something you put, you know, is flavor.

So, you know, to know someone is to sense someone's flavor. Flavor [laughs] is not smell [laughs] but something you feel from someone. And each one has some, you know, particular flavor or not-flavor [laughs]-personality from which many, you know, feelings comes out, and each one has each one's own flavor. Then we have, you know, good relationship with each other. We are really friendly with each other. To be friendly does not mean to occupy someone or to stick to someone, you know, or try not to lose your friend, but to have full appreciation of his or her own personality or flavor, you know.

So to appreciate things and people, we should be-our minds should be calm and pure or clear. So to have this kind of mind, we practice zazen. So when we practice zazen, we just-that is what do we mean by "just sit," "just sit," without not much gaining idea-to be you yourself-or to "settle oneself on oneself." [2] That is, you know, our practice.

"Freedom," you say, but maybe freedom you mean and freedom we Zen Buddhists mean may not be exactly the same. Maybe same, but not exactly. For instance, you know, to attain freedom [laughs] we cross our legs [laughs] and we keep our posture straight, and we keep our eyes in some certain way and we open our ears, you know, to everything, even without trying to open. Let our eyes open to everything. But there is some way to have this readiness, to have this openness, because or else by nature we are liable to be, you know, go extreme and to stick to something, losing, you know, our calmness of mind or mirror-like mind. So there must be some way, you know, to obtain this kind of calmness of your mind, of clearness of your mind. That is zazen practice.

So it does not mean- It looks like, you know, to force something physically, you know, some form physically on you and to create, you know, some special state of mind. Is maybe- You may think that is Zen practice, and you may think this kind of state of mind is, you know, Zen practice, you know: To have mirror-like mind is Zen practice. It is so, but [laughs]-but [laughs]- If you practice zazen, you know, to attain that kind of, you know, mirror-like mind, that is not already the practice we mean. There is slight difference. If you practice zazen to obtain, you know, a kind of state of mind, it is already art of Zen. Art of Zen.

The difference between art of Zen and true Zen [laughs]- Do you, do you- Oh. What is the difference, do you think? Art of Zen and Zen. Actually, you have it, you know, when you do not try. Because you try to do something, you lose it. When you try to do something, you know, it means that you are concentrated on one hand of one thousand hand, you know [laughs]. You lose 999 hands. So that is why we say just to sit, you know. It does not mean, you know, to stop your mind altogether, you know, or to be concentrated on your breathing completely. It doesn't mean that. But it is a kind of, you know, help, you know, to have better practice. When you count your breathing, you don't think so much. You don't have so much gaining idea. Counting breathing doesn't mean much to you. So that is why, maybe, someone get bored about [laughs] counting breathing. "It doesn't mean anything." But when you think so, you know, your way of understanding of real practice is lost. Why we, you know, practice- Why we try to be concentrated or let our mind go with breathing is not to be, you know, involved in some complicated practice in which you will lose yourself. So to have calmness of your mind, or pure mind, or open mind, we apply this kind of practice.

Art of Zen or, you know, is- I don't know so much about art, but art of Zen is, you know, skill of Zen or skill of practice. You know, to be like Zen master [laughs], you know, skillful Zen master who have big strength and who have good practice. It may be your, you know- Some of you may practice zazen to be like someone like, you know, [Sotan Ryosen] Tatsugami-roshi, for an instance [laughs]. "Oh, I want to be like him. I must try hard," you know [laughs]. You are learning art of Zen [laughs, laughter]. You are not practicing true zazen [laughs]. That is how you [laughs] study art, you know: How to draw straight line [laughs] or how to, you know, to control your mind, that is art of Zen. But Zen is for everyone, you know, even though he cannot draw a straight line. If he can [in] any way draw a line, that is our Zen. And if that is very natural to a boy, even though it is not straight, it is beautiful [laughs]. Maybe that is, you know, art- Or more than art so, you know, people like some work done by children rather than done by, you know, famous artist. There is some difference. I don't know how to explain it.

So whether you like [laughs] cross-legged position or not, or whether you can do it or not, if you know what is true zazen, you can do it. Somehow you will figure out if you watch Tatsugami-roshi's practice carefully, with openness of your mind, then you learn something from it, or when your mind is based on gaining idea [laughs], what you learn is art of Zen, not true Zen.

So, you know, the most important thing in our practice is, you know, just, you know, follow our schedule and to do things with people [laughs]. Again, you know, this is, you may say, "group practice" [laughs]. It is not so [laughs]. Group practice is quite different thing. It is a kind of art. You know, in wartime, when we are practicing zazen,

some young people who were very much encouraged by, you know, militaristic, you know, mood of Japan told me that in the [Soto-shu-kyokai-] Shushogi,[3] you know, it says, "To understand what is, you know, birth and death is main point of our practice." [Laughs.] But even though we don't know anything about Shushogi, you know, I can die easily in [at the] front [laughs]. That is group practice, I think, you know. Encouraged by trumpet and guns and war cry (WRAAA) [laughs, laughter], he is normal [?]. It is quite easy to die. That kind of practice is not our practice. We practice with people, you know, first of all. But goal of practice is to practice with mountain, and with river, and with trees, and with stones-with everything in the world, in the universe-and to find ourselves in this big cosmos. And in this big world we should intuitively know which way to go.

When, you know, your surrounding show some sign, you know, to go this way or that way, you should intuitively go this way or that way. Show a sign, you know. When they show some sign, we should intuitively follow it. I am very much interested in the word "show a sign." "Show," you know. "Sign" is something which is shown, you know, by something else to you, and even though you have no idea of following sign, you know, if some sign is shown, you will, you know, go that direction. This is the real practice Dogen-zenji meant. If your practice does not go with everything, with-he doesn't say with your friend-with everything, it is not real practice.

How you can practice with everything is to have, you know, calmness of your mind. So how you, you know- So to come to Zen Center and practice our way is good, but you should not make a big mistake. Maybe you [laughs] already made a mistake [laughs, laughter], but you should know that you are making mistake, but I cannot help coming here [laughs], you know. Then your practice have quite different quality. Meaning is different. "You," in that case, means you which is involved in wrong idea, you know. That is you. So I think you have to accept it: "I am involved in wrong practice," you know. Then your practice include your wrong practice and "you," in that case, means you which includes some wrong practice.

But, you know, we should accept it, because it is there already. You cannot do anything about it. There is no need to try to get rid of it. But if you, you know, open your eyes, true eyes, and accept it, there there is real practice [laughs]. Do you understand? It is not matter of right or wrong, but how to accept frankly, with openness of your mind, what you are doing. That is most important point. Then you will accept "you" thinking something else in your practice, you know [laughs]. "Ah, something came over already." And you should accept that "you" too. You should not try to, you know, to be free from the images you have: "Oh! Here they come" [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know [laughs], this kind of eyes [laughs]. You are not watching any special thing. Someone is moving over there. "Oh, he is moving [laughs]." But if he stop moving [laughs], your eyes is, you know, same. In that way, if

your practice include everything, that is, you know, one after another, if your real practice, if you do not lose some kind of, you may say, "state of mind," that is, you know, your practice.

So this is, you know- This kind of practice is a practice which is unknown to most of the people and which is very important for us-which is transmitted from Buddha to Bodhidharma and Dogen-zenji. So our practice is not group practice or, you know- By means of, you know, people we practice, so it looks like group practice but it is not so, actually. Maybe group practice with everything in the world. Then [laughs] that is not group practice any more [laughs]. You know, group exist in big society: this group, or that group. That is group practice. Our practice is not, you know, Soto practice, you know. Rinzai, Soto, or Obaku, you know: That is group practice, but our practice is to practice with everything. If there is someone else, you know, we should include that person too. We should practice with that person. So our measure of practice is limitless-we should have ... . [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.] When we have this base, we have real freedom.

Each one of our being means [needs?] something. But when you measure or evaluate your value of being, you know, good or bad, or right or wrong, or black or white [laughs], that is, you know, comparative value. You will not have absolute value in your being. When you evaluate yourself by measure of limitless measure, each one of us is really will be settled on real self, you know. To be just you is enough, you know. Because you have short, you know, limited measure, you know, or a dualistic measure, you lose your value.

Hmm. Black one should be just black, white [laughs] one should be just white. That is enough, you know. What do you need more than that? Why do you need more than that? Because of your, you know, small measurement. We must know this point, and we should know what is real practice for human being and for everything. And for everything.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/15/00).

[1] Opening words not recorded on tape.

[2] Suzuki-roshi is quoting Dainin Katagiri-roshi: "To settle the self on the self and let the flower of the life force bloom" [see, e.g., SR-71-01-03, Paragraph 2], who may in turn have been quoting Dogen.

[3] A book of excerpts from Shobogenzo by Rozan Takushu and Houn Fugai.

### **3 - Lay Ordination Ceremony**

Monday, January 11, 1971

Lay Ordination Ceremony  
City Center, San Francisco

I wanted to talk about ordination ceremony, but I think it is pretty difficult to explain it, you know, because-even-because you have no idea of, you know, Buddhist priesthood. And what you have in your mind is priest in America, you know, so [laughs], I have no word to communicate.

[SR interrupted on tape. Narrator says here: "A good portion of the tape was inaudible on the original here." (This suggests that their tape was a copy.) SR then resumes, presumably after a gap.]

... inanimate and animate beings. So everything has its own position in Buddha's-in Bud- [partial word]-as a Buddhist. That is fundamental teaching of Buddhism, and that is the structure of the teaching. So we cannot say priest is highest. Or animal is lowest.

Tentatively, as we are, you know, human being, or as we are teacher or disciples, but we are all friends of-of Buddhist. We are all Buddhist. Tentatively, we take some responsibility to express Buddha's teaching. But each one of us-because each one of us has one's own position and responsibility, so the value of each one is the same. That is fundamental, you know, structure of sangha.

With this understanding, we observe ordination ceremony. Some of them will become priest, and some of them will remain, you know, laymen. And we will fulfill our responsibility to realize-for the realization of the teaching-for the practice of our teaching. This is, you know, why we have ordination ceremony, because we need, you know, priest. But it doesn't mean priest is highest or something like that.

But when we, you know, have some ceremony, or when we have some activity, according to the situation, someone will take more responsibility, and that is quite natural thing which will happen to us. And with this spirit, I want you to join our ordination ceremony. As some day you will be a priest or a nun. No one knows [laughs], you know, what will happen to us. But whatever happen to us, if you want to join our order, and express Buddha's spirit, I want you to join our ceremony, and I shall be very grateful for you if you appreciate our effort.

Thank you very much.



---

Source: Original tape SR-71-01-11. Transcribed and checked by Bill Redican 9/21/99.

#### **4 - Gaining Idea**

Saturday, January 16, 1971

Gaining Idea  
San Francisco

Something valuable [laughs]-not jewel or not candy, but something which is very valuable. You recite right now, you know, a verse on unsurpassable, you know, teaching. What is actually-how to, you know, receive this kind of treasure is, you know, to have well-oriented mind. I have been talking about self for maybe three lectures-what is self and what is your surrounding, what kind of thing you see, how you accept things, and purpose of zazen.

Purpose of zazen, why we practice zazen is to be a boss of everything. That is why you practice zazen. If you practice zazen, you will be a boss of your surrounding-whenever you are, you are boss [laughs]. But if I say so, it will create some misunderstanding: you are boss, you know, you are boss of everyone or everything. And you is, you know, also, in your mind, you are boss of everything, you know. When you understand in that way, you know, you are enslaved by idea of you and, you know, your friend, or everyone-all the people surrounding you. You are, you know, you know, you exist in your mind as a kind of idea, and also people exist in your mind as a member of [laughs] delusion [laughs]. I say "delusion" because when those idea is not well-supported by your practice, then that is delusion, you know. When you are enslaved by the idea of "you or others," then that is delusion. When real, you know, power of practice is supporting those idea, at that time, you know, I say you are "you" who is practicing our way is boss of everything, boss of you yourself, you know.

That is why we say, or Buddha say, you have to control yourself, you know, control yourself. When, you know, you have something you have to control, that is, you know, deluded you, not real you. "You" are in your mind as an idea, you know [laughs], and you are deluded by the idea of you, and [laughs] you are enslaved by the idea of people, so, you know, you have difficulty or confusion between idea of you and idea of your friend. That is confused [laughs] mind. But when you have, you know, you support or you are supporting in its true sense-not encouraging [laughs]. I don't mean to encourage, but you are. Those idea are well controlled by your power of practice, then, you know, that "you," you know, is boss of everything. So even confused mind will be supported by your practice.

That is how, you know, how things, you know, how sound of motor car or various sound, you know, come to your ear when you are practicing zazen. Even though you practice zazen, you may hear various voice. Sometime you may have various idea, you know, in your mind, but if your practice is good, you know, it is, you know-it is supported-not "supported"-your practice obtains, you know, those things from outside. It is not actually from outside, but, you know, are things you have at that moment. At that time, you know, things you see or you hear is a part of you, you know. You include, actually-your practice owns or include the things you hear, images you have, but your practice is strong enough to obtain it, to have it, to own it, without being enslaved by it, as if you have your own hands, your own eyes.

You know, it doesn't create any trouble, even though it looks like, you know, you know, creating problem, you know. Sometime, you know, this hand and this hand will fight [laughs]-not fight-it looks like fighting, you know, when you [laughs] holding, you know, something like this. [Probably made a gesture with hands.] It looks like this hand is fighting with the other hand [laughs]. But, you know, it is not problem for you. They are trying to do something, that's all [laughs].

When you are really boss of everything, even though it looks like confusion, you know, it is not confusion. Even though it looks like confusion, you know, it is not confusion. Even though you look like doing something wrong, you know, some bad thing [laughs], people may say, "Oh, he is doing something bad." [Laughs.] But, you know, that is, you know, their understanding. For you it is not bad. You are not doing anything bad. It is, you know-because "you" owns everything, and you manage things as if you manage your hands. So it is not bad. So, you know, "don't do something bad" means let yourself be, you know, with everything and let everything as they want to. That is the power of practice, and that is quite different from doing something wrong. And by doing something wrong, by doing something wrong, you may suffer, you know, but for him there is no suffering. He is just, you know, managing things in some way, as his own. So it is a part of practice you do in your everyday life.

The precepts also should be observed in this way, you know. You observe precepts not because you have to follow Buddha's words, but because to extend or to have true practice in our everyday life or to settle yourself on yourself. That self, you know, include everything.

You know, sometime we say, you know, you have to extend our practice on everyday life is to be completely involved in your activity, or to be one with, you know, what you have or what you do. That is how you extend our practice, you know, in your everyday life. But that is not, you know, so clear. Then you may ask, you know, to be caught by baseball mania [laughs] is, maybe, our practice [laughs]. To be infatuated in some, you know, gambling [laughs] or something, may be

practice [laughs], you may say, but that is not our practice. Do you know why? Why that is not practice? Because you are enslaved by it [laughs], you know. You are not boss of, you know, gambling. Gambling is boss of you [laughs]. Your practice is not working. You are enslaved by something which you create in your mind. You know, the machine is just going [laughs] without thinking or without doing anything [laughs], but your mind works on it, you know, and you create some delusion on the machine. And, you know, your gaining idea or your playful speculative idea, you know, makes machines, you know, gambling, that's all. So you are enslaved by yourself and by machine too. You are not practicing zazen at all. You are not boss of, you do not own the machine, you do not own your legs, you know, so, you know, as soon as you get up, your legs [laughs] wants to go to Reno. [Laughs, laughter.] You don't own your legs even [laughs]. There is no practice, you know, which support your legs. That is the difference, you know.

So to be one with something, you know, does not mean to be caught by something. Why you caught by something is you become a member of something, you know, in your idea. You already create some, you know, something interesting in your mind. And as a member of, you know, the group, you, you know, become very insuggestic [suggestive], you know. You feel some zeal to be a member of, you know [laughs], to be a member of the group you have in your mind. And you are enslaved by it, and you have nothing but something which you create in your mind. There is no practice-nothing which is supporting you. You are not boss, and you even lose yourself, you know. That is the difference.

So we say you have to practice zazen without any gaining idea, gaining of idea, without any purpose [laughs] even, we have to practice zazen. Let things work as they go, supporting everything, you know, as your own. So you have always-real you have-real practice has orientation. It has orientation or direction. But it has no purpose or no gaining idea. We do not practice zazen because of something which is in your mind, but because, you know, your real "you," you know, [is] well-oriented, and, you know, and always extending itself. It has some direction, you know, direction, which works always outside and at the same time inside too. It has some, you know, always some feeling or direction. That direction does not work, you know, will not be realized, will not happen to be active, but when something come, at the same time it includes everything. So whatever it is, you know, it will work on it. Whether it is good or bad, it doesn't matter. Something bad come, "Okay, you are [laughs], you know, a part of me." Something good come, you know, you will say, "Oh, okay."

We do not have any special goal or special object or purpose of practice. It doesn't matter whatever it is. That is why we call it "Big Mind," because it include, you know, include everything. So we call it "Big Mind." Because it is great we do not say "Big Mind." Whatever it is, it include within us, and we own it, so we call it "Big Mind," "purposeless purpose," or we say "tongueless tongue" [laughs] "tongueless tongue."

Even though I talk [about] something, there is no purpose [laughs], you know. I am talking to myself [laughs], you know, because you are a part of me, so I have no purpose of [laughs, laughter]. I have no purpose in my talk. Something is going, you know, that's all. How it goes is, you know, because of the real joy to share the joy of, you know, practice.

So maybe you practice our practice to share our practice with everything. So when one is practice zazen, everything [is] practicing zazen. When you practice zazen, everything you have, you know, is practicing zazen. Buddha practice zazen, Bodhidharma practice zazen, and everything practice zazen with you. And you share the practice with everything. So, you know-it happens in that way. Our real life happens in that way. Our real bodhisattva way happens in that way. That is how you help others, you know. Help others. "To help others," means to share the practice with people. With children, you know, with people on the street. We have to share the practice, even though they do not practice zazen, you know, like this, you know [laughs], we can share the practice because if I see people, you know, people is already here. And I practice zazen with him, with the sound of the car, with everything.

So to have well-oriented mind is, you know-if someone ask me why you practice zazen, I may answer to have well-oriented mind I practice zazen. Without any purpose we practice zazen. Without any special purpose. So point is not to lose this kind of, you know, well-oriented mind. In Japan, you know, in Japan, children has, you know, Bodhidharma toy, you know. Do you know the paper toy, made of paper? And it, you know-even though you toss it, it will stand up [laughs]. Well-oriented [laughs, laughter] practice. People enjoy the toy, you know, tossing around, because it stand up, wherever it goes, it will stand up like this. It doesn't matter where it goes. That is, you know, good example of our practice.

So our practice should be with everything, you know, with everything. Without being enslaved by it, we should be able to share the practice with everything. That is how you establish yourself, you know, on yourself. And we should know that "the self," we say, but it include everything. It is ready to include everything. And it is not even "it," you know [laughs]. It is something which include, you know, everything is real self. We don't know where it is [laughs]. If you say, "Here is my mind," that is already some idea of, you know [laughs] self. It is here instead of here [laughs]. When you say, "Here. Here is my self," you know, but actually, at that time, the self is here [laughs], not here [laughs, laughter]. And your brain is up here too [laughs, laughter]. Where is it? No one knows. [Laughs.] The only way is to participate [in] the practice, Buddha-practice, and to share the joy of practice. That is, you know, so-called-it, anraku no homon[1]-"easiest and most," you know, "easy and joyful practice."

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shohaku Okumura-sensei. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 9/14/00.

[1] Anraku (well-being and peace) + no (means previous word, anraku, is in the possessive case) + homon (practice, teaching, dharma gate). Hence, "dharma gate of peace and joy." Dogen used this expression in Bendowa and Fukan zazengi.

## **5 - Meeting Yourself**

Saturday, January 23, 1971

Meeting Yourself  
San Francisco

Most of us, maybe, want to know what is self. This is a big problem. Why you have this problem, you know, and is- I want to understand [laughs] why you have this problem. I'm trying to understand. And even though, it seems to me, even though you try to understand who are you, it is, you know, it is endless trip, you know, and you will never see your self.

You say to sit without thinking too much is difficult. Just to sit is difficult. But more difficult thing will be to try to think about your self [laughs]. This is much more difficult. To do is maybe easy, you know, but to have some conclusion, you know, to it is almost impossible, and you will continue it until you become crazy [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, when you don't know what to do with your self. Or when you don't know, when you find out it is impossible to know who you are, you know, you become crazy.

Moreover, your culture is based on the idea of self and science and Christianity [laughs]. So those element, you know, idea of Christianity or sinful idea of Christianity or, you know, idea of science, scientific-oriented mind, makes your confusion greater. You try to always, when you sit, you know, perhaps most of you sit to improve your zazen. That idea to improve, you know, is a very Christian-like, you know, idea and, at the same time, a scientific idea: to improve. You acknowledge some improvement of our culture or civilization. We understand our civilization, you know, improved a lot. But, you know, when we say "scientific" in sense of science, you know, or "improve" means before you went to Japan by ship, now you go to airplane or jumbo [laughs] plane. That is improvement.

So when you say "some improvement," it include idea of value. And that is at the same time, you know, base of our framework of our society-economy. Now I understand you are rejecting that kind of, you know, idea of civilization. But you do not, you know, reject the idea of improvement. You still try to improve something.

And I think in Christianity, you know, all the improvement or civilization should be, you know, end. When the Last (what do you call it?) Last [Judgment], you know- When you are judged, you know, when what you have done is judged by God [laughs], you should go to hell [laughs, laughter]. You have done- You have made a atomic bomb, so you should go to [laughs] hell. You invented, you know, jumbo jet plane, so you should go [laughs, laughter] to hell. And when you go to- That is the end of everything. So our society has some end, you know. When we have end, you can say "improvement." You are improving our civilization just to go to hell [laughs]. That is, you know, improvement according for the Christian.

My friend [George] Hagiwara[1] has very Christian-oriented mind. He criticize always, you know, people, scientists, who are trying to go to the moon, you know. Someday all of us will be, you know, must go to hell [laughs] by trying that kind of thing [laughs, laughter], he always says to me. At first I couldn't understand what he meant, actually. Now, you know, I have some clear understanding, you know, how he feels. He believe in, you know, Last Judgement of God.

What I am talking about is the idea of improvement, which we Buddhists do not, you know, have so much. Nowadays, you know, in Japan or in China, all the people are trying to improve their way of life. We are deeply involved in the idea of improvement of something-to improve something. This kind of element, you know, of idea of to practice- When you practice zazen, you maybe try to improve yourself, and you want to know yourself more, you know, psychological way. That is why you are involved in-interested in psychology so much.

But psychology will tell you about your psychological things, but psychology will not tell you exactly who you are [laughs]. It is one of the many, you know, interpretation of your mind. One of the many. So if you go to, you know, psychologist or psychiatrist, endlessly you will have new information about [laughs] you [laughs]. Endless. So as long as you are going, maybe you feel, you know, some release. You feel as if, you know, all the psychological burden you have, you know, you will be released [from] the burden you carry by a psychologist, by a psychiatrist. But, you know, the way we understand [laughs] ourselves is quite different from that kind of understanding.

This morning I want to introduce Tozan's, you know, famous saying. Tozan,[2] the founder of Chinese Soto school, he said, "Don't try to see yourself," maybe, "objectively." Maybe we can say scientific way. He didn't say so, but, "Don't try to see something which was given to you,"

you know. In other words, don't try to see, you know, some information about you which is given to you by some objective truth. That is information.

He says real you is quite different from the information you will have. Real you is not that kind of thing. "I go by myself my own way," he says [laughs]. "I go by myself in my own way. Wherever I see, I meet with myself. Wherever I go, I meet myself." When you [laughs]- So, you know, he reject that kind of effort to try to be, try to cling to the information about yourself. But you should, he says, but you should go, you know, alone with your legs. Or you should, you know, in other word, you should practice our way, you know, with people. Whatever people may say [laughs], you should go your way, and you should practice with people.

This is, you know, another point. "With people" is another point. It means to meet yourself is to practice with people. To meet yourself. When you- You will see yourself- Someone's practice, you know, if you see someone practicing hard, you will see yourself. You say, you know, if you are impressed by someone's practice, "Oh, she is doing very well," you know. That "she" is not she or you. Something more than that. "Oh, she is doing very well," you know [laughs]. What is "she"? After thinking, you know, for a while, "Oh, she is there [laughs], I am here." But when you, you know, struck, when you are impressed by her practice, you know, that "her" is not you or she. When you see it, when you're struck by it, that is actually real you [laughs]. "You" is, you know- Tentatively I say "you," but it is- That "you" is pure experience of our practice. As long as you are trying to, you know, improve yourself [laughs], you know, having some core of idea of self, you know, trying to improve yourself, that is wrong practice. That is not practice we mean.

When you, you know, empty your mind, you know, when you give up everything and just practice zazen with your open mind, whatever you see, that is to meet yourself. There there is "you," you know, you which is beyond she or he or me. So as long as you are cling to the idea of self and trying to improve your practice, trying to, you know, to find out something, or to see, you know, improved self, better self, or to find better practice, then your practice, you know, is in [has gone] astray. You have no time to, you know, to reach the goal, so eventually you will be tired out, or and you will say, "Zen is no good. [Laughs.] I practiced zazen for ten years, but I didn't [laughs] gain anything!" [Laughs, laughter.] But if you just come here and sit with sincere student and find yourself among them, and, you know, then that is, if you continue in that way, our practice. That is our practice. And this kind of experience could be everywhere. As Tozan said, "Wherever I go, I meet with myself." If he see water, that is he himself. Even though he cannot see himself in the water, you know, to see water is enough for him.

I think it's a, it- I don't want to, you know, criticize someone's religion,

Christianity or anything, but if you do not understand the nature of the religion, you know, you believe in, you will be lost. Even though you are a very good Christian, you say you are a very good Christian, or-even though people say you are good Christian, but, you know, you will be lost if you don't understand how to be a good Christian. Teaching is good, but when you don't understand the real teaching, you will be lost. So actually for a Christian, you know, if you go to church and do this or [laughs] you don't do this [probably making a gesture] [laughs, laughter]. I don't know this way or that way or [laughter]- That is enough [laughs], you know. There is, you know, complete liberation. You are saved at that time. Because you, you know, pray for [to] God for something, you know [laughs], you cannot save yourself. Actually, you know, when you are already saved, you know, you say, you know, you pray for His help [laughs]. That is why, you know, you cannot be a good Christian.

So how you understand yourself is not to understand yourself objectively or try to cling to the information, you know, from various source. If people say you are crazy-"Okay, I am crazy." [Laughs.] If people say you are bad student, "Okay, I am-maybe so I am bad student, but I am trying, you know, pretty hard." That is enough, you know. In this way, when you, you know, continue or when you sit in that way, accepting, you know, yourself and accepting everything with yourself, when you are involved in various, you know, silly problem, you should sit with the problem you have. You know, that is you, you know, at that time. When you try to get out of it, out of them, you know, that is already wrong practice. If you cling to, you know, some idea created by you, like self or some objective world, you will be lost in objective world which you created by your mind. So you are creating one after another [laughs], so there is no end. There maybe there many kinds of world, and, you know, you are creating. To create it may be very interesting- To see many things is very interesting, but you should not be lost in it.

Another side of, you know, our practice is we, you know, we try to think and we try to act. We do not try to, you know, to be like a stone, you know. We- For us, our everyday life is our practice. Instead of being enslaved by thinking mind or imagination or emotional activity, we just, you know, think, in its true sense. Thinking mind, thinking activity, comes out, you know, from true self, which include everything.

Before we think in our practice, trees, and birds, and everything is thinking, you know. And when they think, they grow their [they?] sing, you know. That is their thinking. There is no need for us to think, you know [laughs], more than that. You know, if you see things as it is, that is thinking. Already we are thinking. This kind of pure thinking is the thinking mind we have in our practice, so we have always freedom from ourselves too. And we can see things as it is. At the same time, we can think about things.



For us there is no truth or no falsehood because we have no particular, you know, standard for our thinking, standard to which we cling to. [The preceding sentence was finished by Suzuki-roshi, but the rest of the lecture was not recorded on tape. A handwritten note was enclosed with the original tape containing a summary of the missing conclusion: Before you ask for dokusan with me, start your own practice. Stand on your own feet. Then I can help you. If you want to find out about yourself, maybe better to go to someone else. They will tell you many interesting things.]

---

---

Source: City Center transcript plus handwritten note enclosed with original tape. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 9/8/99.

[1] One of the Japanese-American members of the Soko-ji congregation. The Hagiwara family were, before WWII, caretakers of the Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco. George's father was said to have been appointed by Emperor Meiji.

[2] Tozan Ryokai (Chin. Dongshan Liangjie or Tung-shan Liang-chieh, 807-869): Chan master of the Tang period.

## **1971 februari (9)**

### **1 - Sesshin Lecture #1**

Friday, February 05, 1971

Sesshin Lecture #1  
San Francisco

Purpose of sesshin is to be completely one with our practice. That is purpose of sesshin. Sesshin. Sesshin means- We use two Chinese characters for setsu. Setsu means to treat or, you know, like you treat your guests or like a teacher [student?] treat his teacher, is setsu. Another setsu is "to control" or "to arrange things in order." Anyway, it means to have proper function of mind.

When we say "control," something which is controlled is our five senses and will, or mind, Small Mind, Monkey Mind which should be controlled. And if-why we control our mind is to resume to our true Big Mind. When Monkey Mind is always take over big activity of Big Mind, you know, we naturally become a monkey [laughs]. So Monkey Mind must have his boss, which is Big Mind.

And when we say "Big Mind," then while we practice zazen, it is the Big

Mind controlling the Small Mind. It is not so, you know, but only when Small Mind become calm, the Big Mind, you know, start to start its true activity. So in our everyday life, almost all the time, we are involved in activity of Small Mind. That is why we should practice zazen and we should be completely involved in this kind of practice.

Good example of our practice is, you know, a turtle, you know, which has four legs, you know, and head and tail-and six, you know, six parts of his body is sometime outside of the shell, sometime inside [laughs]. We must have that kind of, you know, activity. Sometime, you know, our head and tail and legs should be out [laughs], or else you cannot eat or anything. You cannot walk. So when you want to eat or go out [laughs, laughter], four legs should be out. [Laughs.] But if it is always out, you will be caught by something [laughs]. So, you know, in case of danger, you know, you should [laughs] draw up all the legs and head and tail. This is sesshin [laughs, laughter]. For, you know, one week our [laughs] head and tail and legs should be inside of the shell. Then, you know, no one can catch you [laughter, laughs]. In scripture said even demon or devil cannot destroy you if you, you know, are inside of the shell-if your six parts of your body inside of-actually, six means five senses and, you know, mind.

But in zazen we do not try to stop thinking, you know, or we do not try to listen or hear or see anything. But we, you know-if something appears in your mind, leave it, you know. And if you hear something, you should hear it, and you should just accept it, you know. "Oh [laughs], that's all." No second activity appears in your zazen-should not appear. Sound-that is one activity. Second one is, "What is the sound? Is a motor car or, you know, or garbage car, or something?" you know. That is second notion, second activity. If you hear it, that's all, you know. You hear. If you see, that's all. You have no-you don't make any judgement. You do not figure out what it is. Just open your eyes and see something. Maybe when you practice zazen, you may, you know, try to make some sense by what you are watching, you know. What, or "It looks like river" [laughs]. "It looks like dragon" [laughs]. While you are thinking, you should not do so, you know [laughs]. When you are sitting pretty long time, you know, watching same place [laughs, laughter], it may look like, you know, various things [laughs, laughter]. It may be good idea, you know, to kill time [laughs], but it is not sesshin.

It may be good idea to be concentrated on something, you know, but to have good-concentrated mind is not zazen, you know. It is not zazen. Of course, it is one of the many elements of the practice, but calmness of mind is necessary, and you shouldn't intensify five sense organs' activity. You should just leave your sense organs as they are. That is how you free your true mind, or how you open your true mind. Only when you can do so in everyday life you will have soft mind. You don't have not much preconceived idea. Some bad habit of your way of thinking will not appear so strongly. It will appear, but it will not appear so strongly. And you will have generous mind and Big Mind, and what

you will say will help others.

I think you have Zuimonki. If you read Zuimonki,[1] you will understand why we practice zazen. One night, he [Dogen] talked to his students and said, "This story is-the story I was told by someone, so I am not sure if that is correct or not." But he said some influential person, Ichijo Motoie, you know, maybe his-he may not be his direct relative but was one of the many relative. One day his sword was stolen, you know, and they knew that no one else couldn't broke into, so they thought some of his men must have stolen it. So naturally they tried to find out, and the sword was found and took back to him. But Motoie said, "This is not my sword [laughs], this isn't-so give it back to someone who own it. This is not mine," he said. But most of the people knew that that man who had it had stolen that sword, but because he said he did not accuse of it, so no one couldn't say anything. So, you know [laughs], nothing happened [laughs, laughter]. That kind of, you know, calmness of mind is the mind we should have, he says.

And he emphasize, you know, life of bare life, you know. Hardly support him to live-something poor, you know-a bare life. Without expecting anything, just practice our way. But many student asked him why that is possible, you know, without any plan-just to live and just to practice zazen, how is it possible to support his temple or his group? But he said, "When it is difficult to support our temple, we will think about it. But [laughs] until then, it is not necessary to think about it." [Laughs, laughter.]

So before something happens, to think about it too much is not our way. If we have generous Big Mind and if we have strong spirit of practice, then, you know, there is no need to worry about anything. That is the way how we have complete calmness of your mind. Because you have something, you should worry about it, but if you don't, there is no need to worry about losing it.

One night he said, "Even some teaching you think it is complete and right teaching, even though you think so, there may be someone who tell you better way. Then, you know, you should change your understanding of the teaching." In this way, we should improve our understanding of the teaching forever. That is our way. So even something you think which is completely right, you know, you shouldn't stick to it. It is right at that time, so because you think so, you followed the theory or rules, but you have some, you know, space in your mind to change the idea. That is soft mind [laughs].

Why, you know, is it possible for you to change your idea, you know, is because you know what kind of monkey is thinking [laughs, laughter]. So sometime he may follow monkey's suggestion-"Oh yeah [laughs, laughter], that's right [laughs]. If we go that direction, we may have some food. Okay, let's go!" [Laughs, laughter.] But if there is something better [laughs], he may say, "Oh monkey, maybe better to go this

way!" [Laughs, laughter.] Because he is naturally he is a monkey, he may follow, you know. But if you stick to, you know, your greed or anger or some vulgar, you know, emotional mind, stick to the thinking mind, monkey mind, he cannot change his former notion.

So in our practice, we should rely on something great. So in that great area we should, you know, sit. The pain you have in your legs or some difficulty you have when you are sitting is something happened-something happened-something may happen in the great area. But as long as you do not lose the feeling that you are in the area of buddha-nature, you can sit, you know, even though you have some difficulties. But when you want to escape from it, or when you try to improve your practice or improve your being in that big area, that is-it means you created another problem for your being. But if you just exist there, then you will have chance to appreciate something which surround yourself, and you can accept yourself completely, without changing anything. That is our practice.

So it is a kind of belief or faith which is, of course, different from usual faith to believe in some concrete idea or being. But believing something which is supporting us and supporting all our activities-thinking mind or emotional feeling. All those things are actually supported by something big which has no form or color. Which is impossible to know what it is, but something exist there, not in the sense of material or spiritual, but something not material or not spiritual. We say "spiritual or material," but it is something more than that. Something like that always exist, and we exist in that area. When you feel in that way, that is right pure thinking. You feel in that way, that is pure feeling of being. Every activity should start from this, you know, kind of feeling.

When I was young, you know, many Zen masters says, "What is Buddha? Buddha is something which make bamboo bamboo [laughs], which make bamboo long [laughs], which make stone round." That is [laughs] buddha-nature, they said. I couldn't understand [laughs] because I wanted to figure out what it is, you know [laughs], and I didn't feel so good if I cannot, you know, figure out what it is in usual sense: big or small, right or wrong, good or bad. But if you practice zazen, and, on the other hand, if you realize how foolish we are, you know, if you see yourself like animals in the zoo [laughs, laughter], then you will understand who you are. Each time I go to the zoo, you know, I think, you know, animals may be very much interested of human being, or American people who is black, white [laughs], yellow, and many Americans, you know. I am [laughs] American too, you know. "Oh, he is also American! [Laughs, laughter.] How strange American he is!" [Laughs.] They may, you know, enjoy us, you know. Animals in San Francisco Zoo is very lucky, you know. [Finished sentence. Tape change.] If they are in Japan, you know, they always may see small [laughs, laughter] human being-small and short leg [laughs, laughter]. Not so interesting at all [laughs, laughter].

I don't say you should fool yourself, you know. It is exactly so [laughs]. But usually you say, "I am an American [laughs]," or, "I am a human being. So it is alright for us to kill animals, to eat animal." But that is not right. Maybe we have to eat, but, you know, it is not right. But while you are repeating the same thing, you know, you use, you know, you begin to think in that way. So you lose your pure thinking, pure observation of yourself.

If you practice zazen, if you are brave enough to throw yourself on the floor, you know [laughs], for seven days [laughs], you may be a little bit better-not too much, but [laughs, laughter] but that little bit is very important, you know. That little bit understanding will help your rigidity, you know, your stubbornness. Almost all the problems we create because of our stubborn mind will be vanish.

But actually, zazen help us not so much, you know, not so much. But if you know how to help yourself, you know, and if you know how valuable it is, if you have even smallest, you know, understanding of the reality, your, you know, way of thinking will completely change, and the problem you create will not be problem anymore. But as long as we live we have problem. And that is also true [laughs]. So you shouldn't think-you shouldn't practice zazen to, you know, attain some big enlightenment which will change your whole being [laughs]. That is not right understanding. That maybe so-called-it, you know, "Zen," you know, but true Zen is not like that.

Zen does not include all the teaching of Buddhism, but Zen-this kind of understanding will save various labor of studying so many scriptures. If you understand little bit of this, you know, if you read scriptures, it will make sense. You don't have to, you know, seek some truth in the scriptures we have. We even try to read all the scriptures. It maybe whole life job to read our scripture once, but if you don't know the point, you know, you have to, you know, seek for the truth in the scripture. If you know this point, all the scripture you will read will help you, will be a good nourishment for us.

In this sesshin, I think we will be concentrated to have experience or to have real experience of true practice. Forgetting all about gaining idea, we should just sit here. If this room is too cold, we will make it warm, and if your legs become painful, you can stretch your legs. And if it is too difficult, you know, you can rest, but we should continue our practice for seven days.

Thank you very much.

["For this seven-day sesshin, there are only transcriptions for lectures given on Days 1, 3, 5, 7, and the closing words. I don't know if those

were the only lectures given, or the only ones recorded, or the only ones transcribed." -Brian Fikes.

One of the lectures on Day 2 of the sesshin, and maybe others, was given by Ryogen Yoshimura. -Bill Redican, May 2000.]

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript (checked against tape) by Bill Redican 5/22/00.

[1] Book 4, No. 16.

## **2 - Sesshin Lecture #3**

Sunday, February 07, 1971

Sesshin Lecture #3  
San Francisco

This morning I said you must find yourself in each being. That is actually what Tozan [Ryokai]-zenji said: Don't try to seek yourself. Don't try to figure out who is you. "You" found out in that way is far away from real you. He is not anymore you. But if I go my own way, wherever I go, I see myself. You know, if you, you know, take your own step, it means bodhisattva way. Wherever you go, you will see yourself. You will meet with yourself. And, he says, the image you see in the water when you want to figure out who is you is not you, but actually just what you see in the water is you yourself.

In Sandokai we have same statements: You are not him, and he is you, you know [laughs]. It is paradoxical, you know. It is to catch your mind, they use some paradoxical, you know, statement like this. You are not him, but he is you. It means that when you try to figure out who is you, even though you see yourself in the mirror, he is not you. But if you just see your, you know, figure in the mirror, without any idea of, you know, trying to figure out what is you- Why it is not you when you figure out who is you [laughs] is, you know [laughs], because of your self-centered mind, you know, limited mind, you cannot see.

A self-centered, you know, practice doesn't work [laughs]. You know, if you try to attain enlightenment, or if you want to be some great Zen master, you cannot be actually great Zen master. When you don't try to be so, you know, or before you try to do so, or before you practice our way, you are buddha. But because of your limited practice, self-centered practice, even though you practice your way, you cannot have real practice. You will miss, you know, yourself, lose yourself in small, self-centered practice.

And this morning I told you first of all, anyway, you should try to help others. But when I say so, there may be some misunderstanding. You will have misunderstanding. Whatever you do, that is [laughs], you know, our practice. The misunderstanding is, you know, comes from also selfish practice, or practice of gaining idea-limited practice.

But it is, you know [laughs], pretty hard to practice our way without any, you know, expectation, without any gaining idea. It is actually very difficult. So that is why we have various rules, you know, in zendo. Because of those rules, you know, just to follow the rules, just you follow the rule without any idea of self, you know. Or giving up your idea of self, you can practice, you know, real practice which is not based on self-centered idea. Unless you give up your self-centered practice, idea of self-centered practice, you cannot follow your pract-[partial word: "practice"?] [laughs] [our] rules, you know. So rules will help you to give up your self-centered practice which wouldn't work, but rather encourage you to practice real practice. So rules will help you to have good practice.

In Lotus Sutra, you know, we have one chapter, you know, in which Buddha is talking about our rules. Why we observe our practice is just to help ourselves to keep our practice and make us easy to help ourselves. It is the practice, you know, easy practice, you know. You may think to follow rigid rules is difficult practice. Someone said, you know, "Oh, I wish I hadn't start this, you know, kind of difficult religion [laughs] like Zen [laughs]." Maybe we feel in that way. Our small mind will feel in that way. But if you know what is real practice, you know, then various precepts and rules of Buddhist way will help us, you know. And we find it easy to follow bodhisattva way because of the rules set up by Buddha.

[Nyogen] Senzaki. Do you know Senzaki-roshi? Perhaps you may know him. And he said, and in his last word, "Don't put head upon [laughs] your own head [laughs]." "Don't put head upon your own head." Because you, you know, put, you know, another [laughs] head upon your head, you are involved in foolish, self-centered practice. Even though it is Buddha's head, you shouldn't put [laughs] upon your head. It is better to have only one head [laughs, laughter].

So, you know, try to attain enlightenment is, you know, try to put another head on your own head [laughs]. You cannot move so easily [laughs, laughter]. We are not trying to put anything on our head. We just, you know, try to experience who am I, what is our own head-that's all. How you, you know, find out your head is our practice. Again, "to find out" does not mean, you know, to find out some head [laughs] upon your head, to find out your head which is thinking. How is it possible to, you know, think about your thinking mind? You know, how is it possible to see your own eyes? That is not possible. But there is only one way for us, you know, which makes us possible to realize what is my own head. If you knock it [laughs], you may feel it. "This is," you know, "my head." In other word, to put some limitation, you know, to

put my head under some limitation is how we realize our own head.

By the way, a famous Zen master in China, Echu-kokushi[1] (Nanyo Echu), [2] who is one of the disciple of the Sixth Patriarch- He was a very good Zen master. But he had not much, you know, descendant of himself, so we don't know him so well. But he himself was a great Zen master. When he was dying, Emperor[3] asked his jisha, you know, what kind of a tombstone should we make for him after something, you know, happened to him. But Echu-kokushi told the Emperor's messenger that, "Ask my student. Ask my disciple." [4] And they made a tombstone for him, and about that tombstone they had a kind of discussion. And one of the students said, "It is as big as this country. This tombstone covers all the state south of Lake Hsiang and north of Lake T'an is included in his tombstone." Another student said [laughs], you know, "No. It will include whole world."

But I would rather say, you know, as his teacher Nanyo Echu said when he was asked, "Any stone will be good," you know, "good enough." Even a small stone can be good enough for me." You know, which do you [laughs] like, whole world or small stone? I rather prefer, you know, a small stone, you know, which we can carry or move, you know. If you know what is the small stone, you know, that is you yourself, which will cover everything. But if you think, you know, big whole universe is yourself, you will be lost [laughs]. You have- It doesn't make any sense.

You need, you know, one small room for yourself. That is very true. And when you find yourself really in the small room, as one of your room, then there is you yourself, and whole universe is there. And whole universe makes sense to you, you know. Without your room, whole universe doesn't make any sense. So what you need now is the small room, and what you will need after your death is a small stone, maybe. That is very true. That is actual reality, which is always true with everyone.

So don't talk about whole universe or some mysterious experience, but to find yourself in the small room or in the rigid practice of Zen. "You shouldn't go that way" [laughs]. You should go [laughs] this way. You should cross your legs this way." Under this kind of limitation, you will find yourself. Real self is there, you know. But because you say, you know, because you discuss whether this room is good or bad, big or small, you know, you lose your real room. Before you discuss, before you are caught by, you know, discrimination or thinking mind, you own your room.

So if you find a true joy under some, you know, limitation, and that is only way to, you know, realize whole universe. There is no other way for us to get approach to the whole universe. When you exist right here, you know, whole universe makes sense to you. Before you think about it, it is important to give up your, you know, foolish discrimination or foolish idea of freedom or, you know-



In this way, we must practice our way, you know. Why you practice zazen is to be filled with real spirit of bodhisattva and real feeling of your being, which transcend our thinking mind or emotional activity. So as long as you are, you know, you don't give up your thinking mind, it is not possible to, you know, to make your enlightenment happen to you. That experience may happen in various way. You say, "big enlightenment" or "small enlightenment" [laughs], but, you know, actually there is no small enlightenment or no big enlightenment.

After your death, do you need big stone or small stone [laughs]? It doesn't make much sense. Anyway, you need something, you know, that's all. You need something. And better to have smaller ones, you know, better to have very narrow rigid [laughs] practice, you know. It is easier for you to follow. If it is, you know- If the rules is provided in big scale, you may feel very good to see it [laughs], but you will find a great difficulty, you know, how to follow that kind of complicated big-scaled rules.

The rules must be very simple. Simpler the better, and stricter the better. Actually it is so, but if we make it too strict, you know, what will happen will be, you know, you will rely on or and you will just goof off, you know [laughs]. Strict rules [laughs]. It is easy to follow strict rules, you know. If you do exactly what your teacher says, that's all [laughs]. It works, but, you know, but on the other hand, you don't make much effort. So, you know, should not be too big or should not be too small, as [Ekai] Hyakujo-zenji[5] said, "Thinking about various rules which previous patriarchs and Zen teachers followed, you know, we-I made this," you know, "rule." Comparing various rules we had, he set up some rules, some appropriate good-sized rules for us. That is how Zen rules was originated. And since then, we are trying to improve his rules according to the circumstances under which we practice our way.

You have no danger in our Zen practice to be involved in small-minded practice. And you can trust our rules, because our rules is after improvement of many great Zen masters we have now here. Of course, I think we should improve or we should have more appropriate rules for us, but point is, you know, the spirit to follow or understanding why we must follow our way and we must have some rules in our practice. [Finished sentence. Tape turned over.]

By now, you know, after many centuries since we are completely involved in scientific world, we should, you know, be free from thinking mind, you know. We come to the point where we should find out real self, you know, giving up superficial self of universal self, which you can, you know, which you can replace for someone's self [laughs], you know. We have enjoyed, you know, some universal, you know, some medicine which is for everyone [laughs]. It will not help you so much if some medicine is for everyone, you know. Do you, you know, trust some medicine for everyone? Medicine should be just for yourself, you know

[laughs]. It may be better than nothing, but each one must have his own medicine.

Buddha, you know, prescribed the medicine for patient according to the person. That is real medicine. But scientific mind create, you know, some medicine for everyone, you know, to sell [laughs], you know, as much as possible [laughs, laughter]. "This medicine is for everyone." Then everyone will buy it. But that kind of medicine cannot help people so well. Sometime it may be poisonous for someone, you know.

Scientific mind can provide something universal, but not for special person. Scientific mind will deprive [derive?], you know, some specialty, you know, from each one, from each being, and they understand people in summary [some way?], picking up some similarity and prescribe medicine for that universal, you know, similarity of many people.

But right now, we should, you know, we should have our own mind instead of putting another big universal self on our head. It is useless, you know. Not useless, but sometime when it is rain, it will help [laughs] to protect you, but in such a place like California, you know, it is useless [laughs, laughter]. We don't need umbrella so much here [laughs]. The more you universalize something, you know, you lose the point of life. If you see something through telescope [laughs], you know, you may see many things, but it is better to see them by your own naked eye. That is our way, without using something which will help you to universalize things.

It is better to stick to one thing rather than to, you know, to be, to try to understand many things. It is better to appreciate something one by one, rather than, you know, to put everything in your pocket [laughs]. You will not see it, you know [laughs]. It's better to pick one flower after another and see it. This is better. This is our way. We put emphasis on validity rather than, you know, universality, you know. Direct, you know, effect on each one of us-that is our practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 7/31/00.

[1] The honorific title -kokushi (Jap.) means "teacher of the nation" or "master of the country," a title bestowed on the teacher of a Japanese emperor; the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese "Kuo-shih." Also "-guoshi" (Jap.).

[2] Nanyang Huizhong (675-775): early Chinese Ch'an master; student of Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch. He was Court Chan Master for Emperor Suzong and his successor Emperor Daizong. Also known as Chu-kokushi (Jap.).

[3] Emperor Suzong (Su-tsung).

[4] His disciple was Tan Yuan: See The Blue Cliff Record, Case 18.

[5] Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. Chan master. Dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi. Author of Hyakujo Shingi, a set of rules for Zen monastics.

### **3 - Sesshin Lecture #5**

Tuesday, February 09, 1971

Sesshin Lecture #5  
San Francisco

I think, as Yoshimura-sensei[1] told you the other night, Zen masters has some humorous [laughs], you know, element in their life. And, you know, even after death [laughs], or even more, we, you know, know how humorous [laughs] they were if you know them. Humor is, you know- Only when he has real, you know-he has some understanding more than real, you know, then he could be humorous, you know. So humor is more real than [laughs] reality, you know. Reality is not so real. But if you see [laughs, laughter] comic, you know, you know, that is more real than [laughs] usual pictures, you know.

So I think because they have something real, you know, so at the same time they can be always humorous, you know. When they say, you know, something usual, you know, not [laughs]- The way they say, or in his mind, you know, he is always expressing it in some [way] as if he is drawing some comic, you know [laughs]. But for us, for him, maybe, it is comic, but for us it is very real and serious thing.

When I was young, or when I was at Eihei-ji, Kumazawa-zenji,[2] you know, Kumazawa-zenji-at that time he was kannin.[3] In sesshin he gave us a talk when we are tired out [laughs]. It was third day or fourth day. And he started to talk about something, and he said, "Suzume-a sparrow," you know, "sparrow has broken a tori'i." Do you know tori'i? Shrine gate, you know, like this [gestures]. A sparrow [laughs] broke [laughs, laughter] tori'i made of stone [laughs, laughter]. And he started to explain how a sparrow did it [laughs]. But, in Japanese, you know, "Kosuzumega." [4] I still remember: "Kosuzumega ishi no tori'i o fumiotta." [5] And he said, "Do you understand?" [Laughs, laughter.] And he repeated several times, but no one laughed, you know [laughs, laughter], because he was so serious. But "fumioru" sometime means "funderu." [6] It is, you know, "stepping on the stone," that is "fumioru-fumioru-funderu," you know. It's "stepping-stepping" you know, "on the

stone," and at the same time it mean "to break" [laughs]. How is it possible [laughs] for a sparrow to break a stone gate?

But we thought, "That is Zen story." [Laughs, laughter.] What he means must be something deep, you know [laughs, laughter]. But he was just joking [laughs, laughter] with a serious, you know, manner like this. He was like this. [Gestures?] As he, you know, is trained very well by zazen practice, he is always serious, but he is always, you know, humorous at the same time. Not just serious, but some element of, you know, happiness or joy is in it. He is always relaxed. And, you know, maybe- Recently I found out that it was a joke, you know [laughs, laughter], but not many people, I think, know that was joke [laughs, laughter]. Quite recently. We didn't talk about, you know, that story anymore.

As we were young, we did not like so ridiculous, you know, stories [laughs, laughter]. Fooling, you know, around serious students, you know. "Oh no! He is fooling us." [Laughs.] We didn't like at all. So we didn't talk about it any more. But quite recently, you know, "Oh!" [Laughs, laughter.] "He was fooling us when we are practicing seriously." [Laughs, delayed laughter.]

When he was dying, you know, do you know what he did [laughs, laughter]? For maybe ninety-six years he was fooling us [laughs]. You know, when he was almost dying, he stretched his arm for the, you know, water pitcher (what do you say? "pitcher"), and the jisha gave him the pitcher. And he swallowed the pitcher and said,

"KAAA!" [7] [very loudly]. And he [laughs, laughter] was no more. He vanished from this world. [Laughter.]

No [laughter continues]. It is terrible [laughs, laughter], you know. And, you know, newspaper [laughs, laughter] reporters including, you know, famous Zen masters, you know, admired his [laughs] death, you know, but I think maybe he was fooling us [laughs, laughter]. You know, that was what he is doing, you know.

When he visited my hometown when I was in Japan five years ago, I, you know, tried to persuade him to come to America. And he asked, you know, about America, for pretty long time [laughs]. He make various questions about America. And he looks like, you know, he agreed. But after, you know, explaining maybe long long time, you know, he said, "Oh, that will be a good job for Takashina-roshi.[8] [Laughs, laughter.] "Not for me." [Laughs, laughter.] "Maybe Takashina-roshi." He is always, you know, like that.

When, you know, the old old lady in Yaizu offered, you know, natsu [9] melon (or what do you call?) melon, you know, very sweet and very expensive. She brought it to him. And he was watching it, you know. I was with her. "Oh, very good, very good, but I don't like it." [Laughs, laughter.] "I would rather give it to my students," he said. And he

clapped his hand [laughs; Suzuki-roshi clapped hands twice] and [said], "Take it to your room!" [Laughs, laughter.] In front of her. But when he does it so, you know, so nice, so she couldn't be angry with him, you know [laughs].

So I don't know. It is pretty difficult to know what kind of, you know, mind he has [laughs, laughter]. He is always same, but what he does is always something different [laughs]. So I knew him pretty well, but recently, you know, I find out many things about him-not new things, but something I find out, you know, what he was doing little by little. I think that is real comedy, I think.

And at the same time, Yoshimura-sensei was talking about anti-Buddhism or anti-Buddha or non-Buddha, you know. I think that is, you know, exactly what he was doing [laughs, laughter]. What he did is something more than we can understand or we can see, you know. So even though does something, you know, that is-we cannot take it literally. So actually he isn't doing anything, you know. He is just moving his mouth, that's all [laughs, laughter]. The only way to know is [laughs]-I don't know how to understand him, but how to be like him is already known to us by Dogen-zenji, you know. How to be like him. Living with people, you know, and living in confusion, always, you know, outside of the confusion: That is, you know, core of practice maybe.

Oh by the way, I have new glasses. So I must use this you know. And I have something to read here [laughs, laughter] [unfolds page]. Oh this- [Laughs, laughter. Took out wrong piece of paper. Much laughter.] This is new one, yeah. Dogen-zenji said, you know [laughs, laughter]:

The Third Patriarch in China said, "The first principle," you know, "the supreme way," maybe, "is not difficult. If you are away from discrimination, if you stay away from discrimination, whatever you see, that is it." And hearing this statement of the Third Patriarch of China, many people may say every dharma or everything is not good or not bad by itself, in itself, and there is nothing which is right or which is wrong. So the only way is according to his nature. He should intuitively take his path. And some of the people may say you should not, you know, talk about the supreme way, but draw a circle or stand, stick, fist. Or knock the floor by staff. Or slap students by hands, or give [get] them to give big cry will be the way to express the supreme way.

But Dogen-zenji said here:

But those understanding is not right, or it is still the understanding of cave dwelling [laughs]. That's not-. Cave dwelling. They are, you know, dwelling in the cave [laughs]. And the saying is something like that.

And that is what Dogen says about the supreme way. But he says, you know, "What will be the supreme way?" In Bendowa,[10] he says:

Buddhas and Patriarchs appears because of this supreme way, and he does not observe anything but supreme way. If there is a chance for the dharma, dharma will appear. If there is no chance for the dharma to appear, dharma will not appear.

That is, you know, what he says. Oh [laughs]. Ah, you know.

But he says, "Supreme way is like a big konjicho"[11] I don't know Sanskrit name for it: big bird which will cover whole world by his wing. If he give one beat over the water, the water, the tidal wave will, you know, arise, and bottom of the sea will expose, you know. And it is so big as the bottom of the sea exposed, he will see dragons. Some of them is alive and some of them already dead by big tidal wave. And he may see many fish already dead, but he pick up only dragons who is still alive [laughs]. And he may be the most, you know, discriminative animal [laughs] in the world [laughs]. Stong [laughs] and discriminative animal.

And that will be [laughs], Dogen-zenji says, that will be the good example of no discrimination [laughs]. But, you know, when Dogen-zenji says so, discrimination is strict discrimination, you know. When he says so, he changed the angle [?] already. Discrimination, you know- You have discrimination in the realm of thinking mind, you know, or imagination or feeling or emotional activity. You discriminate. You say right or wrong, good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable, or you like it or you don't like it. But how is it possible, you know, to reach the supreme way which is beyond discrimination is what Dogen-zenji is talking about.

Oh, by the way, why, you know- Shakyamuni Buddha didn't talk about self or talk about God or Buddha. Figuratively he talked about him, but he didn't point out anything as Buddha. Maybe, I think, you know, if, you know, as Yoshimura-sensei pointed out, if he [Buddha], you know, described something about a deity, you know, or absolute being or God, he may be a founder of another Hindu religion, you know [laughs]. That is very true [laughs]. But that was not the reason why he didn't talk about it [laughs, laughter]. I am not opposing to him [Yoshimura] at all, but, you know [laughs], because that was very interesting point. So I thought about it, you know, more [laughs, laughter].

You know, if some religion appears, you know, and some teaching was described or left by someone, you know, you may have various priest, you know, who will, you know, follow his teaching. And some, you know, priest can live [laughs] on it, you know, explaining or selling his teaching, you know. "This is very valuable teaching [laughs, laughter]. This is [laughs, laughter] supreme way. Why don't you come and listen to me?" [Laughs, laughter.] "And he will be such-and-such [laughs]. That is how to maintain, you know, our activity." So in that way many thing will appear which is not supreme way. Instead of supreme way, you know, we will have many secondary way, which should be rejected. And you must have noticed that he al-... [Sentence not finished. Tape

turned over.]

... by magic power, or foreseeing something, or you should not talk about astrology, you know. You should not be astrologist. With this kind of knowledge or power, you shouldn't fool people [laughs], you know. He [Buddha?] was so strict on this point, he did not allow any religion to be like that, including his own religion. So he didn't talk about anything-single word for the-I cannot say single word-maybe some time he-I don't know exactly, but he didn't anyway. He did talk about what it is, but, you know, what exist, you know, in what way, something exist beyond our world. He, I think, he is tired of this kind of, you know, religious activity at that time. So his, you know, his main point is to, you know, to establish something which is very pure, and very accurate, and very real. The way, you know, he talk about, similar [similes?] he use, or way he talked about is very mystic, but what he is talking about is exactly what we are doing, you know. Anything [nothing?] mysterious. If you know ourselves, you can understand what he was saying. And if you understand what he was saying, you will understand yourself more, you know. More real self will be found by reading his words or by listening to his words.

Dogen-zenji also, you know, when he says konjicho, you know, picks up only living dragon, he is talking about now about our practice. So his instruction about our practice is very accurate, very strict, you know [laughs]. More strict than, you know, more particular than this bird. He didn't, you know, he doesn't want anything if that is not real. He doesn't practice if it is not right practice. He practice only when he see it is right.

So what he says is not just usual, you know, way of paradoxical way of talking, you know, speaking about Zen. He has accurate point, and his whole effort is directed on our everyday practice. He doesn't ignore anything. So that is why we think we believe in his practice. If we follow him, you know, we can, you know, we will have that kind of, not power, but ability; or that kind of possibility is there only when we observe his way.

When I say "accurate," you know, there is no mysterious meaning in it. You can use your own judgment, you know. If you don't accept it, you know, if your thinking mind doesn't accept it, according to Dogen-zenji, there is no need to observe it. So everything we do should be explained fully, but that, you know, explanation is not good enough. And according to when you accept his teaching, by here, now, then, you should observe it by your body. Then, you know, your understanding is not so important when you start to practice, but before that, maybe, understanding is important.

Why I became interested in Buddhism is because Buddhist explains things very [laughs] well and accurate, and we cannot, you know, give

any comment to it, you know. All the comment is already, you know, given to various teaching. Even though you think you, you know, think of some, you know, direct comment to it, you know, maybe, "This is good understanding of the teaching." You may think. But if you, you know, see some other book, someone already did it [laughs]. Almost nothing, you know, to find out, almost nothing to say. It is so, you know, accurate. And many various, you know, naughty students, you know, played, you know, big play [laughs], big fight about our scriptures.

So it is possible for us to make full use of our mind, but the point is, if you want to have supreme way, you know, it is not possible to have it by thinking. If you accept, you know, our teaching logically, by critical eyes, then you should start our practice provided by those strict teachers. So in one way, you know, non-discrimination is our way. On the other hand, when you do something, we must be very sincere. [Refolds and puts away paper.]

I think we are now, you know, making pretty good effort in Zen Center, but there are many danger, you know. Unless we have very strict eye on ourselves, we will lose our way, you know. Even though you can talk about Buddhism, you know, even though you have very very very, you know, deep logical understanding of it, but that is not enough.

So, you know, non-discrimination means to discriminate which can be discriminated. That is, you know, discrimination of discrimination [laughs] is true discrimination. And when you discriminate your discrimination, next thing you should do to have some practice of non-discrimination established by someone who is very discriminative [laughs].

So, you know, I think you can spend, you know, this life and next life, you know, if there is next life, or forever you should work on this [laughs, laughter]. Then something, you know- Anyway, we human being can survive on this big world, or else we will be lost. We will be lost, but nothing will happen [laughs, laughter]. But, you know, if that is okay, you know [laughs], it may be okay, but to say so is quite easy, but I don't think you can accept that. So as long as we live, we should work on this and protect ourselves from something wrong or something, some fake, you know. We should only follow something right, you know, something true, you know. That is our spirit and spirit of practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shohaku Okumura-roshi. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by



Bill Redican (9/27/00).

[1] Ryogen Yoshimura, who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 to assist Suzuki-roshi (see Wind Bell, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30). He died at a young age after returning to Japan.

[2] Kumazawa Taizen (1873-1968). Later the 73rd abbot of Eihei-ji.

[3] Also kansu: Secretary of a Zen monastery; one of the six traditional operations officers (rokuchiji) of a Zen monastery (along with tsusu, secretary-general; fusu, accountant; ino, officer in charge of general affairs; tenzo, head of the kitchen; and shissui, officer of maintenance).

[4] Ko = "baby"; suzume = "sparrow"; ga indicates "sparrow" is the subject.

[5] Ishi = "stone"; no means the previous word, ishi, is possessive; tori'i = "shrine gate"; o means that the previous word, tori'i, is the direct object of fumiotta, "to break."

[6] Fumioru can mean either "to break" or "to step on." Funderu means only "to step on."

[7] Ka! may have been used as an exclamation similar to "Ha!" or "Ho!" [cf. Isshu Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Zen Dust, p. 82].

[8] Rosen Takashina (1870-1968): 71st abbot of Eihei-ji.

[9] Natsu = summer.

[10] "Discourse on the Practice of the Way," a fascicle in Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[11] Konjicho [also myojicho (Jap.) and garuda (Sanskrit)]: A "gold-winged bird"; originally, a mythological bird said to eat dragons; one of eight supernatural beings who protect Buddhism; an incarnation of a deity who saves people. [Hisao Inagaki, A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms, 4th edition, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1992, p. 187.]

#### **4 - Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Page Street Apples**

Friday, February 12, 1971

Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Page Street Apples  
San Francisco

This is the seventh day of the sesshin, and you came already too far. So you cannot, you know, give up [laughs, laughter]. So only way is to stay here. And I feel I had a very good crop [laughs]. You may feel you are

not yet ripened. But even though you are still ripening, but if you stay in our storehouse anyway, it will be a good apples [laughs]-Page Street apples, ready to be served [laughs, laughter]. So I have nothing to worry [about], and I don't think you have any more worry about your practice.

Perhaps some of you started sesshin because you have too many things to solve, or some of you must have thought if you come and sit here, maybe your problem will be solved. But, you know, the problem which you-which is-any-whatever problem it may be, something which is given to you could be solved anyway because Buddha will not give you anything-any more than you can solve and you need. Whatever it is, whatever problem it may be, the problem you have is just enough problems [laughs, laughter] for you.

So I think you should trust him, you know, just enough-not too much. And, you know-and his-if it is not too much, Buddha is ready to give you some more problems [laughs, laughter] just to survive, you know, just to appreciate problems. Buddha is always giving you something, because if you have nothing to cope with, you know, it may be terrible life-as if you are, you know, it is like-problem without life [life without problems] is to sit in this zendo for seven days without doing anything.

But, you know, I think you have had many problems to cope with in this zendo, or maybe more problems than you had in the city. You think it is easy to solve problem in zendo than in the city, but actually it is not so. You will find out more problems which you have had. But why you didn't feel so is you are fooled by something, and because of that you couldn't find out the problems you had. And if you do not, you know, know what kind of problem you have, the result will be terrible, you know. Unexpected problem will appear, you know, but it is not something which you didn't have, you know. Nothing will happen-no problem will happen if you do not have, you know-originally if you do not have problems. Because you had problem, only result came out when you did not expect it. So it is better to, you know, find out problems earlier-as soon as possible.

But in our practice, there is no need-you don't have to worry what will happen to us, because Buddha will give you, you know, just enough problems. I think that is, you know, to-to sit-we Soto students sit, you know, facing to the wall-in other word, facing to Buddha with your back-face [laughs]-back-front face and back-face [laughs]-I don't know how to say-how to express it, you know. You-you sit, you know, like this. Buddha is there [behind you],[1] and [you are] trusting him, you know. If you make some mistake, Buddha may say [laughing], "turn over." It means that you are involved in some dualistic problem, you know. You have some problem in the-in sense of duality, you know. So Buddha says, you know, "turn over."

And you should listen to him, you know [laughs]. But usually, if you

trust him completely, you know, there is no need to face the Buddha. This is the attitude of complete trust, you know. Your enemies or some problems, you know, will, you know, come through the back, not from the, you know, the front. So to expose your back to the Buddha means to express the complete trust with Buddha.

And even though you have problem which you-you don't need, which you feel you don't need, or too much-which you feel [are] too much [of a] problem-problems, but trusting him, you should sit with problems. And, at the same time, you should be ready to refuse it if it is too much. But this will not be necessary, you know. There will not be no need to refuse it, because more and more the problems you think [are] problem will change into something you need.

So you know that, "If I refuse problem, I may regret. So I must keep anyway I must keep this because I am not so sure if this is real problem or Buddha's help," you know. [Laughs.] "Maybe better to keep it." And you sit in this way, you know. "Okay. [Laughs.] Anyway, it will-we will understand what Buddha give-gave us." And Buddha may say, "If you really don't need it, any time I will accept it.[Laughs.] Give it back to me." But if Buddha say so, you may think, you know, "Oh, may be better [laughs, laughter] to keep it. There may be some meaning," you know, "in this problem. Oh, better to keep it." And you should sit. If you sit in this way, you will find various problems as a kind of valuable treasures which is indispensable for you and especially indispensable for Zen students.

So before you sit, before you accept yourself as you are, and before you-so-before you accept the problem you have, your position, you cannot sit in its true sense. But if you fix your mind, trusting him, and sit, then in it-there is no confusion or problems any more.

What you should do is to wait. Be patient enough and wait until the problem will make some sense to you, until you can appreciate your being here and your being-your position, whatever it is. That is how you practice zazen.

So if you only practice zazen, there is no need to expect Buddha to help you. Buddha is always helping you. But usually what we are doing is refusing Buddha's offer. For an instance, if you, you know, ask help-ask some special help from special person, you know, it means that you-you are refusing, you know, Buddha's offering and asking for some other things which is not here yet. So you are refusing him. You are refusing what you have already. And you are refusing to accept treasures you have.

You are like a pig, you know. When I was young, as my father was very poor, he raised many pigs. And if you give pigs a bucket of food, you know, if you are not there he will eat it. As long as you are there, he will not eat it, expecting me to give more food [laughs, laughter]. So you

must be very careful. And you-if you put, you know, if you move, he will kick out the food from the bucket [laughs]. I think that is what you are doing, you know [laughs, laughter].

Just to cause more problem for you [laughs], you seek for something. But there is no need for you to seek for anything. You have plenty. And you have just enough problem. This is mysterious thing, you know-mystery of the life. We have just enough problem: not too much or not too little. So there is no need to ask something for anybody-there is no need to ask anyone's help if you are patient enough, if you are strong enough to accept it. But when you are not strong enough to accept you-accept problem, or strong enough to sit calmly and peacefully, trusting Buddha. Yeah, I said "trusting Buddha," you know [laughs]. I already give you the answer. Only way may be to trust Buddha, you know, to trust your being-why you are here, how you are here, you know. Because you are helped, and because the way you are helped is perfect, you exist here. If it is too much, you will die. If it is too little, you will die. You are, you know, receiving something, you know-as much as you need-just as much as you need. So only way is, you know, to trust him, or to trust your being here. That is, you know, spirit of Zen.

Zen master-you may think Zen master is-all the Zen master is very tough. [Thumps the ground and laughs.] It-he looks like very tough, you know, when you need him to be tough. [Thumps the ground and laughs.] But, you know, he is not tough-so tough. He is just tough enough for you, that's all! [Laughs, laughter.] Actually, you don't need your master if you really-if you know how to practice zazen.

It is already, you know, the last day. Perhaps if you have this kind of understanding, I think if you have problem still, you know, if you are blue apple yet [laughs]-blue or green apple-not blue [laughing, ongoing laughter]-after being red, you will be blue. That is [?] too late. Maybe better than green-to stay green. If you feel you are still, you know, green, but, you know-even though you feel you are still green, you want-maybe you want to continue this sesshin more, I think [laughs]. I am so sure about it.

Last day will be the day for-to-to have-to make our practice meaningful, you know. How to make our practice meaning[ful] will be the-will be our schedule. So I want you just to sit, you know, and to be ready to go to market [as ripe apples], for-to be ready to be served for Zen students.

That is all what I wanted to say this morning. So let's, you know, sit more and-to have full appreciation of our practice.

(12/13/00).

[1] Words in brackets from original transcript (not on tape).

## **5 - Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Closing Words**

Friday, February 12, 1971

Sesshin Lecture, 7th Day: Closing Words

San Francisco

The Sixth Patriarch[1] said: "To dwell on emptiness and to keep calm mind is not zazen," he said. Or he said, you know: "Just to sit in squatting-sitting position is not Zen." But we say, you know, you-you have to just sit [laughs]. If you don't understand what is our practice and stick to those words, you will be confused. But if you understand what is real Zen, it is quite usual warning, you know-a kind of warning for us.

Now our sesshin is almost [at an] end. But-and some people, maybe, you know, go back to their home and participate or involved in previous everyday activities. But if you practice-if you have been practicing true zazen, you will not, you know-you may be happy to go back to your everyday life. You may be encouraged, you know, by our practice to-in going back to your everyday life. But if you feel, you know, if you feel hesitate [hesitant] to go back to your or-go back to your city life or everyday life, it means that, you know, you will still stick to zazen.

So that is why the Sixth Patriarch said: "If you," you know, "dwell on emptiness and stick to your practice, then that is not true zazen." When you practice zazen, moment after moment, you accept what you have now and what you have in that moment, and satisfying with everything you do, and you don't-you do not-you don't have any complaint because you just accept it, then that is zazen. Or even though you cannot do that, you know what you should do. Then sitting zazen will encourage you to do some other thing. Just as you accepted your painful legs, you accept difficult everyday life. Because city life may be more difficult than your zazen practice, so zazen practice will encourage you to have more difficulties.

If you understand in this way what is zazen, that is right understanding. If you have, especially in your seven-days practice, having some taste of real practice, without losing the taste of practice, and continue your busy activity, then that will be great encouragement. Even though you are [it is] difficult, and even though you are busy, you have always, you know, taste of calmness of your mind, not because you stick to it but because you enjoy it. There is some difference [between] "to stick to it" and "to enjoy it." When you enjoy it, you don't have to stick to it, you know [laughs, laughter]. So if you have real, you know, taste of our practice, you can enjoy it all the time, incessantly. Whatever you do,

that taste is not something you have to stick to it, something you have to recall it. That is, you know, true enlightenment. But even though you think you attained enlightenment, you know, when you are busy, when you are some-in some difficulty, and you think you need, you know, to have that experience again [laughs], that is not real enlightenment because that enlightenment is something you have to stick to it [laughs]. But real enlightenment is always with you, and [there is] no need for you to stick to or for-there is no need even to think about it. It is always with you. So difficulty itself is enlightenment. Busy life itself is enlightened activity. That is true enlightenment.

But even though expect-you-even though you want to have this-have a taste of true practice, you know, it may be difficult to have it. Only way to have it is, you know, just to continue right practice according to-following the right instruction and right teacher. That is the only way. If you follow right schedule in your practice, you know, naturally or some day you may have a taste of it. Nowadays, you know, you make date [laughing], you know, young people are making date, but, you know, enlightenment is not something which you can meet by date.

But if you, you know, follow-if you organize your life, if you get up at some certain time and pick up bag lunch at certain time, and go out for the work, then if you have some girlfriend or boyfriend, you know, you will meet her, you know, without any date. There is no need for you [laughs, laughter] to make date. At some certain time, she will come to the corner. You will usually see her, you know. That is our way, you know. It is rather foolish to make phone call, you know [laughing, laughter]. It is, you know-it is troublesome, you know. And you sh-[partial word]-even though you meet her, if you meet her by date, you know, by telephone call, you know: "Hey! I am leaving now," if they-if she doesn't come to the corner, you know, you will be irritated. If you do not make any date, you know, and if she come at some certain time to the corner, you will be really happy. That is, you know, how you attain enlightenment [laughing, loud laughter]. It is not a laughing matter. I am talking about something real, you know. I think you will agree with me.

That is, you know, how not to stick to enlightenment. Not to make any date means not to expect enlightenment or stick to enlightenment. Being encouraged by enlightenment, by seeing her even though you don't say anything-you don't talk with her, just have a glance of her is enough. And all day long you will be happy [laughs]. But if you, you know, are demanding too much of her, then already it means that you stick to enlightenment.

That is what he-the Sixth Patriarch meant when you-when he said: "Just to," you know, "dwell on emptiness is not true practice." Originally he attained enlightenment by one famous statement: "Without dwelling on anything, you will have true mind." If you d- [partial word]-so it means that if you stick to something, you will lose your enlightenment. Even

though you try hard, you know, in making an appointment or date, it doesn't work. If you attain enlightenment in that way, you know, it may not be-most of the time it may not be true enlightenment. The enlightenment you will have in that way is enlightenment which you will stick to, and which-and is not something which is always with you, which will always encourage you.

This point is very important. So even though we finish our sesshin, we should continue well-organized life and to-to have real enlightenment. When you practice hard according to the right instruction of your teacher, then that is how you have real enlightenment experience.

In this sesshin-this sesshin was very fruitful sesshin, and some of you already had a good taste of our practice. Even though you haven't real taste of practice, I think, you knew-you have understood how you practice zazen. So what you should do from now on is to continue our true practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/13/00).

[1] Dajian Hui-neng (Daikan Eno): 638-713.

## **6 - Calmness of Mind**

Saturday, February 13, 1971

Calmness of Mind  
San Francisco

Good morning.

We have been practicing sesshin, so I feel I didn't see some of you for a long, long time. We actually-"sesshin" means, you know, to, in one sense, to calm down, to have more calmness of mind in our activity and in our practice. But what does it mean, by "calmness of your mind." It's maybe pretty difficult for you to understand.

The calmness of mind is, you know, for instance, you may think if you seclude yourself in some remoted mountain or seclude yourself in zendo, you know, and practice without saying anything, without taking some good food or some food which will give you some pleasure or excitement [laughs], or without hearing someone's, you know, opinion, in this way you will have calmness of your mind. But that will help, but

it is not the calmness of mind which we mean, because real-if, you know, that is calmness of mind, you will have worry to lose the calmness of your mind, you know. When you feel so, calmness of your mind is not already there. If you think-if you afraid of losing the-or being disturbed by someone, you know, that is not already calmness of your mind.

So real calmness of our mind is, you know, as I told you in sesshin time, to have, you know, oneness of the mind with your surrounding. That is real calmness of your mind. You are not, you know, you are- You are not him, but he is you, I said, you know, as Tozan-zenji- I referred to Tozan-zenji's words, you know. "You are not him," you know, when you say, "I am," you know, when you say, seeing yourself in the mirror when you say, "This is me," you know [laughs]. But that is not you, because that is not you in its true sense because you think, "This is," you know, "This I me. This is me." Dualistic.

But rather when you say, you know, "This is," you know, excuse me, "I am this," you know. When you say, "I am the image in the mirror," when you say so, "I"-strong idea of "I" is here. "Who is I? Who am I?" You know, you are always seeking who you are. "Maybe," you know, "someday I will understand who I am," and, "Oh, now I met with me. I am this one," you know, "this image in the mirror."

But this is, you know, "you" in dualistic sense: me and him-the image. But rather when you say, "This is me," you know, image comes first and "you" follows, you know. "This is me," you know. There is not much strong idea of "you." You are rather, you know, involved in something you see. At that time, you know, you are one to some extent, or, you know, sometime completely, sometime incompletely, but anyway not much idea of "you" is not included. So when you say, "This is me," you know, it is more like calmness of your mind in which you can see things.

This morning I brought some material for you to-[unfolds paper]. And I want to refer to Buddha's, you know, last words. And this is, you know-the translation, you know, goes-someone translated. But translation goes like this:

The Merit of Seclusion: Yea Brethren, if you desire quietude in action and joy, always avoid confusion and noise. Live alone in a quiet retreat. The man who lives in solitude is respectfully worshiped by Indra and all the gods.

And it goes more, but-Dogen-zenji's, you know, explanation to it goes like this: Calmness means, you know, and Dogen-zenji give the title to this part of Buddha's last word: How to Enjoy the Calmness. And-in Japanese or Chinese, jakujo. Jak means, you know (and this is my explanation), jak means "no sound" or "no voice," you know, "not much voice," you know [laughs], "very calm." And jo means-"jo" is-nowadays we use it in various way, but jo is also "calmness," but it is more



"calmness of our mind," "inner calmness," but "inner calmness," but more positive and, you know, some function is there. You know, "to do something very carefully," you know, and "to do something with calmness of your mind," or "to do things precisely," "to say something precisely"-not too much or not too little [laughs], just, you know, just enough. This is what we mean by "jo."

So to enjoy the calmness means to do things, you know, in your surrounding which you are with careful mind, and to do things precisely and to do things thoroughly, without error. How you can do it is when you enjoy [laughs] the calmness of your mind, you know. So when you enjoy the calmness of your mind, that is zazen practice. In zazen practice [laughs] you should enjoy the calmness of your mind.

And you will have, of course, pain, but if you fix your mind to practice zazen, even though you have, you know, pain, you have joy of one to become one with pain, you know. To become one-you suffer with pain [laughs], with pain, but I don't say "with pain" [laughs] but "with pain" [laughs, laughter]. Do you understand me? With pain. Joy of pain [laughs, laughter]. "Oh no!" [Laughs, laughter.] You may say, "Oh no." But if you, you know, fix your mind, you know, to get married with pain [laughs], you will have joy of, you know, marriage with pain.

That is oneness of, you know, pain and you. And at that time you have no idea of pain, but rather pain is you, you know. Pain. What is in your practice is just pain [laughs], no more you! "Ahhh!" [Laughs, laughter.] Just pain. That is calmness of your mind. And when you feel in that way, you have calmness of your mind in pain. People may say, "He is struggling with [laughs] pain," but "with" is, you know, extra. When you are one with pain, you are not struggling with pain. You are struggling pain [laughs]. Always "with" is necessary. Struggling pain. Enjoying the pain. Pain is going on, you know. Pain may be very happy, you know [laughs], to go with you [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, complete calmness of your mind.

So even though you are city, you know, it is possible to have calmness of your mind. But because you fight with the pain or voice from everywhere, you have no calmness of your mind. So that is how you seclude yourself from city. Physically and also mentally, you will be in city, but if you become completely- If you fix your mind to exist in city-"This is my zendo" [laughs]-when you do not try to escape from the city-"This is my zendo, I must practice zazen here," you know-then everyone will listen to you, even deity [deities, et seq.] in the heaven will listen to you. But as long as you are involved in the fight, "Oh, this is right. Oh, that is not right." And then even [though] you are in Zen Center, you know, you are in the confusion of city.

That is confused mind. Even in confusion you can have the calmness of your mind. Because you have calmness of your mind, you can see clearly, and you will find out how you can-how you solve the problem or

how you dissolve the problem. When you see it, you know, the problems will be dissolved-or, I mean-problems will dissolve. It goes, you know, naturally in its way, and you are just one with it and with your calmness of your mind you are watching it. "Ohhh" [laughs]. "Okay." You may say, "Okay." You don't fight with it, but you see how it dissolve, or how it resume calmness where there is no problem.

To do so, what is necessary there is the practice-the big, you know, decision to practice zazen right here. Only when you have this confidence you will have absolute dignity. Not small dignity (your dignity or my dignity), but, like sutra says, "Even various deity in the heaven will listen to you, will admire you and respect you." That is not just, you know, talk, it is not just story. It happens in that way. And it has been happening in that way in our Buddhist history.

[Unfolds paper.] This is a translation of Buddha's last words-literal, literal translation:

This is why you should leave your own and other communities to live alone in the solitude, pondering the extinction of the origin of suffering.

Why we suffer, you know, how we suffer.

-pondering about the extinction of the origin of suffering. Those who rejoice in company have the pain of company, just as when many birds flocks upon a great tree, it is in danger. Attachment to the world drown one in suffering of mankind, just as an old elephant drowning in the mud cannot get himself out.

This is what is called "solitude." This is what is called "seclusion." But we should not take, you know, his word literally. We should, you know, know exactly what he meant.

As our group became larger and larger, you know, bigger and bigger, we tend to lose this point. When we were small group, you know, this kind of-there was not much danger of this kind. But right now, actually we have, I must confess [laughs], sometime I myself involved in the confusion [laughs, laughter]. But this point should be always remembered. And if the danger is greater, you know, I think our practice will become deeper and deeper. But if you [laughs] escape, not seclude, you know, try to escape from the confusion, the confusion will be bigger. You add one more confusion of escaping from it.

What you should do, you know, whether Zen Center is big or small, it is not problem. It is same thing, you know. If you have real practice here, even though we have many things to do, if you have real practice, it doesn't matter at all. But as we are very lazy [laughs], lazy animal [laughs], you know, if we have not much problem, we have not much spirit to practice zazen. But maybe to have-there is some advantage in our practice when we are big group. But on the other hand, we have

some disadvantage, you know, of losing ourself in the problems we have. How not to be lost in our problem is our practice.

I feel, you know, I have a lot of things to say, you know, on this point, but, you know, the foundation of our spirit, our practice, is here: to come to attain calmness of your mind or to have spirit to be here always. Wherever you are, the place you are is your zendo. Whatever you are doing, that is your practice.

Maybe even so, it is better for us to share our, you know, problems. And under some limitation, it is better to practice our way because for a beginner it is easier. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.] [Whatever your position may be] [1] ... [if?] you practice this practice, you will be worshipped [laughs] by all the people and all the deities in the heaven too. [Laughs.] But don't laugh at me [laughs, laughter]. I am not [laughs], you know [laughs], I am not talking something, you know, mysterious. Why I say so is because I cannot say, you know, we are the highest being and we human being knows every corner of the universe, you know [laughs]. So there may be some deity who are watching us, and he may say, "Oh, you are great. You are practicing [laughs] real practice. I worship you." [Laughs, laughter.] I am sure, you know, they will also respect you.

That kind of thing, you know-every day, if you carefully, you know, watch, you know, Zen Center, that kind of thing every day happening, you know. But you ignore it, that's all. No. You should not, you know, you shouldn't be caught by, you know, your own, you know, observation. So maybe even though you cannot trust a deity in the heaven [laughs], you must have some room, you know, to have some deity in the heaven. Even though you do not acknowledge it completely, but you must have some room for everything to exist, and your practice should be extended whatever it is, you know, where something exist. That much confidence you must have in your, you know, everyday practice.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: City Center transcript and handwritten notation on Side A label of the original cassette. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/16/00).

[1] Text in brackets is from a notation on the Side A label of the original tape.

## **7 - Buddha's Practice**

Saturday, February 20, 1971

Buddha's Practice  
Tassajara

Buddha's practice goes first. Our practice goes.

We say, "our practice," but it is actually Buddha's practice. We should know this point. This is the key point of our practice.

I don't know how many people want to practice zazen, but as long as their practice [is] involving personal practice, it is not true practice. If we practice selfish personal practice, it means that we are accumulating our karma more and more instead of releasing our previous karma.

Because of many bad choice--things you accumulated in previous life--you are right here and practicing under [Sotan Ryosen] Tatsugami-roshi. In spite of his difficult situation, Tatsugami-roshi is here.

Again, when Buddha's practice goes first, real practice will be ours.

The more you know what is practice, the greater your practice will become.

We must be very, very grateful to join this practice--day by day, moment after moment.

Sorry to disturb your practice.

Thank you.

---

Source: Original tape SR-71-02-20 transcribed by Bill Redican 9/12/99.

## **8 - Actual Feeling of True Practice**

Tuesday, February 23, 1971

Actual Feeling of True Practice  
Tassajara

It is more than six months [laughs] since- Is it working?

Student: Yes.

-since I came to Tassajara, and I was very much impressed, you know, of your practice at this time. And I am now thinking about, you know- not thinking about-but actual feeling I have now, you know, and some,

you know, prospect for the future-future life of Tassajara. I feel something right, and I want to talk, you know, a little bit about my feeling and my hope.

I don't know if you have actual feeling of true practice. I don't know, because, you know, why I say so is because I didn't know [laughs], you know, when I was practicing zazen. Even though I was practicing zazen when I was young, I didn't know exactly what it was. But although I had some feeling of practice, but, you know, it was pretty difficult to talk about the feeling I had. But now, you know, the feeling I had makes some sense right now for me, right now [laughs]. But at that time, it doesn't make much sense, although I had some feeling, and sometime I was very much impressed by our practice at Eihei-ji or some other monasteries. Or when I see some great teachers, listening to their teisho, I was very much impressed.

But it was difficult to organize that kind of experience-to put some order in those experience. Maybe because I wanted to put some order, you know, it was not possible. This way is to have full experience and to have full, you know, feeling in every practice. Then that is, you know, that was our way. But maybe it is true with you.

Why we couldn't satisfy our practice is one reason I didn't. I thought I did my best, but I didn't, you know [laughs], [make] enough effort for our practice. That is why. And another reason was because, you know, I wanted to put order, you know. People say "stepladder [laughs] stepladder Zen," you know. Actually, we are talking about, you know, enlightenment and practice is one, but still, you know, actually, my practice, at least, was stepladder practice, you know: "I understand this much, and next year," I thought, "I understand a little bit more, little bit more" [laughs]. That kind of, you know, practice doesn't make much sense. Maybe after you try, you know, stepladder [laughs] practice, you may realize, you know, that that was mistake.

This morning, you know, when [Sotan Ryosen] Tatsugami-roshi was, you know, giving dokusan when we are practicing zazen. I cannot explain you literally what he said, but, you know, our zazen is- If we don't, you know, feel some actual feeling of practice, some warm, you know, big satisfaction in your practice, that is not practice. Even though you sit, you know, with right posture, trying to have right posture, following your breathing, you know, and following all the instruction which was given to you, but maybe still, you know, it is, you know, empty [laughs] zazen.

Why it is empty zazen is you are just following instruction, you know, following form of, you know, practice. And you are following what the way you should do, even though you are counting, you know, you are not kind enough with yourself. That was the point of Tatsugami-roshi's saying this morning. You should be very kind, you know, with yourself. Not just count your breathing to, you know, to avoid your thinking mind,

but to take best care of your breathing, you know. There is big difference, you know. Even though you are following breathing, you know, just to follow your breathing doesn't make sense. If you, you know, if you are very kind with your breathing, then, one after another, you will have, you know, refreshed warm feeling in your zazen.

Perhaps, you know, we are not kind enough with ourselves, with our practice. We understand that our practice is, you know- Still we understand, you know, our practice by following some instruction. Or if you only follow the instruction given by some teacher, then you will have good zazen, but [laughs] it is not so. Why you have instruction is how you are able to be kind with yourself. That is, you know, purpose of instruction.

If you don't feel Buddha's mercy in instruction, and if you don't feel, you know, Buddha's mercy on your form and breathing, you know, and take care of your practice, then there is no warm feeling in it, and it is not, you know, well-satisfied zazen. You should be fully satisfied with your, you know, practice. Or you should be very kind with yourself. So, you know, when you are very kind with yourself, naturally you will, you know, feel satisfaction, you know.

A mother may take care of her children, you know, even though she has no idea of how to make her baby happy, you know. But still, what she is doing for his mother is to, you know, to make her laugh or to make [laughs] her baby, you know, happy, you know. In that way you take care of your posture and your breathing, you know. There should be some warm feeling in it. And when you have warm feeling in your practice, that is actual good example of great mercy of Buddha. If you practice, you know, this way, whether you are priest or monk or layman, you know, you have actual practice which will help your everyday life, which will be extended to your everyday life. When you do something, you take utmost care, you know, of what you do. Then you feel good, you know.

So we say, you know, you are, you know, rather something on or in what you do. For instance, you know, as Tozan Daishi said-Tozan Ryokai Daiocho, you know. You recite his name every morning. And Tatsugami-roshi bow, you know. When Tatsugami-roshi bow, all the patriarchs, you recite their name. And Tozan Ryokai Daiocho, he, you know, attained- It is difficult to say, you know, when he attained enlightenment [laughs]. So he [laughs] attained enlightenment so many times [laughs, laughter]. So we cannot say, you know, when. But when he was, you know, crossing river, he saw himself in the river and he said, "Don't," you know, "try to figure out what is you. If you try to figure out what is you, what you will understand will be far away from you. You will not have even image of yourself." Don't try to do so.

But you, actual you, are rather in the river. You may say that is just shadow or that is just, you know, reflection of yourself, not me. You

may say so. But if you carefully, you know, if you see it with warm-hearted, you know, feeling, that is you, you know. [Laughs.] You know, you think you are very warm-hearted [laughs], but when you, you know, try to understand how warm I am [laughs], even by temperature, you know [laughs], thermometer, you cannot measure your feeling actual. But when you take-see yourself in mirror or water with warm feeling, that is actually you. And whatever you do, you are there rather than here.

If this side of the monks are, you know, doing something, and the other side of the monks doing some other things, what [laughs] what Mañjushri is doing [laughs, laughter]? When you do something, there is Mañjushri, actually. Real you is there, you know. [Laughs.] You don't have to [laughs] seek for where is Mañjushri and what is he doing. If you actually, you know, [have] good practice in your everyday life, there is our practice, and there is Mañjushri, and there is true you, you know, real you. Don't say Mañjushri is here or there [points] or in the middle of the zendo. It is actually, you know, there when you do things with warm heart, by your warm-hearted mind. That is actual practice. That is how you take care of things. That is how you talk with people.

So there is many ways, you know, because some of you are priest, some of you are layman, and some of you are married priest and some [of] you are not married priest. But our practice is same, not different. Those who, you know, who are not monk and priest may, you know, may his own way, you know, to go. Those who are not married or who have already married, you know, they have their own way of extending our practice to everyday life. So although our situation is different, but, you know, practice is just one.

Mañjushri is actually one, but even though he is one, but [laughs] he is everywhere, you know, and with everyone, and with things what you do. Whatever practice you are involved in, there is Mañjushri. But secret is, you know, not to forget the true mercy of Buddha who takes care of everything. If we lose this point, you know, whatever you do, it doesn't make any sense.

Tatsugami-roshi put emphasis on warm heart, warm zazen. If you practice zazen, you will feel very warm. Even though it is cold, but you should feel some warm feeling in your practice. That is, you know- The warm feeling we have in our practice is, in other word, you know, enlightenment or Buddha's mercy, Buddha mind. It is not matter of just counting your breathing or, you know, following your breathing. Counting breathing is too too too, you know, tedious [laughs]. So maybe better just to follow [laughs] breathing. This is easier, you know, and less disturbance in our practice [laughs, laughter]. This is just [laughs, laughter]- Doesn't make any sense.

The point is, you know, one after another, inhaling and exhaling, you have to take care of, you know, the breathing in and out, just as a

mother may watch a baby, you know. If a baby smile, mother may smile [laughs]. If a baby cry, mother will worry. "Ohh" [laughs]. That kind of, you know, close relationship-to be one with your practice is the point. I'm not talking about anything, you know, new. Same old things [laughs, laughter], I am sorry. But I was very impressed, you know, this morning when he was, you know, giving you dokusan. I wish you could understand Japanese [laughs], but you don't. But I think you must have felt some feeling from his, you know, talk.

Various rules we have here, you know, maybe like some, you know, I think maybe like some, you know, machine gun looking glass [sighting scope] [laughs]. Do you know the machine gun looking glass, you know? There is many line on it, you know. It is easier to see something, you know, where the target is, you know [laughs]. And it is for the teacher, of course, you know [laughs, laughter], to- Of course it is so, but, you know, it is for the student too: to work on it, you know, to work on something more carefully, you know. When you want to work on something more carefully, naturally you will count, you know, and naturally you want to figure out how to work on it, you know. That is just, you know, relying on your machine-gun looking glass. I don't know how you call it, but they have it, you know. If you see the movie, you know [laughter], BOOM! [Laughs, laughter.] It goes in that way. And there you see, you know, the glass in that way.

It is just to help your practice, you know, for teacher, some [?], or students. It is not something actual, you know. Actual relationship between teacher and the student is this, you know: "Hi, how are you?" But this is, you know, too direct and too much, so we have to have looking glass and you [laughs]. Through it, we need something, you know, between us. If we are too close with each other we cannot see, but we can feel. But, you know, if we feel too much too close [claps hands together twice], it doesn't make any sense. We cannot help each other. So we need some distance, you know.

So the rules will give us some distance between teacher and disciple. So because of the distance, student may have some freedom in his activity, and teacher will find out how to help, you know, him. When you play something, you know, if you are too close, you cannot play game. Only when you have some distance between you, you can you play something, you know [laughs]. You have some freedom. If student do not have any freedom, you know, teacher cannot tell actually what he wants to do and what kind of, you know, instruction he need. Only when he see from distance, you know, teacher can help him. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

... something to restrict your freedom, rather to give you freedom to behave and to act in your own way. And teacher, without criticizing him, you know, and knowing him-knowing student what really they want to do or what kind of mistake they have, and teacher may help him more meaningful and helpful. It is, for instance, it is something, you know, to-



when you want to know whether this, you know, water is too much sugar or your coffee is too much sugar [laughs] or too little, you will stir it up, you know, or too strong or too weak. It is necessary to do something on, you know, coffee or on what you do. We should act on it, you know. That is rules. By rules we know what kind of experience you need or what kind of help you need.

The background or-our rules is based on, you know, also a warm, kind mind. So you are, you- It is not so important to follow the rules, you know, literal, but within the rules you should, you know, try hard. And sometime, if you don't feel so good, you should [laughs] try to break it [laughs, laughter]. You should do something like that. Oh no [laughs, laughter]. Then we will know, you know, what is wrong with him, you know [laughs, laughter]. Maybe his tongue is not so good, or today he lost his belt. That is also gives us some help, you know. So you are pretty free, you know, within our rules. But if you- So when you practice our way, you know, our rules are very very, you know, organized and very, you know- It doesn't, you know, words doesn't come up. Anyway, it is very good for students and for us.

That is actually Tassajara life. And that is why we make our rules [laughs] stricter and stricter, you know. Don't misunderstand us, you know. If your, you know, practice improves, you know, we have to have, you know, more-we have to know about your practice more, you know, carefully. So we must have very, you know, small, very fine, more lines on it anyway [laughs], so that we can measure exactly [laughs, laughter]. If your practice improve, more exact [laughs], you know, glass [crosshairs] is necessary.

You may think, you know, Tassajara became more and more rigid and, you know, strict. And what be-what will happen to us after all [laughs, laughter]? Nothing happens [laughs]. You are you-still you. You have big freedom, you know, but your practice will be improved a lot. And when your practice improve, you have good control over your everyday life. When you have good control of your desires and everyday life, then you will have, you know, big freedom from everything. That is, you know, goal of our practice for priest and for layman.

Ahhh. I don't think I have any more time.

Thank you very much.

And, yeah, you know. I have to go. I have to leave you this afternoon. Take care of your practice. Take good care [laughs] of practice and to be very kind with yourself.

Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 4/6/01.

## **9 - Maps and Trips**

Saturday, February 27, 1971

Maps and Trips

San Francisco

The purpose of our practice is, of course, to maybe to have full enlightenment. Why we cannot have enlightenment is because of our, you know, delusion or mumyo, [1] we say. Or-because we are not-we don't have clear picture of this world, or we do not have eyes to see, you know, clearly, to see clearly, or to have clear understanding of this world. That is, you know, so-called-it called mumyo. Mumyo is delusion. Mu is "no." Myo is "clear." "No clear light."

We are-maybe we are-we Buddhist or we student or someone, you know, who do not have clear eyes to see, you know, what is the true way-which way to go [laughs]. So naturally you are wondering about, you know, to find out some truth, or to have-because you are wondering about, so you want to have some clear map, you know, which way to go. And that is why you must have teacher who, you know, give you some map or some instruction or which way to go.

Even though you have map, if you have a map or, you know, and you have teacher, there is still, you know, difficulty in your practice. The difficulty may be, you know, you have no-if you have-if you-as long as you trust your teacher, you know, you don't have to worry about the way, you know, you take. But because you have, you know, no worry, you know, you, you know, you are liable to, you know, to see something else, you know, because you have-you don't have to, you know, try to find out which way you should take. So you just follow [laughs] your teacher. When he goes fast, you go fast, and when he goes slow, you go slow.

You know, maybe teacher will be like your driver, you know. Because you have, you know-you don't have to worry about driving [laughs], so you see something [laughs], you know, outside of the car, and you will be easily caught by [laughs] something. Or, "Let's have a cup of tea [laughs], a cup of coffee. Let's stay here for two or three days [laughs]." So, you know, teacher, you know, must have accommodate [laughs] with your request, and in that way you will waste your time, you know. Instead of, you know, trying to-asking your way to take, you know, someone else, you will, you know, stop at the coffee shop and having coffee-more than you need [laughs]. That is a trouble you may have. And even though, you know, in that way, eventually you will arrive at, you know, the goal or city you want to go.

But, you know, but sometime you will lose your driver, you know, because it takes too long time to go-to arrive at that city, and if he is

very old, he may die [laughs, laughter] before [laughs] you arrive at the city you want go. So naturally you should find out another driver [laughs]. But you have some advantage, you know, because you came, you know, already so far. So someone who, you know, find you, you know, will be very sympathetic with you, or [say], "You are very close to that city you want to go, so maybe I will take you to that city," you know. You will find out the advantage is, maybe, it is easy for you to find out someone who may, you know, drive you to the city. That is one advantage.

Ahhh.

But, you know, I think, you know, you will miss, you know, the driver, you know. After [laughs] he is no more, you know, you will miss him a lot. And there you have some advantage too, you know. Because you miss him, you will try hard, you know, next time-this time, you know, not to waste your time [laughs]. You know, if he dies, you know [laughs], you must find out another driver, so you will not waste your time and you will not disturb your driver anymore [laughs], saying, "Let's [laughs] stop here," you know. And especially you don't know how far it is city, you know, you want to go, so naturally this time you will, you know, you will not disturb the driver. That is the advantage.

But if you cannot find out a driver, anyway asking your way, you will, you know, make a trip on foot, you know. And maybe someone who has big confidence in himself [will say]: "Yes, I am strong enough. I can walk by myself," you know. But at that time the difficulty will be, you know, even though you actually arrive at the city, you know, you don't know [laughs], so you still wondering about, you know, where [laughs] to go [laughs]. You are actually in the city, but you don't know that is the city, you know. You will arrive eventually, at last. That is a trouble, you know.

Or another trouble maybe, you know, before you arrive [at] the real city, you know, you will think, "This is the city [laughs] which I wanted to go! This is the city." But that is not the city, you know. But when-before you arrive at real city, you think this is your city. That is another trouble. I think many people have this problem. The problem is to have right teacher, is to have good driver is a trouble, and not to, you know, disturb your driver, you know, is very difficult. Not to waste your time with your teacher is another difficulty, and, you know, to think you attained enlightenment before, you know, you attain enlightenment is another difficulty. Even though you have enlightenment, you know, you don't know, you know, that you have-you obtain enlightenment in your practice. That is another difficulty for us. In Japanese we have technical term, you know, for those difficulties.

Excuse me [sips water].

So best thing, you know, best thing is to have, you know, a good map. I

mean by "good map" a clear understanding of our practice, even though to understand teaching does not mean you have enlightenment, you know, does not mean so. That is just intellectual understanding, you know, but, you know, that is just, you know, picture or map. And map is necessary, and you should know and you should know how to read your map and at least, you know, what kind of spirit is necessary, you know, when you have good driver. And, you know, if you have some experience of driving car, you know [laughs], you will not disturb your driver so much, so some experience or some idea of driving car will help.

This morning I want to talk about this point little bit, you know: the idea of, you know, driving your car. Our way, you know, is, you know, "way-seeking mind" we say, you know. Way-seeking mind is, you know, the understanding of how to drive. Way-seeking mind. Way-seeking mind is very difficult, maybe, you know, for you, although it is not so complicated thing. It is quite simple, but actually, to have it may be difficult. When we, you know, make trip-why you make trip is to go to some beautiful city or sight-seeing place. For instance, you know, it is-the way-seeking mind is lit [?]-and your desire to make trip, you know, is quite different thing [laughs]. Your desire. Your desire, you know. And, you know, to know this point is very important. To know this point-if you know this point, you can, you know, you have direction, you know, in your trip. You know which way to go, anyway.

Kitano-zenji-you know, when I was at the monastery, Eihei-ji Monastery, Kitano-zenji[2] was the archbishop of the Eihei-ji Monastery. When he was young, you know, he was making trip, takuhatsu. And when he reach to the, you know-he was an inveterate smoker [laughs], you know, and when he reached to the, you know, top of the pass, you know, and he took a rest there, sitting on a stone, and, you know, take out cigarettes or I don't know what it was, but-took out his pipe. And seeing the, you know, down, you know, he will arrive on that evening, you know, he took a cigarette. And it was wonderful, you know [laughs]. It was so wonderful, you know, to have a, you know, puff, you know.

So, you know, so it was so wonderful that he gave up. He stopped smoking at that time [laughs]. How about that [laughs, laughter]? You know, it must be, you know, foggy, you know. Through mist, you know, he could see the town. And he thought it may not be so difficult to, you know, arrive at that city, and so he must kill his time little bit more, and he was smoking. It was so nice that he stopped smoking. He knew, you know, what is, you know, real desire or what is desire exactly.

[Laughs.] This is another, maybe, story. I think here in San Francisco you don't have so [such] cold weather. At Tassajara, maybe, it is pretty cold, but in wintertime when you have a lot of snow, in wintertime you will have, you know, "frostbite?" or, you know, frostbite. Before spring come, you know, it will become very itchy [laughs]. You will scratch [scratches himself], you know. And there is, you know-I think there will

be no more agreeable thing than to scratch your [laughs] itchy, you know, frostbites. This is the time of the year when we scratch, you know [laughs], frostbite. So you will do, you know, and more you do it, more the frostbite become itchy [laughs, laughter], and you cannot stop it. You know, you know, that is not so healthy, you know, thing to scratch it. And you know this is not wholesome, you know, condition of your skin. So no one try to be, to, you know, to have more frostbites [laughs]. No one want to have it, you know.

He knows, you know-Kitano-zenji knows this is not so very good [laughs], but, you know, it is not something, you know, he should desire so much, you know, he should attach so much, like, you know, like frostbite. So he didn't-no one try to have more snow-frostbite, but many people will be interested in that kind of joy or agreeable feeling, you know.

Because others have [?] [laughs], you cannot make good-quick trip, you know, fast trip to the goal-to the city you want to go. You know, you know, we shouldn't stop so long, but you will stop there. If you demand-if you ask driver, you know, "Let's," you know, "stop here," then driver, you know, knowing that this is just to kill time-waste of time-he may be annoyed. Or he may be sometime very sympathetic with you, you know. "Oh, okay," he may say [laughs], but he is not so happy.

So in that way, you know, but if you know, you know, if you only know you shouldn't scratch your frost bite so much, you know, you should know what kind of desire is, you know, will help you, you know, and how much desire you should have, you know. And naturally you will have control over it, as you don't scratch your frostbite so much. And it seems to me that it is very difficult for you not to scratch [laughs] frostbite. This is, you know, vital, you know, this is, you know, very big problem for us, this point. Even though you think you are striving for attaining enlightenment, actually you are sometime you are scratching [laughs], you know, frostbite.

That is, according to Buddha, that is to refrain from your desire. To refrain from your desire. Refrain from your desire. But it is not because, you know, desire, you-not because desire is bad, so you shouldn't have desire. It doesn't mean that. But to have right practice on your desire is the true practice. Desire itself will create, you know, if you let them, you know, alone, if you let them go, you know, without control over it, it will create you various karma, you know, and you will suffer from the karma. And so even though you think you are, you know, [doing a] religious practice, but unless you not notice this point, you will, you know, by religion, you will create another karma, you know.

To study Buddhism is to create karma [laughs, laughter]. [Sentence completed. Tape turned.] ... on the desire. But even though he gave up smoking, he has desire as long as he is alive, you know. But he knows how to treat his desire, that's all.

[Laughs.] Do you understand this point? I want you to understand this point very well, very clearly, before you make your trip. [Laughs.] Are you sure about this point? It is very foolish of you not to notice this point, very foolish, you know [laughs]. I am not talking about something, you know, difficult. To know this point is very difficult. Maybe to give up smoking is difficult. I know that. But to know this point cannot be so difficult, you know. If you only know this point, I don't say give up, but if you know this point, you know, you will know how to treat yourself. Even though it is difficult you will know that.

So it is easy to follow, you know, our practice, but if you don't know this point, whatever, you know, rules you have to help your practice, you know, you will, you know, you cannot follow it, you know. You don't like to follow it. Our rules is provided not from the standpoint of your, you know, wild desires. It is provided, you know, from standpoint of the enlightened person, enlightenment experience. So, but your understanding of our rules is, you know, from the viewpoint of wild-, you know, open desires: "freedom" and so on. It doesn't make any sense. [Laughs.] Don't you think so? You are just want to scratch your [laughs, laughter] frostbite-that is your freedom. It doesn't make any sense. If your mother said, "Don't do that," you will fight with her [laughs, laughter], that's all. That is what most people are doing, you know. Understanding of the rules. But our rules is not, you know, something like that. Our rules is, you know-we call it "pure rule," or "enlightened rules."

So if-it is the map to go to the city. It is, you know, to help your practice, you know, we have rules or we have maps, and you have driver. If you always, you know, demand your teacher to have more, you know, pleasure, [it is] only a trip. Doesn't, you know-that is big problem. But it is not-as we have, you know, desires, so it is not necessary to be too strict with it, you know. Maybe if you ask too many things, you know, [laughs] maybe your mother will [be] angry with [laughs] you. But what mother want to do is just, you know, just to make you come, that is all. If you do not drink anything, you know, she will worry, you know. "Don't drink so much," she may say, but, you know, if you doesn't drink at all, she may worry. So it is not necessary to be so strict, but you should know the point. And you should have right attitude, and you should, you know, be cooperative rather than disturbing, you know, your teacher. Okay? [Laughs, laughter.]

I won't saying, you know, because of me, but because I want to help you, you know, I am saying this point. It is very easy thing, you know, to understand and to do, and you can trust my words on this point [laughs]. I don't know when I say something very, you know, fancy [laughs, laughter]. I don't know. But I am very straightforward, you know. I have many experiences like this, you know. And you will enjoy, you know, your understanding of your desires, and naturally you will have good practice, and that good practice will help your, you know,

everyday problem.

Here in this zendo, you know, we-our way is the so-called-it Soto way, you know, Soto way, not Rinzai way [laughs]. But "Soto way" we say, but actually, you know, our way is nothing but, you know, how to get rid of our confusion and our trouble from our life. So we, you know-Soto way put more emphasis on zazen. Zazen, zazen, zazen [laughs]. And what zazen means to you is to have, you know, to be yourself, you know. How to be yourself is, you know, how to treat yourself, you know, including various desires. How to treat yourself. How to treat your painful legs, you know, how to have good posture, how to make your smooth, good breathing.

When you, you know, really, when you take care of yourself, you know, then you will have mother-like mind, you know. You will not say-you will always say to yourself, "Oh, don't eat too much" [laughs], you know, because you are always taking care of yourself, like in your zazen, you know: always trying to take of yourself. When you become angry, you may say, "Oh, don't be angry so much." Or you may, but [laughs] it will not help, you know. You will treat your anger in that way.

That is how you treat yourself in your zazen. If you, you know, shout, "Don't do that!" you know, [laughs]. In zazen you cannot say so, you know. So naturally [laughs], you will, you know, because-even though you are angry [laughs], you will be like this [laughs], without saying, you know [laughs], "Don't be angry!" That is how you treat your anger [laughs]. So naturally, eventually anger will go, you know. You will not be so indignant about any special things. You will be tired. Actually, you have no time [laughs] to be angry. That is how you, you know, take care of yourself.

And if you become boss of yourself, include desires, then you will be a boss of everything, you know. Your practice include everything. The way you treat yourself is the way you treat, you know, your friend, the way you live in this society. You will not create any problem, but you will not even try to help others, but, you know, you are actually helping others in that way. And it is very difficult for almost all the people to be like that, you know. If, you know, you, you know, are like that, it will be good example for others, and others will follow your example. They will not recognize you, but they may feel very good to be around you.

So what you learn by Soto way is, you know, how you treat yourself, you know, and how you live in this world without creating karma for you and for others. You ignore the, you know, idea of karma. Mostly it seems to me, you know, you ignore, you, you know [laughs, laughter], you don't want to see your karma, even though you are creating a lot of karma, one after another, you know, one over [laughs] another. But you try to ignore it. But who will suffer from the karma? You yourself karma. No one else will suffer from it. And you cannot ignore the truth of cause and effect, you know. If you do something, if you create some karma

because of no controlling practice over your karma, the result will come, you know. [Laughs.] You cannot escape from the law of karma. How you, you know, make your bad karma into good one is also power of practice. When you create bad karma, because of your good practice, bad karma will change its direction. It will not vanish, you know. Once you create karma, karma is there, always with you, but that karma will change its direction. Karma is not good or bad. But, you know, when you work on karma, it will be a good karma, and when you don't, you know, the karma will create various karma on you because you don't know how to treat yourself, how to treat your karma.

This point should be, you know, realized. Perhaps you don't want to hear [laughs] this part, but this is also true, you know. It is not so fancy Buddhist, you know, teaching. It is very very clear teaching. You know, no one can ignore this truth. Your foolish effort will try to ignore it, but it will never work.

If you force too much, you know, you will invite destruction. It is, you know, worse than war. We are actually, you know, creating war through everyday activity. You talk about peace in some angry, you know, mood [laughter, laughs]. Actually you are creating, you know, war with angry mood. Rhhh, rhhh! [Laughs.] That is war, you know.

We should know. We should open our, you know, dharma eyes, you know, and we should know the map, you know, once again, once more. And we should help together forever.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shohaku Okumura-sensei. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/15/00).

[1] mumyo (Jap.): ignorant; dark; lightless; spiritual darkness; ignorance of the true nature of existence.

[2] Kitano Daiko Genpo (1862-1932 or 1842-1933): 67th abbot of Eihei-ji.

## **1971 maart (3)**

### **1 - The Idea of Self**

Tuesday, March 02, 1971

The Idea of Self



San Francisco

There are various kinds of religion, but why we have to [have] religion- this question is answered not only by religious leaders but also by psychologist. So the understanding of religion nowadays become more and more deeper. And I think- I don't know not much about psychology, nowadays psychology, but so far I understand, as you know, just as purpose of religion is to save [solve] our difficulties, the psychologist is working hard to save or to solve the problems of our life.

Why we have, you know, so many problems in our life is, you know, because of, you know, our social structure, which is not so good, or human relationship, you know, which is not also good. So that is why we have difficulties, and if the difficulties become too much, it will result [in] a nervous breakdown or some mental, you know, disorder.

But why we have this kind of, you know, problem in our society or in our individual life is, according to Buddhism, our problems is based on, you know, our structure of, you know, way we live, you know. The foundation is something wrong [laughs]. Our way of living is something wrong. That is so-called-it "leakage," you know, leakage. Or you may call it "break" or you don't say "breakage" [laughs], but maybe, you know, something like that. Something is wrong with our fundamental framework of life, you know. Something is wrong. This point is already pointed out by Buddha. What is wrong is, you know, according to Buddha, because we have various desires, you know. But that desires are limitless, you know, as well as Buddha's teaching [laughs]. It is limitless, you know: no limit in our desires. But actually the things which will satisfy our desire is not limitless, you know. It is limited. So there is already, you know, big gap between your desire and things which will suffice your desire. Even so, our way of life is, you know, based on our desires: to, you know, to have complete satisfaction of our desire, which is not possible.

And sometime you may, you know, choose some desire out of many desires, forgetting the rest of the desires, you know. You will choose one desire. That is what you will say to your girlfriend [laughs]: "I don't care anything [for anyone] but you." [Laughs.] It means that you gave up, you know, the rest of the desire and, you know, you try to satisfy only one desire-"to have you."

But it looks-it looks, you know-that is, maybe, by choosing one desires from out of many, you can think it is possible to satisfy your desire, but you will find out, you know, the nature of desire, you know. Even though you choose one out of many, that one desire is limitless [laughs]-no end-until you lose yourself in the desire.

And that is, you know, why we suffer, you know, as Buddha pointed out. Same thing is true with modern, you know, psychology or psychoanalysis-especially psychoanalysis based on existentialism, you

know. According to them-modern psychologists-you know, the problem we have in our life is, you know, not because of something, you know, outside, you know, some object of desires, but based on, you know, your, you know, fundamental framework of life, you know. Something is some-you know, something wrong with it. What is wrong with it is in whatever way you seek for something, you know, you think things exist, you know, outside of yourself, not within yourself or not in relationship between you and things.

The way, you know, things exist is not in the way something exist independent from you. Or you do not exist, you know, in some way quite independent from your surrounding. So what actually exist is not you or not things, but some, you know, actual existence, you know, which is in the realm of relationship between you and surrounding. So as long as you think you-something exist outside, and you exist in spite of, you know, many things, you know, related with you, [and] you exist independent from them, then you have-you cannot get out of the difficulties.

Usually, I think, our-when we have difficulty in actual life, not in Zen Center [laughs], in actual life [laughs], in city life, maybe [laughs, laughter], you try hard, you know, in your own way, to have good relationship with people and, you know, and to get some money, you know. And to have good relationship with your family [laughs]. Even you do so, you know, it is, as you must have experienced, it is not so easy [laughs]. You have always difficulties.

You have, you know, so naturally you will, you know, give up, you know-not forever, but for a time-and you will find out some retreat, you know, like Zen Center [laughs]. That is why you come to Zen Center-some of them-because of this reason, come to Zen Center-and shut yourself up from the, you know, city life. And usually what-you know, usual people, you know, what usual people may do is, you know, shutting up themselves from the world and thinking hard to find out some, you know, good way. And when you feel you have some confidence in your, you know, way, you will go out to the city and work again, but still it is difficult. While you are repeating this kind of thing, you will be entrenched, you know, in some, you know, some line of thought or some idea, you know, of difficulty, and you will lose your confidence in yourself. That is, you know, how usual person is doing.

But here in Zen Center what you are doing should be different from this kind of, you know, shutting out yourself from world. But to find out, you know, quite different attitude to work on this kind of difficulties which you think, you know, exist, you know, outside of yourself. But in zazen practice, as you must have experienced, the way you take care of yourself, you know, is-should be the way [you] take care of your kitchen and your room and Zen Center. And this, you know-in this way you have more subjectivity and you have more subjective attitude towards, you know, your surrounding and taking care of your, you know, your

surrounding or things around you. You will learn how to be boss of your surrounding, and instead of being drugged [dragged?] by things, you know, you will, you know, work on your surrounding. Then, you know, your circumstances will be quite different. This is, you know, actually how we work on our life.

And if we, you know, if we want to explain this kind of practice more carefully, you know, or more maybe fancy scholarly way, maybe [laughs, laughter], which I cannot do it so well, but, the things, you know, as we always, you know, repeating, do not exist, you know, without you, you know. Because you are here, things exist. If you were not here, things does not exist, you know. Maybe you may say even though you are not here, things-this building will exist. Even though you die, this building will exist. This kind of, you know, argument, is, according to Buddha, it is useless [laughs]-useless argument which will not help you so much, you know.

You have difficulties, you know, in your life which is, you know, which is consist of you and your surrounding. The problem only arise between you and your surrounding, which is directly [laughs] something to do with you [laughs]. You don't mind what kind [laughs] of things Japanese people [are] doing in Japan. You don't mind [laughs]. But you will mind what I will do or what your husband will do or what will your wife do in everyday life or your neighbors will do. That is actually our life. And when you think, "Even though I am not here," you know, you are not here, "things exist," that is, you know, that-if you think in that way, that will create more problem [laughs] to you. So you must take care of, you know, things which you are related directly, and more and more you should extend this kind of activity, you know, to more things. We should live in reality, not in delusion. We call it delusion, you know.

And, you know, we think-you may think, you know-you may worry about your future, you know. "Your future," you say, that is, but your future is, you know, something, you know, some situation you project, you know. Your-things you have right now around you, you project something to the future, and you become afraid of it, you know. And because you have some difficulty now, you think in your future you will have same difficulty. This is, you know, fear.

But actually that kind of a fear does not-is a illusion, you know, because it is something which you project, you know, to the future. And, you know, magic is here [laughs]. You have various material, you know, here with you, and you project what you have in [to the] future. And you become afraid of it, and you are confused, as you are confused right now. So point is, you know, how to, you know, solve-how to take care of your surrounding, you know, before you become afraid of, you know, your future.

You say you have such-and-such difficulties when you were young, you know. You know, psychoanalysts may say because your mother was

very, you know, strict with you, that is why [laughs] you have, you know, difficulty in adapting yourself [to] your surrounding. Because of the fear you had, you know, your mind does not, you know, work properly right now. But that is, you know-even though you talk about past, you know, difficulties, it doesn't help. All the result is now, right now here. So to work on, you know, your problem right now is the best remedy. That is according to Buddha, you know. If you [are] shot by poison arrow, you know, you shouldn't talk about what poison it will be [laughs]. To pull out the arrow is the way, you know. Same thing is, you know, true with modern psychoanalysis, you know. And it is-I was amazed by what they say, you know [laughs, laughter]. They teaches me what is Buddhism [laughs].

Instead of, you know-when you have difficulties, you know, with your friend, for an instance, what you should do, you know, fundamentally, you know, in conclusion, what you should do is not to be, you know, enslaved by your circumstances but to go beyond the idea of self or to give up the idea of self. And, you know, that is the only way to get rid of all the source of difficulties. And they say that is, you know, how to get rid of the idea of self, you know, maybe by religious practice [laughs]. They say so. Only by religious practice you will get rid of idea of self.

As long as you stick to the idea of self, you will be enslaved by your surrounding, and instead of being boss of everything, you will be enslaved by them. Because we have self, according to them, you know, we seek for some possibility or-not "some possibility"-you seek for something good, you know, for yourself because you are here. So you seek for something good. But something good, according to them again, something good is, you know, is in the realm of good and bad, you know, and it is in realm of possibility, you know. The possibility means possibility of being good and possibility of being bad, you know. If you drive a car, there is two possibility: to have accident [laughs], to arrive at Monterey, you know, safely. There is two possibility [laughs]. As long as you are going to Monterey, you know, another possibility of accident is follows always with you.

But that possibility is not, you know, on the freeway. It is on your side, you know. To seek for something completely, you know, something good, completely indifferent from something bad [laughs], that is not possible [laughs] to have it, you know. Most of time you will arrive at Monterey without accident, but no one knows, you know, when you are driving, you know, if you [will] have accident or not. No one knows. Case by case, if you want to, you know-you may be, you know, one case out of thousands, you know [laughs], so no one knows.

But you seek for, you know, something good. That is, you know, altogether wrong, you know, way of seeking-way of having to get rid of uneasiness from your life. When you, you know, you know what you are doing exactly, you know, there you have chance to practice our way quite seriously, you know, to have more positive way, you know, in your

life. How you have positive way in your life is, you know, instead of, you know, pushing yourself, you know, you should forget yourself, you should, you know, you should get rid of the root of the trouble, which is "you"-idea of "you" [laughs]. That is the root of the trouble. Because of the idea of "you," you know, because you stick to the idea of you, you have to choose something which is impossible to have.

And, you know, so far, various, you know, religion has been helping us. But if we come to this point, you know, not many religion can help, you know. The most religion will encourage your [laughs] idea of self. Maybe most religion, you know, will. Christianity is not. They don't. They say something: "You cannot add one more feet over your head," or something like that, you know. But most religion, you know, encourage you to, you know, pull more [laughs], to make your hands one feet longer, you know, to reach for something or to make yourself higher one feet to reach for something. If they believe in something, you will have more power or more ability. So that you will have more power or more ability, you know, you believe in the teaching they give you. But that is not, you know-that will not help. That will encourage your problems.

But [the] only way, you know, is to get rid of the idea of self. And here, you know, if I say so, "That is not possible," I'm sure you will say so. "That is not possible," you may say. [Laughs.] But it is possible [laughs]. Someone may say, "If you get rid of idea of self, you know, what will happen to you?" [Laughs.] You will be very lonely, you know [laughs for rest of sentence], without any idea of self. If the purpose of practice is to get rid of idea of self [laughs], you know, what will happen after you attain enlightenment [laughs]? Maybe all the people get enlightenment, you know, attain enlightenment. It may be okay [laughs], but I don't want to attain enlightenment [laughs], giving up myself, you know [laughs], to make other people happy [laughs]. "Oh no," you may say [laughs]. But, you know, it is not so. That is why, you know, Buddha, you know, had difficult time [laughs] to provide some way, you know, for people to get rid of this kind of idea.

Hmm.

Do you [laughs]-do you have some answer for that question? [Laughs.] What is our way, then, you know? How do you get rid of idea of self is the point. Of course, you cannot do it all at once. But there is a way to get rid of idea of self. [Drinks water. Says "Ahh" audibly. Puts cup down with an audible sound. Laughs, laughter.] Maybe I have [takes a sip of water]-if I start to talk about, you know, I don't feel, you know, so good. Before I tell you to have a cup of water, it is very good [laughs]. I feel I have some secret [laughs, laughter]. If I tell you, "Oh, that is what Roshi is talking [about] all the time," [laughs], and you may be discouraged. So maybe better not to tell you [laughs, laughter]. Ahh. [Laughter.] Everything is written on this paper [lecture notes?] [laughs, laughter]. I am selling you, you know, snake oil now [laughs, laughter]. Hai. [Laughs, laughter.]

Hmm. Ahh. [Laughs, laughter.] I haven't talk one hour yet, you know. So I must continue, maybe [laughs, laughter]. Do you have some question [laughs, laughter]? Yeah, please ask some question, you know. Hai.

Student A: I have an answer to that one on how to get out of self-concern for self-and I think it's concentration on truth and love. Those two things will get you right out of your self, I think.

Suzuki-roshi: Ahh-what?

Student A: Concentration on truth. In other words, any time you hear anything that you think isn't perfectly in agreement with how you yourself have thought about it, then you say what you think.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: You risk your-you don't care what they think about you because you're speaking the truth.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Student A: And love. Those two things. And an extreme concentration on both, I think, will get you out of yourself.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Yeah. After you have good practice [laughs, laughter]. And another side of it, you know-how you have good practice, you know. That is the other side of the answer, you know. When you are well-concentrated, you know, on what you do and on what is happening here-not you or me-but, you know, what is happening in the realm of possibility. If you best take care of things, you know, in realm of possibility, that is only one way. There, you know, small "I" is not there. Some object is not there. What exist there is not something on the mirror, you know, or, you know, is not something-it is something on the mirror but not mirror or not you, you know. You are in the mirror, actually. You see? In the mirror. You are watching yourself in the mirror, but that "you" is not you, you see, and not mirror. What is it [laughs]? That is true reality. That is something which I talked about the other day, you know. "You" in the mirror-in the river. You see yourself-Tozan [Ryokai] saw himself in the mirror-in the water. That is something real: not himself, you know, not water, but real self.

If something bad happens, you know, happens to you, but you should know the other side of it is good [laughs], you know. When you say, "This is good or bad," already you say so, but things itself is not good or bad, you know. So you shouldn't be bothered by it. Something bad happens? It is okay, you know. It appeared in that way. How you have this kind of actual understanding of life is how you practice zazen. In your practice you don't hear, but sound comes, you know, to your ear,

and your ear and something, you know, create something new here [hear?]. That's all. To understand in that way, you know, is to be-to go beyond you and things, you know. That is real love, you know. But when you carelessly say, "Love others," you know, in that case there may be, you know, some danger, you know, because you feel you love others, you know. But in real love there is no idea of or feeling of loving anyone else, you know. [Tape turned.]

... [through practice] [1] ... you know, experience, and you cannot even take hold of it, you know. You cannot understand yourself even [laughs], but real "you" is there. That's all.

Student B: Is it possible to make a mistake in some way?

Suzuki-roshi: Actually there is no mistake, you know, in our life. Whatever you do, it is not mistake [laughs]. But when I say there's no such thing like mistake, when I say so, you know, I am saying it, you know, in the viewpoint of our real practice. So in usual sense there is, of course, mistake, you know. But even though you make mistake, you don't have to, you know, have to worry about it too much. You must be, you know, free from it, and you must, you know, instead of being worried by it you should, you know, work on the result of your mistake, which is present [taps with hand or finger] right here.

Student B: The reason why you wouldn't call it a mistake is because like it's a step up the evolutionary ladder, and you learn from it, so it is really good. That's how I look at that. I mean, I don't have to worry about the good and bad of an act. I look at it like it's a test of you, so that you don't say, "Oh, that's a terrible thing that happened to me." Instead it was a testing situation. You were just tested. How did you come out of it?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Testing. Yeah. Maybe, yeah. To live on this moment is, anyhow, you know, important. Or else somehow you will create some confusion and distress. Hai.

Student B: When I-when I sit, I'm also-it's the same situation all the time.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm.

Student B: When I get close to doing something without watching myself, when I get close to being balanced and just breathing and sitting, just before I seem to catch myself and say, "Oh! Now this may be as close to zazen."

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm.

Student B: And I've lost it. And I-I keep stopping myself. And I don't know what I'm afraid of or why I do that, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: You-

Student B: I couldn't get beyond it.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh, I couldn't follow you so well. Uh-huh? You-

Student B: My thinking mind won't-I feel like I'm controlled by it. And the minute that it begins to lose its control, and I just feel myself sitting just for half a second, and I'm just breathing and sitting and-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: -that's all that's happening. The minute that that begins to happen, I begin to think about it again. And I watch it. And then I'm no longer sitting. I'm thinking about it.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: And, and-seems like my thinking mind is so strong.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.]

Student B: I-I'm afraid, I think, to stop thinking that way because I hold on to it. I don't know how to-

Suzuki-roshi: Ohhh. I see. Stop, yeah. I am not saying to stop your thinking, you know. To think is okay.

Student B: I don't mean I'm trying to stop it. I mean that, uh-

Suzuki-roshi: Naturally you stop it, or intuitively, or-

Student B: I'm afraid of stopping. I continue it. I'm holding it.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I see. You are afraid of stopping it, and you want to continue it.

Student B: Yeah, but I also don't want to [laughs, laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: But it goes. Thinking mind goes even though you don't try to stop it or try to continue it. It goes. Is that what you mean?

Student B: Yeah, but I go with it is the problem [laughter]. I guess I can't [1-2 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing.] How you go with it. "You go with it" is pretty good, you know [laughs, laughter]. "You go with it." You follow, you know, with it, so thinking mind is going, not you, you know. And thinking mind is stronger and "you" is weaker, you know. I think so.



Isn't that so? So if-and if you are not, you know-soon, I think, you will not be afraid of, you know, going with it or afraid of stopping it, you know. You will just follow your thinking mind without being afraid of it or without trying to stop it. Then your, you know, your ego is very weak, you know, and thinking mind is so-called-it, you know, "think non-thinking." Dogen says, you know, "Think non-thinking." Non-thinking is pure thinking. Think-

Student B: Without any direction?

Suzuki-roshi: Without any direction. Follow. Then, you know, what is happening there is-cannot make any harm to you, you know, and rather it will help you.

Student B: But I'm afraid of that.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm?

Student B: I'm afraid of that.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Don't-yeah-that is, you know, that is, you know, it is some evidence that your practice is involved in some, you know, some usual practice, you know, of, you know, doing something. Our practice is just sit. Let everything happen on you. That is, you know, looks like very difficult thing, but there is no other way to get rid of the root of the problem. And how you do it is to take care of yourself, you know, to take care of your breathing and thinking mind, we say, but, you know, if you do not reject it, or if you do not want to stop it with warm feeling, if you follow it, you know, if you are very kind with your thinking mind, then there is not much ego-as if you take care of your, you know, friend or children. You see? Thinking mind at that time is like a children [laughs] running around you, you know. "Ohhh [laughs], be careful!" [Laughs, laughter.] You know, that is the way. There is no-when you practice in that way there is no "you" anymore. That is the secret of, you know, to go beyond self-centered practice.

Nine o'clock [laughs]. Maybe one more question [laughs]. Hai.

Student C: Is it possible that it isn't because we are afraid of-because it seems we are not used to the experience of experiencing ourselves as one whole thing? It happens in a blink of an eyelash, that you are absolutely still and absolutely in one piece. They're not used to that.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: If you can that aspect of [10-15 words unclear] that you extend the time, I think, that it is possible to be like that.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: It comes upon you while you are doing zazen. All of a sudden [2-5 words] some idea of what zazen is about. But it doesn't stay with you, as she said.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: It stays for a second or for a few seconds. So it's a model of how you feel, I think.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Not only-our practice is not just sitting, you know. Way we eat, way we walk, you know, is a, you know, practice too. So if you walk or if you eat the way we eat, you know, then more and more you will have that kind of mind, you know. That is why we have-we practice tea ceremony, you know. Tea ceremony is established by Rikyu.[2] Rikyu? And, you know, because of his lord-his lord who is very impatient person, you know, and who did not like him so much, but he was his lord, so he has to offer tea, you know, always. But with perfect calmness of his mind, he, you know, made tea and offered [it to] his lord. When he does this, you know, he-in Japanese, we say suki no nai.[3] Suki no nai, you know, means his lord has no chance to, you know, kill him. With his complete calmness of mind, he is ready to [for] anything which will happen to him [laughs]. Complete calmness of his mind. But at last, you know, he killed himself, but tea ceremony was established by him [laughs]. If you act like he act, you know, you will feel his spirit.

So our zazen practice-not only zazen practice, but also meal practice or rituals is provided in that way originally. But nowadays, I don't know [laughs] so well. So if it is difficult for you to practice sitting zazen, you can study tea ceremony, you know.

Some student who was taking movie of tea ceremony invited me, you know, and asked me to explain what kind of, you know, action is Zen and what kind of action is not Zen. "Tell me," [laughs] he said. But all from the beginning to end, you know, what they do is supposed to be, you know, Zen-Zen practice. Not this part or that part. From beginning to end it should be zazen practice. So whether they know what is Zen or not, if they do it, you know, he will eventually, you know, find out what is Zen through action.

Thank you very much.

-----

Sources: City Center transcript and note on original tape case. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese phrase by Shohaku Okumura-sensei. Transcript made verbatim by Bill Redican 3/30/01.

[1] The text in brackets is from a note on the original tape case (not on tape).

[2] Sen Soeki Rikyu (1522-1591) is credited with developing the Way of Tea in Japan. He served as tea master to the shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), who eventually ordered Rikyu to commit seppuku.

[3] suki ganai (Jap.): suki = unguarded moment, flaw, space, or room; no = of (possessive); nai = no. Hence, to be always on alert; to be thoroughly guarded.

## **2 - Admonishing Our Many Wishes**

Tuesday, March 09, 1971

"Admonishing Our Many Wishes"

San Francisco

One day a Chinese famous Zen master was making a trip with a-with his disciple.[1] A [flock of] geese, you know, fly-were flying over-passed, you know, over their head, like this [probably gestures].

And disciple [teacher] said, "Where are they going?" or "What are they?"-oh-teacher said, "What are they?"

The disciple said, "They are geese."

"Where they are going?" [laughs] the teacher asked.

Disciple say, "I don't know," disciple said quite honestly because he didn't know [laughs].

Disciple [teacher] twisted his disciple's nose, like this [laughs, probably gestures].

As a disciple of Buddha, we should know what we are doing, you know, especially, you know, when we, you know, we are with his teacher, you know [laughs]. We should extend our practice, you know, in our everyday life, as you know. That is our practice. So if you know secret of your, you know, life, you will understand, you know, the meaning of practice. And if you know the meaning of practice, you can extend our practice to your everyday life. That is why-must be why the teacher twisted his disciple's nose. [Laughs.] "What are you doing now?" Actually, he was not talking about geese.

We feel very serious-we become [laughs] very serious when you-when you have problem, without knowing that you are creating problems always. And even though you, you know, you have a lot of trouble, somehow, you know, you can manage-you think you can manage it. "Oh, this is not big trouble," you know. "I can manage it quite easily"-

without, you know, knowing how you should cope with the trouble.

The other day, you know, when we had shuso ceremony at Tassajara, someone asked shuso, Peter [Schneider], that kind of question, you know. And after many question and answer finished, Yoshimura-I thought it was Yoshimura[2]-Yoshimura-sensei said-no-Tatsugami-roshi [3] said, "A tiger," you know, "catch a mouse with his whole strength," you know. Whht! [Laughs.] A tiger does not, you know, ignore or does not slight any small animals. The way he catch a mouse and the way he catch or devour a cow is same way, you know. But usually, although we have many problems, this is minor problem. So you don't think it is necessary to-to treat it, you know, in relationship with our practice. But in this way, to treat our problem in that way is the-the way many countries treat their international problems: "This is minor problem. [Laughs.] So as long as we do not violate international treaties, it may be okay. [Laughs.] Unless we do not use atomic," you know, "weapon, we can fight," you know.

But that kind of, you know, small fight will eventually, you know, result [in] a big fight. It is same thing, you know. So even [though] the problem we have in our everyday life is small-may be small, but we should know how to solve those problems or else you will have big, big difficulties because of the law of karma, you know. Karma starts from small things, but it will result-it will accelerate your, you know, bad karma. And you should know how to cope with, you know, with those small difficulties or suffering.

Before Buddha's Nirvana Day,[4] I read some of his teaching about fundamental Buddhist way:

Admonishing our many wishes, yea brethren, in receiving all food and drink, you ought to accept them as medicine.

You must not accept or reject what you like or dislike. Just support your bodies, and avoid starvation and thirst.

As a bee in gathering flowers takes only the taste of-taste of them but does not harm their color or scent, so brethren, you may [?] accept just enough of people's offering to avoid distress.[5]

Don't have many demands and thereby break their good hearts.

Wise men, for an example, having judge the amount of capacity of his axis [arm's? actual?] strength, does not wear out its strength by overloading.

"Admonishing our many wishes": Oh-this is-"many wishes" means, you know, "many wish-many desires." "Many wishes"-it does-it-it is-in Chinese translation, it is-"small wishes," it says, you know. Small wishes.

The many wishes means, you know-many wishes or small wishes, or many desires and small desires-few desires-it is not matter of so many or so few, you know. It is-it is, you know, not to-the idea is to get rid of desires or to be-to go beyond desires. But to have, you know, little wishes means, you know, not to divide our concentration [on?] too [to?] many things. That is actual meaning, you know.

To do things, you know, with one true-hearted way, you know, with oneness of the mind-that is to have few wishes-many-or many wishes-to be restrained from many wishes. Many wishes looks like, you know, to have various desires-to eat or to sleep, you know. But [laughs] we cannot live-we cannot, you know, restrict or we cannot-it is almost impossible to get rid of some of many wishes, you know. All the wishes should be-we should have, but we should not divide our focus of activity. That is what it means.

"In receiving all food and drink, you ought to accept them as medicine," you know. When you accept-when you receive food, you should be concentrated, or you should accept it with your whole body and mind. That is what it means.

And at the same time, it means you should not accept it in dualistic idea of "you" and "food." You know, we say "we receive" or "we accept" food. We do not say "we take" food-maybe [laughs]-"as we take food and drink [laughs]," we say. That is, maybe, wrong translation. "As we accept food and drink"-we should say so, you know. Acc- [partial word]-"to take" and "accept" is different. "To take" is more dualistic, you know. "To accept" is more, you know, more complete activity. You know, to-you may say [laughs] "to take" is more complete, you know, action. But to accept is m- [partial word]-you know, not so complete, you know.

When you take something, you will grasp it like this [probably gestures]. This is complete [laughs]-complete concentration on your activity is there. But according to Buddha's teaching, you know, this [probably gestures] is not, you know, to grasp some food or to take food is not complete acceptance-it is dualis- [partial word]-because it is dualistic.

And in that way, we will create karma, you know. When you grasp it-when someone grasp it or someone may grasp it because some other person want to take it, you know. So you must be very quick [laughs, laughter]. That is activity, you know-dualistic activity which will create many karma [laughs]. But when you receive it, you know, you have it already here [probably gestures], so-and if you accept it with, you know, with great appreciation-"Thank you very much," you know-that is more-it is-the activity-Buddha-it is the true activity or small wishes-not "wishes" or small desires-Buddha meant. You ought to accept them-"accept them" is right. You ought to accept them as medicine, you know, with full appreciation of it, without not much dualistic mind.

"You must not accept or reject what you like or dislike," you know. Like or d- [partial word]-you must not accept it-accept it because-or reject it, you know-accept or reject is also dualistic. You ought not to accept-you must not accept or reject what you like or dislike.

"Just support your bodies, and avoid starvation and thirst." "Just support your bodies, and"-it means that you should not take it with a dualistic idea of good or bad or enough or small [not enough]. So this kind of, you know, teaching does not mean to con- [partial word]-to have controlling power over your desires. If it is so, you know, it is difficult to know how much you should accept, you know-how much-to accept how much food is, you know, appropriate for you. It is difficult to know the limit of the desire or to make some b- [partial word]-some limit to-to limit your food, you know.

If you want to control-[have] controlling power over your desires, you know, how much you should control is-will be the next problem. And in that way, you will make more problem, one after another. And you will make-maybe you will make some good excuse, you know, to have more food [laughs]. In that way, you know, you will lose your way.

The point is, you know, again, come back to the zazen practice. How much you-how you accept things is how you take care of your body and to know yourself, you know, like you sit in zazen with many desires and problems. If-to feel, you know, your problem as your own problem is our practice. So when you eat, you know, eating is a part of your practice, you know. To eat food as you practice zazen is how to accept your food. So "to accept" is not-the word "to accept" is not-has not any dualistic concept.

"Just support your bodies, and avoid the starvation and thirst." So if you know how you practice zazen, then you will know, you know, how much food you should take. And there is no danger of eating too much or eating too less.

"As a bee in gathering flowers takes only the taste of the flower but does not hurt their color or scent-" This is a very famous, you know, parable. "As a bee in gathering flowers takes only the taste of honey but does not hurt their color or scent-" It is-it means that-to take-to have true taste of the flower is, you know, not because-to take it not because flower is beautiful or scent is nice, but because, you know, to take care of you and flower. So to have, you know, to have direct feeling of flower and taste the honey from it. So there is no-like a bee, we have not much, you know, desire as we have in dualistic sense. So-

So it is not possible, you know, to extend our practice in our everyday life without, you know, knowing what kind of difficulties we have. What is the usual attitude to take care of our problems in our everyday life? We are not so careful, you know. You know, we may be like a carpenter

bee sometime [laughs] and may violate many beautiful flowers. But sometime we may be a[n] ant, you know. Even though they do not, you know, destroy the flower, but they-because of the ant, the flower may die. They are too, you know, sticky [laughs], and stick too much always in the same flower. Purpose of flower having honey [nectar] is, you know, to-to help the plant in some way, you know, inviting bees, you know. To invite bees they have some honey [nectar]. But if-maybe they are expecting honeybee or something, not carpenter bee [laughs] or ant. So it is necessary to-to know whether we are like a carpenter bee or sticky small ant or what was-[laughs]. It looks like very gentle and kind [laughs], but eventually, if too many ants come to a flower, flower will die. So in, you know, in our everyday life, we should not, you know-our minds should be more careful, you know, or our mind must be more, you know, cautious, or attentive, or more reflective.

You may think, you know, our way is too-we have too much rules [laughs] about way of treating things, or way of speaking, or in various way we have various rules. But we should know that-before you say that is too much, you should know what you are doing, you know. You should know whether you are creating problem in your everyday life or creating bad karma for yourself and for others.

And you should know also why you suffer right now. There must be some reason you suffer. And if there is some reason to suffer, it is, you know, not possible [laughs] to escape from it. If there is some, you know-some reason, it is not possible to escape from it. Only way is to-by treating in some way, to change the function of the karma from bad to better. That is only way.

How you do that-how you can do that is-only when you are very attentive or when you know the nature of karma very well you can do that. It is not so easy to kick a stone by the [laughs]-on the roadside. If-because we have various, you know, karma we have now is created in some way, and law of karma cannot be, you know, changed. How you-according to the, you know-when you follow the karma and drive the karma in good direction [laughs], you know, you can, you know, avoid the destructive nature of the karma. How you can do that-you-is to be attentive to the nature of karma and nature of your desires and activities.

So, as Buddha pointed out, cause of-to know cause of suffering is to know how to avoid suffering. Why you suffer: If you know why you suffer, you know, you will know the cause and effect of the karma. And if-when you understand cause and effect and how it-how bad thing result-bad-bad cause result [in] bad effect-then, if you know that, you can, you know-in the same way, you can avoid the destructive power of the karma.

And there is some ways to make the power weaker. The best way is, you know [laughs], to make karma work on the voidness of the air. It-it

will [not] create any harm to anybody. But mostly that is-looks like difficult for us because of-because we have-we exist here, you know, which is idea of self, you know. As long as we have idea of self, the karma has some object to work on. If you have no idea of self, you know, karma doesn't know what to do [laughing, laughter]. "Oh, where is my partner, where is my friend?"

But that looks like very difficult, and we know that. But some people, you know, try hard to banish [it] [laughs], you know. But I don't think that is possible. The best way is to treat them well, you know-to tame it. And that is how we control ourselves. And that is possible when we know-knowing the strict rule of karma, and work on our karma immediately.

Did you go to Dr. Lancaster's [seminar]? I think some of you went to Dr. Lancaster's seminar the other day. [One word] was making good point about, you know-good explanation to-how to take care of things. If you know something [is] wrong with your car, you should immediately [laughs], you know, stop your car and work on it. That is good point. But usually we don't. "Oh, this is minor problem of my car. [Laughs, laughter.] It doesn't stop," you know. "Let's go." That is not our way, you know. We should take care of our car very carefully, even though we can go on and on. But if you go on and on with many problems, the problems, you know, is constantly, you know, working on your car until it will create some destructive harm to your car.

Student A: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student A: What if-what if you know there is something wrong with your car, so you drive very slowly and you try to find out where the problem is? Can you do that? Or do you have to stop completely?

Suzuki-roshi: Well maybe you can drive slowly [laughs]. Well, anyway you should take care-immediate care is necessary, which you don't [laughs]. Perhaps if it-if you think it is minor problem, you don't do that, and you don't realize how dangerous it is, you know, to take care of-to have minor care of things. This is, I think, big problem for our society, you know. This point is missing, you know.

So as long as you [don't] violate your state law or federal law, you know, you feel you are [not] doing anything bad, you know. But even [though], you know, you do not violate your rules, you know, you are doing something which will result [in] some big result. And when you find-until you find yourself in some immediate, you know, necessity to violate your law when it is too late.

It looks like-you may say this is-it-our way is too, maybe, too timid or something. But this-when you find out-when you think, you know, when



you understand this teaching is just about our desires, you may understand in that way. But if you understand this way of this kind of practice include our zazen practice and all-whole area of Buddhist teaching. One teaching covers whole teachings we have. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.] ... [whether it is Buddhist][6] way. It covers whole area.

If you think, you know, how to apply Buddhist teaching to your everyday life, you know, if that is, you know, why you practice zazen, that is wrong practice, you know. Buddhist-Buddha's teaching is here, and your life is here, you know, and you are borrowing some-you are-you are asking some aid from Buddha, or you-you ask Buddha's advice so that you may feel better, as if, you know, you think if you don't violate your law it is okay whatever you do. You-you have some excuse, you know: "I am not," you know, "doing anything wrong with our-with our society. I am not in- [partial word]-creating any-we are not creating any trouble between our countries," you know. But if you, you know, push your policy to the limit, what will happen? And when you find yourself-"Oh, we cannot," you know, "we have [to] stop our car." Maybe that is too late, you know. And it takes quite a lot of strength to stop it. So everyday care is very important.

You may always say "Rinzai way" or "Soto way," but there is no difference between Rinzai or Soto. But we are-we have, you know, we are just more-more careful, you know, in our everyday life and in our practice, that's all-in our way of practice. When we have this kind of idea of practice, according to the person's ability, you know, we can help with each other. Everyone has a good position, you know. Everyone will be very useful person in our society when-only when we try to take care of things with, you know, complete attention. When we rely on some, you know, strong way, then, you know, people needed will be limited. Unless you have strong, you know, physical power or sharp, you know, mental power, you cannot help people. But when we have very-various-when our way is very cautious, cautious enough not to leave anything behind, then everyone will have their own position in our society, and everyone can have good practice. I think this point should be aware of more. Do you have some more questions? Hai.

Student B: What do you mean by "good karma" and "bad karma"?

Suzuki-roshi: Karma is, you know-karma is a kind of, you know, succession-link of, you know, like a chain of cause and result which has-which is not bad or good, you know. But because-because we have-because of the viewpoint we take, it can be a good karma or bad karma. But anyway, karma is going. Hai.

Student C: In our actual life, what does it mean to stop?

Suzuki-roshi: Excuse me?

Student C: In our actual life, what does it mean to stop?

Suzuki-roshi: Stop?

Student C: To stop to take care of-

Suzuki-roshi: Stop? [Laughs.]

Student C: -some minor problem.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I-

Student C: Some [?] reaction of "stop."

Suzuki-roshi: I-I don't mean to stop and wait or escape from it. Yeah? You cannot escape from it. Actually you cannot stop. [Laughs, laughter.] Even though you look like stop [laughs], you are, you know, still going to prepare for something-to go ahead-to go on. That was, maybe, you know- Hai.

Student D: Does the "stop" mean that you try to withdraw from too much involvement in what happens so that you can detach yourself enough from it to really see what's happening? I want to see what I'm doing, yourself.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student D: It like a-it's like-it's a kind of a slight[ly] diminished involvement.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student D: Does it mean something like that?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. What I mean, you know, is more intuitive things, you know-not to think or, you know-but what I'm talking about is, you know, how, you know, how much misunderstanding you have or how much deluded you are, you know, in your own idea of good or bad, you know, good practice or bad practice, or in dualistic thinking mind. To get rid of those, you know, understanding of life I am talking-this kind of things-to know what you are actually doing.

Student D: Actually one can attempt to know one's motivation, but one can't really know what is good and what is bad-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student D: -because sometimes you think you do a good thing and it turns out to have been a bad thing after all [1-2 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, at the same time. So, you know, in-when-only when you practice, you know, zazen without having-without being bothered by idea of good or bad-good sound or bad sound-you-when you accept it, when you have oneness of-you-subjectivity and objectivity, then, you know, that is the way how we are-we should go. That is the point of, you know-the point. And what you should do to find out some way thinking about which way we should take-that is not what I mean. It is confusing because I am talking-because I use the word "good" or "bad" or "to stop" or "go ahead," you know. But if you know what is your practice, you know, how you take care of yourself in zazen, you know, that is the way you take care of yourself. That is the point [laughs] of my, you know, my talk. Why you cannot completely agree with me [laughs] maybe is you take my word literally, losing the point of my talk. So- Hai.

Student E: Sometimes after sitting I-I will sit, and it will be very-I'll feel very good about it. And then after I've finished sitting I get up, and for a while afterwards I'll be-I'll find myself being irritated or nervous-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -about any little thing-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -and I'll-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: -lose my temper or-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: -be very-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: -irrational-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Student E: -for, you know, half hour or so after I finish sitting.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. But-

Student E: It's like, one minute I'm sitting very quietly and then-

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. That is very much so.

Student E: -for a half hour-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student E: -I'm very intimate [?]. I'm-not quiet, but jumpy and angry.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm

Student E: And I was wondering what-

Suzuki-roshi: What you should do. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student E: Yes. What should I do. [2-4 words unclear] if that's okay-if maybe that will go away. I don't know.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. At that time, you lost your practice, you know, like you lost your counting breathing when you are, you know, practicing counting-breathing practice. So even though you are counting, you know, you may lose your practice, you know. So if you, you know-so why I say instead of counting breathing or following your breathing, I say [be] more attentive to what you are doing, or to take care of yourself, or, you know, to take care of things, you know. In your practice, if you are following breathing, you know, or counting breathing, you think you are practicing zazen. But it is not always so. Even [laughs] though you are sitting very straight without, you know, sleeping, but sometime your zazen is not there. If you [are] really practicing zazen, you know, you have no second notion or no second thought. All the thought you have will be only direct thought which will come over-no second thought of good or bad-what it is, you know: "I shouldn't be bothered by it."

So delusion is-may be divided-there are two kinds of delusion: the delusion itself, you know-delusion which, you know, which can be understood various way, but-delusion itself is same but, you know-which can be many things-delusion which arise simultaneously. But delusion is one, you know-which is not [laughs]-when we are not in oneness of the mind, that is delusion. And delusion which will arise as a second notion or second thought is also delusion. Because of that, our practice will be divided in various way because of the second notion of good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable. When it comes to you, you know, it is not good or bad.

So after [laughs], you know-so only way is when you, you know, eat, you should eat: "Oh, thank you very much." [Laughs.] That is our way, based on pure practice. And if you practice long enough and attentive enough to your practice, you will easily, you know, find out where you are in your everyday life. And if you find out yourself where you are, there is no problem any more because only way is to resume your own way. So you have no one to be mad at [laughs].

So I am-actually I am giving you some material to test your practice,

you know, as I told you, from other angle, you know, to encourage your good practice. So this is not just-what I'm talking about-small desires or something like that is not-not as a[n] art of life, you know, but what is the right practice. Hai.

Student F: Sometimes we speak of pure practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: Sometimes we speak of good practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Student F: Are they the same, exactly?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, pure pr- [partial word]-same, I-pure practice, good practice, yeah, real practice, yeah, same.

Student F: But-but we sometimes also say that real practice goes beyond good and bad.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: So-so good practice is actually-I don't know. If it's good, it should be good, but if it is beyond good, then it should be bad too.

Suzuki-roshi: Beyond [laughs]-it is just words, you know [laughs, laughter]. Your mind is very, you know, very fancy. His mind is very fancy [laughs, laughter].

Student F: Okay. [Said in a humorous tone of resignation.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughs, laughter.] Some other questions?

Student G: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student G: I don't exactly how to tell you-can you do two things at a time-

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student G: -and stay healthy through them [preceding five words uncertain]?

Suzuki-roshi: No. [Laughs, laughter.] That is not possible.

Student G: Not even if you do one just a little bit?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. No. That is not possible, you know. That is why, you know, it is easy, you know. If you can do two things at the same time, we will [laughs]-we will have a big trouble, you know. It is good, you know, that we can do-we can choose some-only one things, you know. We cannot choose two, anyway. Only when you fool yourself and you, you know, you are making excuse for yourself, you can do it. If you become very sincere with yourself, you cannot do that.

Student G: Well, if we live here and have a job outside, that's kind of like doing two different things.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Looks like [laughs, laughter] Zen Buddhists cannot eat or drink. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student H: Roshi, how can you tell if you are doing two things or one thing?

Suzuki-roshi: Two things or one thing.

Student H: Is it not always one thing if you do it in the right spirit?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. It is one thing, actually. But after you did something- or before you do something, you may say [it is] two things. But actually, when you start involved in something, it is-it cannot be two. So if you do things, you cannot do bad things, you know. So easiest way to do, you know, something [is] to choose something more appropriate to do at that time. I don't say [?] "something good" [laughs] because you will raise some other questions [laughs, laughter]. Some-some more questions?

Student I: Roshi? Sometimes there is "do not waste time"-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: -and other times it's "to be patient."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: But-and they seem as if there's two different ways.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: So if I do this, I'll be not wasting time. If I do this, I'll be impatient.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Student I: But shouldn't one-shouldn't they be the same?

Suzuki-roshi: "To waste time" means, you know, to waste time is-means

without, you know, making-without having oneness of your mind with something else is to waste time in its-what-according to what we mean, you know. To waste time is to-to be involved in dualistic thinking only, without, you know, having the root of the practice. That is "to waste time." When we do not practicing our way, it is waste of time.

"To be patient," you know-it doesn't matter whether you are doing things quick or slow, okay? And that is also renunciation, you know. Renunciation means to refrain from dualistic world. Even though you are doing something in dualistic world, you know, we should be free from- on the other hand, we should be free from the idea-dualistic idea. Or you may say if you do one thing only, you know-if you make best effort on something you do, that is renunciation. That is non-duality. That is, you know, to be patient sometime. When your full effort [is] on your practice, that is, in short, not to waste your time. Okay? Yeah.

Student J: How about making plans for the future-what about working for a goal in the future?

Suzuki-roshi: For future. Future, you know-you say "future," you know, but future is-in-at the same time, right now. It is just word, you know. You project your activity in framework of past and present and future. There is no actual future, you know. Future will be different even though you, you know, have some plan or some idea about your future activity based on your present, you know-based on things you are doing right now. But-but [if] the plan is not related on your present situation, it is not-it is daydream. So sometime you will be involved in just daydream, you know-the typical type of [laughs] dualistic mind.

Student K: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student K: Does that mean that to think about what you want to do in the future is an entirely useless activity?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I don't think so.

Student K: You can think about what you want to do in the future without involving yourself in delusion?

Suzuki-roshi: If it is really future plan, you know, the future plan should involve present situation, or present situation should involve future plan. They must be-that-that future plan is a kind of possibility, you know, which is included-which is already in present situation. There may be various possibility, you know. Present possibility [is] not something which exist in future, or else [laughs] you will not [would not be able to?] think about it, you know. If there is no possibility, you don't think.

Student L: Is the future now in possibilities, or is it-

Suzuki-roshi: Future?

Student L: -actually something that actually is just occurring now, along with the past? And can we realize that there is no passing time and survive like [sounds like student snaps his fingers twice].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Ahh [like a sigh].

Student L: How do you cope with the world as it appears-

Suzuki-roshi: C- [partial word]-appearance.

Student L: -as everyone else seems to see it appearing?

Suzuki-roshi: Appearance. Future appearance. It-it is question of reality, or appearance and reality, or phenomenal, you know, things and some ontological being, or a problem of present and future, or-?

Student L: Excuse me?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] I don't, you know, I don't catch my-my frame of [laughs]-framework of my mind does not catch your, you know, question, so that is why I am asking.

Student L: Well, I was wondering if the future exists as possibilities now, or does it exist as-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -well, to me it appears as if, in the future, I'll be in another place and time, which I had read is illusion. But I don't see the same that-I don't see all the events of my life as simultaneous. It seems like if I saw them as simultaneous, I'd be very confused, or, you know, I wouldn't be able to cope with each event. Do you understand what I'm asking?

Suzuki-roshi: [Probably makes some gesture. Loud laughter.] Hai. I am sorry.

Student M: He said if there is no past or future, then everything's happening in his life at the same time, so that makes for one big confusion because then things wouldn't be happening before and after each other. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: No. You know, the present has various meaning or face, you know-angle. But actually it is one, you know, interp- [partial word]-many interpretation of the present fact-event you have. As a possibility, there may be many possibility in, you know, in this present moment, but before it happens, nothing happens. So there is nothing to worry



[about]. There is no confusion.

Is it okay? Yeah. [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah, it is-you are right. It is rather difficult to accept, you know.

Student L: Well, I hear certain things said and then I-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Student L: The world still appears-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student L: -as time to time [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Student L: And I'm just asking you about how it really is.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. [Laughs, laughter.] Unfortunately, I am not so interested in [laughs], you know, some fancy idea [laughs] or many interpretation of things, you know. Oh. Some more question? Hai.

Student M: I was reading Trung- [partial word]-what's the guy who wrote Meditation in Action?[7] [Laughter.] He said-Trung- -Trungpa?

Student N: Chögyam Trungpa.

Student M: He said that-he made this comment-we have images of ourselves, you know, like sometimes you get the image that I'm-when you sit in meditation you have a fine image of how you sit-"I want to sit real good," you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student M: He said that you should examine you-

Suzuki-roshi: You should examine yourself?

Student M: -examine in close.

Suzuki-roshi: Closely.

Student M: Yeah. And I was wondering the best way to do that. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: To examine?

Student M: Well, I have the image of myself as-when I walk, say-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student M: -I see myself. It's impossible to lose, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student M: I wondered the best way to deal with it-deal with these images.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. To have feeling of Zen when you are walking or something-when you are eating.

Student M: To feel it rather than see it.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. What I mean is not, you know, to feel-to see yourself objectively. I don't mean so. Or to-to examine yourself, maybe, does not mean to, you know, to, you know, to see your mudra or, you know, to see your posture [laughs, laughter]. I don't think so, you know. If you are in perfect meditation or not will be the point. So when you walk, walk. What you should realize is, you know, when you are out of practice, then, you know, you will realize, "Oh, I lost my practice." In that way, rather than t- [partial word]-I, you know-to-to check yourself whether you are perfect or not, to check yourself whether you are-you lost your sitting or not. It is easy to find, you know, yourself when you lose your meditation. It is very easy. Then, you know, I think you have-you will have good practice eventually.

Student O: Excuse me, Roshi? Earlier Pat said something about dualistic practice. I experienced that. Is that bad practice? A lot of times, when I'm away from the building I practice chanting to [?] Buddha, and when I-

Suzuki-roshi: Out of building.

Student O: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Student O: -as part of my practice.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh huh. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Student O: Is that a bad practice?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah, we have that kind of tendency, and I understand that, you know. After doing something seriously, you know, you may, you know, feel: "What I-what have I been doing [laughs] all those days?" [Laughs, laughter.]

Student O: I just-my involvement with the people here-I get completely

involved. I'm meeting all kinds of fascinating people.

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. Yeah, but-we cannot be al- [partial word]- completely-we cannot continue practice always, you know. But you-if you know what is good practice, you know, then that will be a great help. And, if possible, you know, to-to have good practice when we are liable to lose our practice, that is very important. For an instance, after you sit for a long, long, long time, you know, [you may think] "Oh, sesshin is finished! [Laughs.] Rrrr!" [Laughs, laughter.] That will be almost all the people want to do. But that is not so good, you know. If you know that, you know, you should be careful. It is not so difficult, you know. If you are a little bit careful, you know, you can continue your practice. My policy was-before-with my-my policy with myself was, you know, to be-to remember the word "apt to" or "liable to"-to be so or to do so "liable to." That helps a lot. "We are liable to be so, but be careful." [Laughs.] That kind of thing is not so difficult, you know. Just to be-to know that-just to remember that word is-may be good help. Hai.

Student P: Sometimes we-we have an attitude of practicing, and sometimes we don't.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student P: What-what do we do when we don't have an attitude of practicing?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That [is a] good question. [Laughs.] You know, if I use the word "liable to," you know, people [are] liable to try not [to] practice zazen when you don't want to, you know. In such case, you should practice [laughs] zazen, you know. That will be the very good practice, you know. When you practice zazen when you want to, you know, then that practice has various danger or various wrong possibility. But when you do practice zazen when you don't want, you know, not much danger in your practice.

Student P: [3-4 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Do you-hmm?

Student Q: I don't know if that was your question.

Student P: I don't know if that's the question that I asked or not.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah, maybe so. [Laughs, laughter.] Your question, you know-almost all our questions will be answered [laughs], you know, in some other way [than] you want to ask me. For an instance, what will be how we should, you know, get out of birth and death, you know? What you may, you know, what you expect from him [a Zen master] may be, you know-even though you die, you know, you

will have next life, you know, so it may be okay, you know. But almost all Zen master believe in-who believes in next life will not give you that kind of answer [laughs]. His answer will be, you know: "The life is such-and-such," you know. He will not answer-he will not give you the answer which you want. [Laughs, laughter.] And he will [be] very much concerned about your question: Why you make such a question, you know? And he will stick to the, you know, reason why you make question. [Sentence finished. Start of second tape.] ... to ask question. Maybe it's better to think, "Why do I make that kind of question?" Then question will be answered.

Student R: Roshi, you said that if something was wrong that we should stop and fix it. And in my life, if I feel something is wrong-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student R: -one of the ways that I try to do what I do is to sit zazen.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student R: But I can't see what it is. I can't find it. And no matter how I try, I-what should I do?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student R: How can I see it to fix it [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: How-yeah. Maybe, you know-how long, by the way, have you been practicing?

Student R: Two years.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student R: Two years.

Suzuki-roshi: Two years? Excuse me. [Drinks water.] I think you will-you will understand pretty soon.

Student S: I've been practicing five years. When will I understand? [Loud laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: You don't understand-do you know why? [Laughs.] Do you know why?

Student S: No.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. [Laughs.] Maybe you-because you are trying to practice good practice. Maybe that is the reason. Hmm. Yeah. This is very good question. That will be the question almost all students will

have, I think. [Laughs.] But, you know, you shouldn't be disappointed. The only way is to continue your practice because there is no other way, you know, to solve our problems. Just to continue our practice-there is no other way.

Student T: When you said there is no other way, what do you mean? There is no other way from what?

Suzuki-roshi: From-from practice of zazen.

Student T: There is no other way from-other than practice of zazen to find out who you are?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't think so.

Student T: Then [SR laughs, laughter]-then what is meant by-when-when-when it is said that there are many, many different ways, and that-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Many-

Student T: -zazen isn't necessarily the way-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student T: -for that individual?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah. What it means [is] there are many and many ways, you know. But it looks like it means-it looks like there are many and many ways, but that is-if it is, you know, really, actually-actual way, that is various name of zazen practice. It means, you know-it looks like many and many ways, but actually it is one way if it is actual practice. If it is not daydream or, you know-whatever you do, it looks like different, but actually it is one practice of Zen. And you may say-

Student T: Yoga is a different way than Zen.

Suzuki-roshi: Looks like. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student T: Well, okay. Okay. But I-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Oh, I see. Yeah.

Student T: [2-3 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Okay. Thank you very much.

---

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/18/00).

[1] Case 53 of The Blue Cliff Record. The teacher was Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu): 709-788. The disciple was Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814.

[2] Ryogen Yoshimura-sensei: Soto monk who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 to help Suzuki-roshi. (See Wind Bell, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30.) He died at a young age after returning to Japan.

[3] Sotan Ryosen Tatsugami-roshi: Soto Zen master and ino-roshi at Eihei-ji monastery in Japan for many years. A teacher or master of Jean Ross, Grahame Petchey, and Philip Wilson (all students of Suzuki-roshi) while they attended Eihei-ji. He visited Tassajara to help establish monastic forms and practices, and he was head of training at Tassajara for the Spring and Fall 1970 practice periods.

[4] Nirvana Day is the observation of the traditional Mahayana date of Shakyamuni Buddha's death, usually falling on the second Sunday in February, which in 1971 was February 14.

[5] This verse is from the Dhammapada, Verse 49. Literally: "As a bee without harming the flower, its colour or scent, flies away, collecting only the honey, even so should the sage wander in the village" [Dhammapada, trans. by Narada Thera Vajirarama, 1963, p. 53]. Suzuki-roshi is probably translating from a Chinese text (see p. 3). This verse is also commented upon in SR-71-08-03. The source(s) of the other quotes is not yet known.

[6] Text in brackets is from note on back of original tape case.

[7] Chogyam Trungpa, Meditation in Action. London: Stuart & Watkins, 1969.

### **3 - Lecture at Reed College, Portland**

Friday, March 12, 1971

Lecture at Reed College, Portland, OR

It is not so easy to say what actual practice is, what Zen is. But anyway, I want to try. First of all, why we practice Zen may be the question most of you have. As you know, Buddha's first teaching is the Four Noble Truths. According to him, our life is a life of suffering. And if you know the cause of suffering, you will know how to go through our suffering, and you will attain Nirvana or enlightenment.

Tonight maybe it is better to explain why we suffer. Suffering includes various kinds of confusion or fears we may have because of our lack of understanding of our life. The reason we suffer, according to the Buddha, is because we have desire. Desire cannot be broken, because we have too much desire-there is no limit to our desire. That is why we suffer-because we have interest in strong desire. So our suffering will be limitless, deep and long. The suffering you feel is as deep as a night when you cannot sleep is long. When you cannot sleep, the night maybe very very long for you. That is why we suffer. The root of desire is so-called "ignorance" or "darkness." Ignorance means ignorance of our life, ignorance of human nature. If we know human nature and how we live in this world as a human being, then we will know why we suffer and how to go through suffering. I don't say that you will go beyond it, or that you eliminate suffering. But if you know the cause of suffering, which is ignorance of our life, then maybe this knowledge will be a great relief for you. Moreover, you will find out how to cope with our suffering. For instance, if you sit in a cross-legged position like this, at first you will have pain in your legs, as some of you must have experienced already. It is not so easy to deal with the pain you have in your legs as you sit. If some of you sit thirty or forty minutes, without any instruction, you will know how you can deal with suffering. The way to deal with, or to overcome your suffering is actually the precepts which the Buddhists observe. But the precepts still will not be good enough, because you don't know how to limit your original ignorance. So to work on the source of suffering and also to hunt the many big branchings of suffering is the true way to cope with the suffering you have. That is actually zazen practice. Through the practice of zazen you can cope with original sin, original ignorance, or darkness, and with the weaker branchings of suffering. I think the everyday lives of all of us are actually involved in this kind of suffering which originates from the source of ignorance.

Maybe I should explain more about ignorance. Ignorance means the dualistic thinking-mind and feeling-mind, or discrimination. That is the root of ignorance. Thinking mind is the first step of ignorance. It may seem strange, but according to Buddhism, it is so.

The other day I read Sasaki Roshi's lecture with questions and answers which you have. He pointed out that dualistic thinking mind does not catch reality. It will catch the shadow of reality, but it is not possible for dualistic thinking mind to have actual reality. For instance, when you say it is 8 o'clock now, it may not actually be exactly 8 o'clock-it may be a few seconds after 8 o'clock. Then you may say a few seconds after 8 o'clock, but then it may be one minute after 8. You know it is not possible for our thinking mind to follow reality. Our thinking mind is always behind reality. The characteristic of our thinking mind is that it will result in contradictions because the viewpoints we take. For instance, the idea of time is the idea of continuity-time is continuous. But at the same time, the idea of time is discontinuity. When you say it

is 8 o'clock you take the idea of time as discontinuity. But on the other hand, time is continuous, so which is right-continuity or discontinuity? Both are right. But you will be confused. The reason we become confused is that we want some definite answer for our questions. But your thinking mind will not have any definite answer for your questions. If you want to have some definite answers, you must take some other approach. The approach you may take is to have direct experience of time. But time is an idea, so it is not possible to have a definite experience of time, then you should appeal to direct experience of things which change, always, as time goes.

That is actually how we have a final answer for our life. Again, this is our practice. Here I must explain our practice a little bit more. When you sit, at first it is almost impossible to stop your thinking mind. You can do it, but you cannot stop it completely. One after another, various images come. Or if you work on a koan, as long as you are working on it, your thinking mind will be concentrated on one thing only. If your mind is occupied with only one thing, it is as if you have stopped your mind. You have a chance to have direct experience of your life at that time.

If you cannot attain enlightenment, as long as you sit in some certain form, with various instruction about your breathing and posture, then your mind and body is open to the various things which come to you. You are open to everything, and your mind follows. At that time, you actually have direct experience of your own being and the outside world, your surroundings. When your practice is good enough, mature enough, then you practice zazen with your whole body and mind. For instance, you must take care of your mudra, because this mudra includes everything, just as our practice includes everything. The reason we say this mudra, or our practice includes everything, is that when you practice, you are taking care of everything, your whole body and mind. And this kind of feeling will be extended to whatever you do, whatever you see. You will see a thing not as an object, but as one part of something much bigger. So to take care and confused is that we want some definite answer for our questions. But your thinking mind will not have any definite answer for your questions. If you want to have some definite answers, you must take some other approach. The approach you may take is to have direct experience of time. But time is an idea, so it is not possible to have a definite experience of time, then you should appeal to direct experience of things which change, always, as time goes.

That is actually how we have a final answer for our life. Again, this is our practice. Here I must explain our practice a little bit more. When you sit, at first it is almost impossible to stop your thinking mind. You can do it, but you cannot stop it completely. One after another, various images come. Or if you work on a koan, as long as you are working on it, your thinking mind will be concentrated on one thing only. If your mind is occupied with only one thing, it is as if you have stopped your mind. You have a chance to have direct experience as your surroundings change, is



there actually no suffering; because that is non-dualistic thinking. That is zazen practice. Usually our activity is involved in the dualistic area. But in Zen practice our mind is not dualistic-our mind is always with things, one with things and non-dualistic. Whatever we seek is part of our strength. That is actually our practice.

If you attain enlightenment, you can work on the root of ignorance, the root of duality. Even if you don't attain enlightenment, you will have this practice of not fighting with things. Then you can be with the suffering without cutting off the chain of suffering. At that time, it is not suffering anymore. When you attain this kind of practice, you will be called a Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva mind is the mind which becomes one with everything, helping others as one takes care of oneself. Actually, for Bodhisattva mind, there is no self, or this is only one self which includes everything. Anyway, it is not dualistic. When we say "I help you," that is dualistic. Without having any feeling of me or you, practicing zazen with you is Bodhisattva practice. For instance, if my hands take hold of a cup, this cup is already practicing zazen with me. Instead of saying, "I have a cup," my practice includes this cup. In this way, your practice will include everything.

The Bodhisattva way is many ways, but the most important point is to become one with others, to be kind and to have a warm feeling for others, with your mouth or with your life, to give teaching or to give materials things without any idea of giving or receiving, just giving with a warm heart. To help people in various ways, making tea or scrubbing the floor, or cleaning the restroom, without any idea of, "This restroom is dirty," is the Bodhisattva way. Just with a warm, good feeling you clean the restroom. In that way you can help people, and you have no confusion or suffering. This is how you extend zazen practice to your everyday life.

I think most people practice zazen when they don't have many problems, when they feel very good. But actually, you should practice zazen when you don't feel so good. The you will know how to live with your problems, how to take care of your problems without escaping from them, without fighting. You should practice zazen when you have problems, when you have bad feelings, -anxiety, confusion or hatred. And when you have good feelings, you may think it is not necessary to practice zazen, but that is also a mistake. The reason you have good feelings is because of your dualistic mind. A very good feeling is very dangerous because it is the other side of the bad feeling. So when you have good feelings, you must also practice zazen. When you have neutral feelings, it may not be so dualistic, , so it may not be necessary to practice zazen. Sometimes we practice zazen with neutral feelings, but that is not real zazen.

All of us right now are wearing everyday clothing, but if someone gives you new clothing, then you will give up your old clothing. Even though you say you have neutral feeling, it is not so. We always have latent

desires sleeping in our pocket and waiting for a chance to come out. When some new clothing is given to you, then all at once the black snake of discrimination will come out. The way you can tell a Zen student is well trained is that their mind is always warm and kind, always calm, and not dualistic. But even for a good student there is some chance for the black snake of discrimination to come out.

In China we have an old, old interesting story. An old Chinese lady was having to take care of a Zen Master. While she was taking care of him, her daughter came. Her daughter was very beautiful and 18 years old. So the old lady maybe to test the Zen monk, told her daughter to give him a big hug and see his reaction. The daughter did as she was told, but he was like a wall or stone. His mind did not move. The old lady became very angry with the monk. She expelled him and burned down the house he was staying in. What do you think about that? There are various answers for that. Maybe a true Zen Master should not be like a wall or tree or stone. He should be human even though he practices zazen. Maybe that is why she burned down his home. She experimented with him. But Dogen Zenji's understanding or answer for this story is that the Zen monk did not lose his calmness of mind, which was very good, and the old woman who banished him, who experimented, was also good. And Dogen Zenji says, "Full of tears, the old lady must have experimented." That was the second test. The first test was agreeable, and the second was the opposite-she experimented and burned his home. And still he practiced. She wanted to know his reaction. Without complaint, he went away. So according to Dogen Zenji, the monk was great, the daughter was great, and the old lady was also great. They are three great teachers.

So it is rather difficult to know who is a well-trained teacher and who is not. If your teacher understands what real practice is, then, by talking to someone or by a glance at someone's face, the teacher can immediately see into that person's practice. A well-trained Zen Master expresses some feeling without anything being said. So there is no need to test--just to see him is enough. You can immediately feel his power of practice. At that time. True practice is right there.

You may say Zen is very difficult, but actually Zen is soft, because there is no limit to our practice, as there is no limit to our desire. If there is no limit to our desire, our practice has no limit. But even though there is no limit to our attainment, from the first step of our practice there is real complication. Real practice will help to keep you from suffering and keep suffering from arising. Again, Zen practice is not so hard. Our practice is everywhere. If you don't attain enlightenment, it is okay, as long as you do not lose these points-how to be kind to others and how to be one with others. When you have good practice, then without trying, without making so much effort, you can help others quite easily. At that time, someone who receives help will not realize that he was helped.

He is actually helping others. That is real alm-giving, and that is real

teaching; to give some real teaching, not by words, but by just giving.

I prepared something (else) for this lecture, but I think it may be better for us to have some questions and answers.

Question: According to Zen theory of art, as I understand it, the painter when he paints a tree is to become a tree. Can you explain this?

Suzuki-roshi: I think you must have understood what I was talking about. To become one with it even though you don't have a picture of the tree in your mind is the way. The picture of the tree in your mind is already dead. If you are a good artist, without any picture, the tree will come out of you.

Question: Is that from feeling rather than visual?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, it is more than visual. If you depend on the vision you have, then the vision is too strong. When you have no intention, no vision of the tree, what do you have?

Question: If you reach enlightenment, is it possible to again lose enlightenment?

Suzuki-roshi: Enlightenment is not some idea or dead experience. It is actual. So you may study various Zen stories, but the actual answer for you cannot be the same. You will have your own understanding of it. It cannot be the same. You might think you can visualize or experience the same enlightenment experience again, but that is not possible. You don't have to. That kind of experience is not Zen experience. That is more like scientific knowledge.

Question: Sitting is so good and necessary to our life, so why should we even do things like going to school? Why should not we just sit all the time?

Suzuki-roshi: Zen and school are two completely different things. You should go to school, but the point is that if you think that by going to school you will be almighty, that is wrong. It is necessary for you to practice zazen. If you don't, what you acquire will be dead, will not work, or most likely, it will create more problems.

Question: Should we make an effort in our culture, even though we know we cannot make the culture what it should be, or a perfect culture?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, that is our way. Whether it is possible or not is out of the question. Because you see something, you should do it. When you see some problems, you should deal with them right now. It is not even a matter of you should or you shouldn't. We should be very honest and very straightforward in our way, to eliminate or confront the root of the

problem if possible. It is a waste of time to confront the twigs and branches of the problem before the root-they should come second. First of all, it is necessary to confront the root of the problem. To resume the oneness of all being. To be part of everything and to let all things fall into our practice is the point. When we have this kind of feeling in our practice, then we can help others in its true sense. And if many people do so, it will be a great help. Something will happen. And I think we have come to the point where we should resume our original standpoint of the oneness of all being, to feel things as part of us, and to take care of things as a part of ourselves. If you do it through right practice, you are free from emotional discrimination or dualistic thinking mind, and you can help people. That is the only way to help people. If you want to help people, actually at that time you should not help people, because you want to. "You want to" is extra. You should just do it. And only through zazen practice is that possible. For instance, if you feel someone else's place with your heart, whether it is a man or woman, spiritual guardian or old lady, you can practice with the same feeling. That is how you help people without creating more problems. If you try to help them, you will create more problems for them. That is not our way. So we should work on the root of the problem.

Thank you very much.

## **1971 juni (8)**

### **1 - Sesshin Lecture #1**

Saturday, June 05, 1971

Sesshin Lecture #1  
San Francisco

First of all, I want to explain, you know, I want you to understand what is our practice. You know, our practice we say, "just to sit." It is, you know, "just to sit," but I want to try to explain as much as possible what do we mean by "just to sit." Practice is usually, you know, practice to expect something: at least, if you practice, you know, some way, some practice, your practice will be improve. And if there is a goal of practice, you know, or if you practice aiming at something, you know, you will- your practice supposed to reach, you know, eventually, the goal of practice you expect. And actually, you know, if you practice, your practice itself will be improved day by day, you know.

That is very true, you know, but there is another, you know, one more, you know, understanding of practice, you know, like, you know, our practice is, you know, another understanding of practice. We practice it- our zazen-with two, with different, you know, understanding from this. But we cannot ignore the-our imp- [partial word: "improvement?"]- progress in our practice. Actually, if you practice, you know, day by day, you make big progress. And actually it will help, you know, your practice will help your health and your mental condition, you know. That is very

true.

But that is not, you know, full understanding of practice. Another understanding of practice is, you know, when you practice, you know, there there is-goal is there, you know, not, you know, one year or two years later. But when you do it right there, there is goal of practice. When you practice our way with this understanding, there is many things you must take care of so that you could be or you will be-you can-you will be concentrated on your practice. You will be completely involved in the practice you have right now. That is why you have various instruction, you know, about your practice, so that you can practice hard enough to feel, you know, the goal of practice right now, when you do it.

You may ask me, you know, then, "My practice [laughs] usually, even in sesshin, my practice is not good enough to feel the goal of practice or to feel full meaning of my practice." You may ask in that way. Here you should apply another idea of practice, and you should know there is, you know, progress in your practice. But even though your practice is not good enough, you know, even though your practice is, you know, bad, you say, "My practice is bad," but even so there is no other practice for you [laughs] right now, you know. Good or bad, you know, that is your own practice, you know. There is no other way to accept yourself, to have, you know, approach to the perfect practice. There is no other way. If so, you know, you shouldn't say your practice is good or bad, you know. Even though you feel your practice is bad, that doesn't help your practice. Even though you say, "My practice is excellent," it doesn't help so much [laughs]. Your practice is same, you know. You are talking about your practice in various way, good or bad, that's all. We should know this point first of all.

Actually, this is how you understand Buddhist teaching. For us, you know, whatever it is, whatever you see, whatever you hear, that is actually Buddha's teaching. That is very true. And all the teaching Buddha or patriarchs taught us is interpretation of the truth we see, you know. Interpretation of the actual reality is the teaching, you know, although according to the situation, according to the time, there were many ways of explaining it, you know. Buddha explained it in his own way, according to the people with him. Bodhidharma, you know, gave instructions to Chinese people, you know, in his own way. But Buddha and Bodhidharma, you know, understood his friend is buddha and his follower is-were buddha, and buddha is nothing but what he-what they saw.

That is very true, but there is another side of the teaching. Without Buddha, without Bodhidharma, without people, you know, who may see things, you know, who live in this world, there is no beautiful flower or bright star. Because we are here, and because Buddha was there in India, there were teaching. That is another side of the truth. It means that there is, you know-what you see is expression of, you know,

embodiment of the truth. But at the same time, for us, you know, subjectively, it is your own understanding of the truth, you know. When the understanding of yourself and embodiment of the truth, you know, become one there is real, you know, truth. Even though, you know, scientist, you know, explain the reality very carefully, you know, that is not truth we mean. The truth we mean is, you know, truth which is experienced actually, you know. The fact-through the fact you are facing to it come together, that is, you know, actual truth which will help us, which is our own.

So we say, "just to-just sit," you know, "just sit." And why we say "just sit" is because we have buddha-nature. So you just sit, you know. Then there is buddha-nature. So you just sit, you know [laughs], we say so. But that is not, that is, you know-if you understand fully that is good explanation, but there must be-there is misunderstanding. Most people will misunderstand "just to sit," you know. And moreover, we say, good-"Even though your practice is not so good, you know, that is perfect practice [laughs], so just to sit. Just sit."

But what you will understand will be, you know, because of your scientific mind, you know. Way scientific mind will understand is you see, you know, you objectively observe your and understand your practice, or see your practice or someone's practice, you know, "Oh anyway, they are sitting in the Buddha hall," you know, "so that is good practice [laughs]-perfect practice. There will be no need to encourage them," [laughs] you know, "and there is no need for them," you know, "to sit all day long. Maybe if, as much as possible, if they sit, that is okay. Even one hour is okay. One period is enough."

If-you may understand in that way. That kind of understanding is, maybe you could say, superficial understanding. But more clearly, if you want to understand this point, it is, you know, understanding of, you know, truth-as a[n] embodiment of the truth, you know. You don't understand-you have no understanding from the viewpoint of your subjective side.

Truth is there-always there. But if someone who do not observe the truth accept the truth, that is so-called-it, "painted cake," you know: cake on the paper which you cannot eat [laughs]. Even though you are actually sitting, you know, you are eating paper, you know, cake on the paper. So there is no taste, and you will give up because it doesn't mean anything, actually.

Or [you may say], "Zen is no good," you know, "it doesn't mean anything. Even though we sit seven days." [Laughs.] "Doesn't result [in] anything" [laughs], "so may be better to go to downtown and to eat something" [laughs], "instead of," you know, "food Zen Center provide." [Laughs.] That will be, you know, exactly, you know, what you will understand. But you, you know, you, you know, maybe you fool yourself, you know. And you are pleased, you know, when people call

you Zen student [laughs]. That's all. So your practice is encouraging your ego, you know. You are not practicing Zen. If "just to sit" is like that, Zen does not mean anything. This is more-or-less intellectual understanding plus something, you know, plus some physical effort.

But our true zazen cannot be like that. If Zen is like that, Zen will not survive, you know, couldn't survive so long time [laughs]. Long time ago, Zen must have vanished from this world. Why Zen, you know, [is] still alive, you know, is because of the other side of the truth, you know: to accept the truth as your own. Various, you know, and patriarchs and great, you know, sage of Buddhist or various religion said, you know, "Buddha," you know, "left teaching just for me," [pats himself] you know, Nichiren said, you know. "Buddha left Lotus Sutra just [pats himself] for Nichiren. Just for me. Not for anyone else. Just for me."

If that side is forgotten, you know, the Buddha's teaching is nothing, you know, nothing but waste paper. "Just for me" means, you know, it is not arrogancy, you know. "Just for me" means, you know, because-when he has full appreciation of the teaching as his own, you know, he says, "All the teaching is just for me."

That is a side-that is the spirit we need in our zazen practice. Everyone can be, you know, Nichiren. Everyone can be Dogen or Bodhidharma. Because I practice, you know, zazen, there is Buddha, there is Dogen, there is Bodhidharma, and there is Buddha's teaching.

Actually, you know, we should realize that, you know, I am-you are only, you know, one being in this world. No one else exist. You are the only one who exist in this world. And that is very true. No one can take over your position. And that is very true, so all the teaching is just for you.

When you are young, you have no such feeling, you know [laughs]. You think you live fifty more or one hundred more years [laughs], so today is not so valuable for you. If you become my age, you know [laughs], you will really feel, "I am just one being, you know. No one can take over my position," you know, "so I must not fool myself," you know. This is very important point for Zen student-maybe for everyone, but, you know, especially for those who practice our way this point is very important.

Without this confidence or this understanding, you know, your practice will be involved in, you know, various, you know-you will expose your weakness in your practice, you know. "Oh, no, I am not," you know, "I am not good enough," you know, "to practice zazen," you know. "Look at me. What I have been doing?" you know. "I cannot practice," you know. "Zen is so beautiful and so perfect. How is it possible for me to join," you know, "their practice?" You will expose your various weak points, and you will, you know, feel, actually feel, various weakness of your character and of your conduct or habit, you know, you have. And,

you know, in calm sitting, this kind of, you know, feeling will occupy you, and you cannot sit. But whatever you say about yourself, you are only one, you know. You cannot escape from this world, because the whole world is yours. That is, you know, that is very true-more than-it is more than truth, you know, which we can talk about. This is ultimate truth, you know.

How you can deny this fact that you are, you know, only one person? Even though you can criticize yourself-that is easy. But how you can deny this fact? That is, you know, that is the point we should face. If you understand this point, you know, you have no time to say good or bad-good practice or bad practice. Because you turn deaf ear to this truth, you have time to criticize yourself. When you realize this point, you can hear or you can see the truth, and you can practice zazen. You can accept the truth, whatever it is, you know. Whatever you see, that is truth. That is expression of the truth.

How you, you know-we say our practice is to open up yourself for everything-everything you see as a embodiment of the truth, as a bodhisattva, as a buddha-to open up yourself and accept buddha. [The song "Baby I'm Yours" is playing loudly in the background.] This is why we practice zazen and why, you know, everyone can join our practice and why this practice include every activity you have in your everyday life.

This kind of practice-our practice is so-not usual practice: cannot be, must not be usual practice which could be compare to various kind of practice as a means of, you know, attain something, to acquire something. By long, long experience of many people, you know, form we take and the way we take breathing, various instructions was accumulated-human experience.

So it is, at the same time our practice can be accumulation of human experience as, you know, scientific knowledge is. But the difference between scientific knowledge and Buddhist wisdom is Buddhists put emphasis on more subjective side of the truth. Not-objective-it is not only objectively true but also subjectively it has, you know, point which could be, you know, everyone's point. Each one of us have had this point and have been practicing our way. That is why we say every one of us is Buddha, and this is how we transmitted Buddha's teaching to us all. It is not just, you know, paper transmission. Subjective side has been always with us, and this point was emphasized always without losing objective, you know, side of the truth. Sometime, you know, people ignore the objective side of the truth-people who call themselves "spiritual" person who, you know, ignore the objective side of the truth. That is also a mistake.

But if we, you know, [are] caught by, you know, the objective side of the truth and rely on the truth, you know, with idle attitude, the objective truth will not help you, as we human being already start to



experience, you know. Even though we can go to the moon, it doesn't help so much. As long as we rely on objective truth, scientific truth, you know, it doesn't help. Only when we, you know, each one of us feel the truth, appreciate the truth, and when we-each one of us, you know, appreciate truth, accept the truth, and ready to, you know, follow the truth, it will work. Putting themselves outside of the truth and study the truth, you know, then when something happen to him, you know [laughs], he doesn't know what to do.

[Laughs.] Do you know the story of the dragon, you know?[1] The Chinese person liked a dragon [laughs] very much. And he talked about dragon to his friend, and he painted [laughs] dragon, and he bought various kinds of, you know, dragon [laughs]. So dragon thought, "If I," you know, "if real dragon like me visited him, he may be very," you know, "happy." So one day [laughs], the real dragon sneaked into his room [laughs, laughter]. He couldn't know what to do! Waah! [Laughs, laughter.] He couldn't even run away. He couldn't even stand up. Waah! [Laughs, laughter.]

For long, long time we have been like, you know, like him. That is not our attitude. We should be always dragon-not only, you know, more than his friend, we should be always dragon himself. Then you will not be afraid of any dragon. But, you know, you may not know what is dragon [laughs] either [even?]. So that is another, you know [laughs] side of that, you know, another difficulty, you know, because [laughs] it is difficult to appreciate, you know, dragon.

So from various angle, we should be ready to study our way. With this kind of, you know, understanding you will practice zazen. Zazen become zazen, and zazen become your own zazen, and you are buddha. And, you know, you can, you know, express your true nature in various way. That is freedom from the form of practice, you know. Whatever you do, you can, you know, express your, you know-you will be really you, you know. Whatever you do, you know, you will be buddha in its true sense. The difference between this kind of practice with this understanding and, you know, the, you know, lazy practice with poor, superficial understanding of form and instructions and teaching, you know. There is big, big difference. After all, as Buddha said, you know, you should only rely on yourself. There is no one you can rely on. You should be relying on yourself. It means that you should be boss of everything. You should see, you should understand, you know, Buddha's teaching and our practice, you know, as your own, you know. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

...[at that time don't say ... "if you say yes" = covering eyes/ears/mouth ...][2] ... or bad, you know. Don't stick to your own karma you created. You should be free from the karma, you know, and plunge into the practice on each moment. Then, you know, there is no karma, you know, who will control you. You are free from karma in our practice. And if your everyday life is based on this practice, then your

life is not karmic life. It looks like, you know, the way of life of non-Buddhist and Buddhist [is the] same, but it is completely different. One is karmic life, and other is the life, you know, free from karma.

In short, you know, if you can say, "Hai" [laughs], at that moment you are free from karma. If you can say, "Hai! Yes I will!" you know, then there is no karma. When you say "bad" [laughs], nevertheless, wait a moment [laughs, laughter]. At that moment you will, you know, be bound by your own karma. Quite easy [laughs]. "Yes, I will," you know. That is how you keep our precepts.

When you receive precepts, you know, I may say, "Can you," you know, "are you sure to keep this precepts?" you know [laughs]. If you think, "Oh, 'Don't kill'. I may kill many things [laughs]." Better not to say "yes," you know [laughs]. Then you cannot receive precepts. Anyway, you should say, "YES!" [laughs]. Then you can-you are keeping precepts-you kept precepts. When you keep precepts, at that moment, you know, whole world are keeping precepts in its true sense. You know, scientific mind will not accept what I say [laughs], but, you know, as Buddha said, as you accept it or not is, you know, my problem-your problem [laughs, laughter], you know, so ideal [I dare?] say, if you say, "Yes, I will," you know, then you are free from karma.

Even though, you know, you shouldn't say- Even though you say "Yes," you know, you don't mean "Yes" [laughs]. That will be- Someone may say, you know, but, you know, actually, if you say "YESSS" [laughs, laughter], if your mind is tender enough to say "YESSS" [laughs, laughter], I may look very, you know, look like, you know, children-like, maybe [laughs], but that is the way, you know, that is the way how you keep precepts.

So after giving various precepts to you one by one in this way, and after you accept-various priest, maybe 250 or 500 [laughs] you know, one by one, and what I should say after is, "You should keep our precept always in that way," you know. The way we keep precepts should be like that, you know. You say our, you know, ceremony to give precepts is, you know, just form-formal practice. It is not so. First of all, you know, I may say, if you receive precepts, you will be a son of Buddha and you will sit with Buddha. You will be sitting with the Buddha if you receive precepts. If you don't, you know, if you are always involved in, you know, karmic life with superficial understanding of subjective or objective side of the truth, you know, you are not Buddha. But receiving precepts or practicing zazen-true zazen, true precepts-and when you actually receive it from me, from teacher, then you are Buddha, and, you know, there is no difference between, you know, accepting precepts and practicing our zazen. There is no difference.

So, you know, your teacher may say, "You should," you know, "keep our precept in this way." So when you practice zazen, your teacher may say, "You are really Buddha." It is so. And your teacher may say, "You

should practice zazen always in that way." That is the way you practice zazen. So it is not just form. It include, you know, truth and attainment and, you know, progress in your practice. You have, you know, all kinds of, you know, virtue in your practice.

That is the spirit, you know, you must have in your practice. Not difficult at all. If I say "spirit," you know, "good spirit" or "bad spirit," maybe someone like Eka[3] can be a [laughs], you know, Bodhidharma's disciple. But everyone can be Bodhidharma's disciple, you know, without cutting [off] your arm [laughs].

Ahhh. Okay?

Ah? Maybe one hour? Okay. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: City Center transcript and notes on the original tape shell, Side B. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (4/4/01).

[1] Probably referring to the story of Sho-kung (Jap. Seiko or Shoko) in the Hsin-hsu (Shinshi Ryaku). Sho-kung loved painted and carved dragons but was terrified when visited one day by the real thing. "Do not become so accustomed to images that you are dismayed by the real dragon" (Dogen-zenji, Fukun Zazen-gi, in Nishijima and Cross, ed., Shobogenzo, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 282).

[2] Text in brackets is from handwritten notes on the original cassette shell, Side B.

[3] Dazu Huike (Taiso Eka): 487-593. Second Chinese Zen Patriarch. He is said to have cut off his left arm and presented it to Bodhidharma, who then accepted him as his student.

## **2 - Okesa Ceremony**

Sunday, June 06, 1971

Okesa Ceremony  
San Francisco

[The tape begins with Tenshin-sensei Reb Anderson reciting the verse attributed by Shakyamuni Buddha, quoted in the fascicle "Kesa-koduko," in Dogen-zenji's Shobogenzo. The translation may have been by Suzuki-roshi.]

Tenshin-sensei: I will read now a translation of the sutra we just chanted:

Listen carefully, Chiko Bisshu,[1] to the ten precious virtues intrinsic to the garment of the great field of blessedness. While common clothing encourages the growth of delusion, the Buddha's garment of the dharma, the okesa, is by no means like that.

The okesa enables one, first of all, to achieve the completion of clear conscience. The okesa covers the dishonorable conduct. It is worthy to be called "the field where perpetual blessedness grows."

Secondly, the okesa enables one to rest in the ultimate repose, eliminating discomfort from cold and heat or a poisonous insect with the preserving way-seeking mind.

Thirdly, the okesa enables one to be free from greed in the homeless life of a monk and eradicates the five false views. It directs one's effort towards the right practice.

Fourthly, the okesa enables one to elicit the same blessedness as King Brahma by paying homage on one's knees to the okesa like a banner woven with gems.

Fifthly, the okesa enables one to enjoy happiness in heavenly and human worlds under no influence of sinfulness, always in the belief that wearing the okesa identifies itself with the worship of a stupa.

Sixthly, the okesa enables one to realize that as a true monk wears and reveres the okesa, made by the three proper methods and arrangement of its materials, color, and measurement, all his conduct is uncontaminated by upward attraction.

Seventhly, the okesa enables one to realize that all the buddhas admire its virtues and call it the fertile field, because to wear it is the best way to confer benefit on all beings.

Eighthly, the okesa enables one to cultivate the root of the enlightened mind and to practice under the inspiring influence of the okesa.

Ninthly, the okesa enables one to realize that the germ of the religious awakening is like a spring seedling-that it is growing, and the surpassing result of the enlightened mind is like an autumn fruit.

Tenthly, the okesa enables one to be unspoiled by the poisonous arrow of delusion due to wearing the indestructible armor.

The Buddha has, as mentioned briefly above, admired the ten precious virtues of the okesa which surpass all description, even if one were to

spend an incredible time to describe it.

A dragon with even a thread of the okesa is able to escape the hazard of falling prey to the garuda,[2] king of birds.

Crossing the sea, carrying the okesa with him, he [a person] is by no means concerned about the danger of dragon, fish, and other devils. Even a thunderbolt or unforeseen disasters, fear and stay away from those who wear the okesa. All demons simply cannot reach a layman who wears the okesa.

When one seeks the life of a homeless monk with this awareness, and wants to be free from worldly desire for the sake of practice, demons' palaces in all the ten directions will shake and collapse. And the Buddha and buddhahood will be revealed.

Suzuki-roshi: Thank you very much for your [10-15 words obscured by mike noise] ... Yoshida-roshi.[3] I have heard of how important practice is to wear okesa. But it is not so easy to meet the occasion to have or to receive okesa-especially okesa which is made in proper way, you know. It is-you may feel funny if I say "proper," but to transmit teaching properly is not so easy thing.

I don't say we have been neglected the study of okesa for long long time. But under the very difficult circumstances, it was not so easy to transmit how to make okesa, how to wear okesa, and what does it mean to wear okesa. What is the relationship between our zazen practice and okesa-wearing practice? And what is the relationship between how to make okesa and our teaching transmitted from Buddha?

If you understand how to-how to practice zazen, and how to make okesa, how to wear okesa, then you may find out the similarity of two practice. It is not similar-not only similar but also it is the expression-two ways of expression of our buddha-nature.

The word-words we explain or express the virtue of okesa and virtue of our zazen practice maybe, you know, because the home of practice [?]. But if you really understand what does it mean by those explanation of okesa and of zazen practice, you will find out, "Oh, that is not two different thing. It is just one practice. It is not different in its spirit."

Right now, I don't have enough time to explain the sutra we recited right now. But for an instance, here it says, "The miraculous or supernatural power of okesa is beyond our understanding." [4] And it will lead our practice to go [?]. And it will enrich our practice. The word "supernatural" or "beyond our understanding," you know, it is nothing but another explanation of our zazen practice. We always say, "Just practice zazen. Just practice zazen." Why we say so is even though you think about it, you know, your thinking mind will not reach the real virtue of our practice because it is beyond our understanding.

We practice zazen, you know. By practice, only by practice you will understand what it is. And you will find out the real meaning of your everyday life: eating, sleeping, working, you know-whatever you do, because [if] your conduct, your intention [attention?] is based upon our true practice it makes sense. If we lose the foundation of real practice, our life does not mean anything even though you live more than one hundred years. It does not mean anything.

Today, at last, I could receive the proper-right okesa, properly made. I don't think-I don't think it is too late for me to receive this okesa. I don't think so. I'm still think I am very lucky to receive it, you know. You may think "He is-" you know, "We thought he is a great Zen master, but he just received okesa today." [Laughs.] You may think you-you are fooled by me. But, you know, my spirit is always aiming at one thing-one truth, which can be true with everyone: layman and priest, Japanese and American, and Indian people and European nation. We are in just one truth. That is why I always say it is not so easy thing to achieve Buddha's way. It cannot be so easy as long as our cultural background is different, as long as our way of life is different, our language is different, it cannot be so easy.

But there is something which all of us aim at. The okesa is the symbol of that oneness-the expression of this, you know, one goal, one spirit. Maybe even though I receive okesa right now, even though I shave my head long, long time ago, I must shave my head again and again. Even though I received ordination long, long time ago, but still it is necessary to receive okesa. Many and many a times [1 word unclear: "really"?) this kind of sincere practice, as long as you are-you do not lose the sincerity or way-seeking mind for the ultimate goal of human being, then every time you do something, that practice will enrich your experience of dharma and strength-make your spirit stronger and stronger. And you will be really a good example of bodhisattva.

No one can be too late to receive proper okesa. No one can be too late to be ordained as a Buddhist. Here I mean-Buddhist-I said "Buddhist," but I don't mean any special, you know, religious group. Only when you neglect-only when you lose the spirit to attain the oneness of all being, including all monks, all animate and inanimate being.

You say "this religion or that religion," "layman or priest." Actually, all of us should be eventually priests-all of us, without any exception. All of us should be priest. But until we have-we can accept priesthood from the bottom of the heart-bottom of your heart, you will be laymen. As Dogen-zenji said, right now we are teacher and disciple. But all of us are actually friend-friends of Buddhist.

Those who received okesa already, you should appreciate what does it mean-the meaning of receiving it. And those who haven't, you know, respect okesa. And you should know someday you will receive okesa.

And those who joined this family by chance, also should know-or may know some day what we are doing here. Some day.

So if you practice our way, this kind of spirit, you know, whatever you do, it makes sense. When you lose this spirit, you will be lost. Even though you wear okesa, you will be lost. So, you know, to respect the truth is a very important thing. You shouldn't-you shouldn't say "this or that" because everything has some meaning as they are.

I am so happy to have Yoshida-roshi here in Zen Center to introduce the real practice for us. I met Yoshida-roshi's teacher and master [Eko] Hashimoto-roshi[5] at Eihei-ji only once. But I heard of his sincere practice for long, long time. And he is no more. So Yoshida-roshi is as a successor of Hashimoto-roshi, striving for the study of okesa and continue Hashimoto-roshi's spirit. I don't know how to express my gratitude for her and for her teacher Hashimoto-roshi. Hashimoto-roshi was a good friend of my teacher Kishizawa [Ian]-roshi and also my master [Gyokujun So-on Suzuki] who helped Kishizawa-roshi.[6]

In Japan, you say Buddhism is almost died. But I don't think so. When, you know, something looks like dying, true spirit will arise. That is always true with something which is [1 word unclear]. If it is died-if it is dying, I think "let it die." If it is not true, it will die. So, you know, Buddha take care of something which is dying. If something is true, it will arise again. And true teacher will appear in some way. It is not number of people, but the quality of our practice. I think something will happen to America, where there is so many sincere student.

Thank you very much.

Thank you very much for [several words not clear: probably addressing Yoshida-roshi, possibly in Japanese].

---

Source: Original tape SR-71-06-06. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shohaku Okumura-sensei. Transcribed verbatim by Bill Redican (12/28/00).

[1] Chiko is the Japanese equivalent of the monk's name Jnanaprabha. Bisshu is probably the Japanese equivalent of Sanskrit bhikshu, monk. The original term that Dogen used in "Kesa-koduko" is biku.

[2] The great mythical bird who feeds upon dragons; one of the eight guardians of Buddhism (along with devas, dragons, et al.).

[3] Eshun Yoshida-roshi: Teacher of okesa sewing in the lineage of Eko Hashimoto-roshi.

[4] Attributed to Shakyamuni Buddha by Dogen-zenji in "Kesa-koduko."

[5] Eko Hashimoto-roshi: 1890-1965.

[6] Kishizawa Ian-roshi: 1865-1955.

### **3 - Sesshin Lecture #2**

Monday, June 07, 1971

Sesshin Lecture #2

San Francisco

Shikantaza, zazen, is-our zazen is just to be ourselves. Just to be ourselves. We should not expect anything, you know, just to be ourselves. And continue this practice forever. That is our way, you know. Even, we say, even in, you know (what do you say?) [laughs], even in, you know [snaps fingers], [student: "Snap of the fingers?"] [laughs, laughter], you know, in snapping your fingers there are millions of kalpas-no, cetanas. [1] The unit of time. You know, we say "moment after moment," but in your actual practice, moment is too long, you know. If we say "moment," you know, or "one breathing after another," you still involved in-your mind still involved in, you know, following breathing, you know, to follow breathe. We say "to follow breathe," "to follow our breathing," but the feeling is, you know, in each, you know-to live in each moment.

If you live in each moment, you do not expect anything. With everything, you know, you become you yourself. If you, you know, feel strictly yourself [your self?], without any idea of time even, you know, in smallest particle of time you feel yourself [your self?]. That is zazen.

Why we say so is if we are involved in idea of time, various desires will, you know, start to act some mischiefs [laughs]-they will become mischievous, you know. So-but if you, you know-when you have no idea of time, with everything, you know, you bec- [partial word]-your practice will go on and on.

So this practice is not so easy. Maybe you cannot continue this practice for even for one day, one period. If you try to continue it one period, you know, you must make a big effort. So what will you do, then, rest of the time of your five days is to extend this feeling for each period, or to prepared for, you know, for this shikantaza. Maybe that is what you can do, and this preparation, or to extend the practice to another period of time, eventually will be extended to everyday life. So everyday life-how you practice or how you extend our practice is to expose yourself as you are, you know. You shouldn't try to be someone else [laughs]. You should be very honest with yourself, and you express yourself fully. And you should be brave enough to express yourself, whatever, you know,



people may say, you know. It is all right. You should be just yourself, at least, at least for your teacher, you know. You should be just yourself.

Until your teacher may say, "Okay, in that way you should continue your practice," you know. Until your teacher say so, you should try hard. And after your teacher said, "Okay, now you should continue that practice," you know, "forever. You don't need me anymore," you know. That is, you know, actual practice, actual life of you. This is, you know, rather difficult unless you trust your teacher. Rather difficult, you know. But if you find out your teacher's spirit is the same spirit as you have, then you will be brave enough to continue this kind of practice.

Sometime you have to, you know, argue with your teacher-[laughs] sometime. That is okay. You should do that. But you should be ready to give up your argument, you know, when you are wrong, when you find out yourself, you know, sticking to some viewpoint [laughs] foolishly, you know, sticking to only one viewpoint. Or when you are making some excuse, you should give up. That is how you should-how to be honest with yourself. You should give up, you know: "I surrender. Okay." [Laughs.] "I am sorry." [Laughs.]

If you cannot accept what he says, you know, until you can accept him you should try to understand your teacher. For teacher and for you, what we should do is to perfect-to have perfect communication, you know. We should try to have perfect communication. So for a teacher, you know, the important point is, you know, always ready to surrender [laughs] to your disciple, you know. If teacher thinks, you know, he was wrong, he should say, "Oh, you are right. I was wrong." [Laughs.] If, you know, your teacher has that kind of spirit, you should have same spirit, you know. That is not so easy. You may think it is easy. If you continue this kind of practice, sometime people may think he is crazy [laughs]. Something wrong with him [laughs]. But doesn't matter.

We are not same, you know. Each one of us [is] different from the other. So each one has, you know, each one's problem. So, you know, it is okay. Anyway, you should be yourself. You should not, you know- Fortunately, you have Zen Center here, you know. Advantage of Zen Center for you is-Zen Center is not shade for you, shade which will protect you, you know. It is-it is not umbrella [laughs]. But, you know, there you can, you know, you can have, you know, real practice, you know. You can express yourself fully.

And you should open your eyes to, you know, appreciate other's practice, you know. You should, you know, you should be able to communicate with each other without words. Your mind-your eyes should be open to see other's practice. It does not mean to criticize others, but to appreciate or to know others.

That is why we have, you know, rules or rituals. You may say, you know, if you are practicing zazen, no one knows, you know, no one

understand your practice [laughs], but, you know, when you are practicing, it-you know, for me, it is, you know, easiest chance to understand you. Especially from the-if you-if I see from your back, you know, it is very easy to understand what kind of practice you have. So that is [why] sometime walk around [the zendo], not to hit-not to hit you [laughs] but to see you [laughs]. Very interesting [laughs, laughter].

If you are, you know, dancing or talking [laughs] or making big noise, it is rather difficult to understand you [laughs]. If you are reciting sutra, you know, each one has each one's own voice [laughs] and in the way you recite sutra is different. And it is, you know, easy to know with each other, even though you are not trying to understand. But if you practice together, eventually, you know, naturally you will be a good friend. Sometime because you know with each other [laughs], you know too well [laughs], so you-there your have some difficulty because of your small mind. But as long as your mind is big enough to expose yourself and to accept others, if you practice, you know, zazen or rituals together, then you will be a good friend.

And another point is already we have free from idea of time. You shouldn't, you know, try to be ordained, or you shouldn't worry how long you should, you know, stay layman. Or if you become priest, you shouldn't worry what will be your next step. When you are lay student, as a lay student you should, without expecting to be something, you should, you know, [be] honest with yourself. Because you try to be someone else, you lose your practice and you lose your virtue. When you try to be-when you are faithful to your, you know, position or to your work, your true being of you is there. This is a very important point.

Zen Center is, you know, community, and those who come and sit is also, actually even though they are not a member, actually they are our member. We do-even though we do not call them "member," but in its true sense they are also our member. When they come for the first time to Zen Center it may be difficult for them to know what we are doing. But more and more, they will feel what we are doing and join our practice. So those who knows, who are practicing our way, should give them some idea of practice or feeling of practice. The best way to, you know, to give the feeling of practice is to have the feeling to-each one have our feeling fully. Then naturally people who come will feel it. But if our practice is wrong, you know, they will-what they will feel is something completely, you know, different from the proper feeling a Buddhist must have.

Why wrong feeling is created is because we, you know, we have-we are involved in selfish practice. I said don't have no idea of time, you know. Why I say so is if you [are] involved in idea of time-today or next year, you know, or tomorrow-idea of, you know, selfish practice will start from there. It is all right to have idea of time, but that is the extended

practice of non-selfish practice on this moment, to express ourselves.

We don't know what will happen in-on each moment. So if you fail to express yourself fully, then you will regret [it] later. Because you expect some other time, you fail to express yourself fully. And you will be misunderstood by your friend. So you should be always express yourself fully. That is why we observe-we eat in some certain way. You may think, you know, in that way you cannot express yourself, but it is not so, you know. Because you have some way to, you know, serve, you know, you can express yourself-how much sincerity you have.

If there is no way, you know, the way is-if you have many ways of expressing yourself, you know, you don't know how to do it. So if you know how to do it, you know, you can express yourself in that way. It is big mistake if you think you cannot express, you know. If you want to express yourself, it may be, you know, the best way is to do something whatever you want to do. You may, you know, do, you know, exactly how you feel, you know, superficial feeling, you know, just choosing some way, you know. Because you or when you don't know what to do. Oh, you know, this is not [laughs], you know, you are not expressing yourself. If you know what to do exactly and you do [it] then you can, you know, express yourself fully.

So in that way, strong person express himself [in a] very strong way [laughs], and, you know, kind person will express himself, you know, very kindly, doing same thing, you know. When you pass [out] the sutra card, you know, from this end to the other end, you know, each one, you know, pass it [laughs] each one's own way. So if I see it, you know, it is easy to see, you know, because they do it same way. If they do it different way, you know, it is very difficult to know. Because you do, you know, it-all of you doing same way from this corner to the other [laughs], it is easy to see [laughs]. And because you repeat, you know, same thing over and over again, so everyone can understand, you know, your friend's way, you know. Eventually, though you shut your eyes, if you [laughs]-"Oh," [laughs] "that was Katherine." [Laughs, laughter.]

That is advantage of, you know, having rules and rituals. Or else, you know, your understanding or your relationship with people-without this kind of understanding, your understanding of people will be very superficial, you know. If someone wear beautiful [rubs own robe], you know, robe you think he is a good priest [laughs]. You know, if someone give you some beautiful thing, you think he is very kind to you [laughs], you know. That kind of understanding is very superficial. If he think [bring?], you know, a beautiful thing, you know, you think she is good person [laughs]. That kind of understanding is not, you know, good understanding. Very superficial.

Usually, you know, our system of the society is built up [in] some superficial, frivolous way, you know, always changing. What, you know,

the controlling power will be money or something, you know, a big noise [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, controlling power because our eyes, our ears are not open, [not] subtle enough to see things, and we are-our feeling is very, you know, dull.

Most people who visit Zen Center may feel Zen Center is very strange place [laughs]. "They do not talk so much. They do not even laugh." [Laughs.] "What are they doing?" [Laughs, laughter.] But we, you know, actually, you know, without talking so much, we can communicate. We don't say, you know, we don't smile always, but we can feel others' feeling, and our mind is always open, and we are behaving exactly, you know, behaving-expressing ourselves fully. Actually, you know, even though you are not trying to express yourself, you are expressing yourself anyway [laughs]. If your mind is open, you can see. Those who are accustomed to, you know, big noise, you know, cannot see anything here-that's all.

We should extend this kind of practice to city life, and we must have more friend, so that we can be-all of us can be a good friend of each other, of others. It is not difficult thing when you decide to be honest with yourself and to express yourself fully, without expecting anything. Just to, you know, be yourself and ready to understand others-that is how you extend our practice to everyday life.

But it is not so easy to be free from the selfish practice. So even for one hour a day, we should try to sit shikantaza, without moving, without expecting anything, as if you are, you know, in the last minute. Moment after moment, you know, you feel your last minute. Inhaling-in each inhaling and in each exhaling there is countless, you know, units of time, and you should live in each unit of time.

And smoothly exhaling first, and then inhaling. When you, you know- Calmness of your mind is beyond the end of your exhaling. And if you exhale in that way, smoothly, without even trying to exhale, you are going to the, you know, complete calmness of-you are entering into the complete perfect calmness of your mind. You do not exist anymore, you know. And if you enter the complete calmness of your mind, then naturally, you know, your exhaling will start from there. And all the blood you have will be, you know, cleaned, catching every, you know, everything from outside, and that fresh blood carrying everything from outside and pervade your body and refresh your body. You are completely refreshed. And you start to exhale, to extend that fresh feeling to the emptiness. You exhale. So, moment after moment, without trying [to do] anything, you continue shikantaza.

Complete shikantaza may be difficult because of your pain in your legs. But even though you have pain in your legs, you can do that. Even though your practice is not good enough, you can do that. So you-your breathing-with your breathing, you know, you will vanish gradually. You will fade into the emptiness. And natural inhaling ... [Tape turned over.]

[will bring back] [2] ... bring back to yourself with some color or form. And your exhaling, again, with your exhaling, you gradually fade into emptiness-empty white paper. That is shikantaza.

I'm just explaining, you know, the feeling of shikantaza. So when you- important point of shikantaza will be, you know, in, you know, in your inhaling. You, you know- important point is- excuse me- exhaling. Instead of trying to feel yourself, but try to fade in emptiness when you exhale.

When you have this practice in your last moment, you have nothing to [be] afraid of. You are actually, you know, aiming at emptiness, empty area. There is no other way for you to have a feeling of immortality- or mortality, oh, excuse me, mortality. You become one with everything after you exhale- completely exhale- with this feeling. If you are still alive, naturally you will, you know, inhale again. "Oh" [laughs, laughter], "I'm still alive!" [Laughs, laughter.] "Fortunately or unfortunately!" So you start to exhale and try to fade into emptiness. This is, you know- you don't know, maybe [laughs], what kind of feeling it is. But some of you will know it. By some chance you must have felt this kind of feeling.

When you have this practice, you know, you cannot be angry so easily [laughs]. Because you are interested in inhaling, you know, more than exhaling [laughs], you become angry quite easy [laughs]. You are trying to [be] alive always, you know. My friend, you know, wrote on newspaper the other day. He had heart attack, and what he could do was just exhaling. He couldn't take inhale. That was terrible feeling [laughs], he said. But if he, you know, could try to exhale, you know, at that moment as if we exhale, you know, aiming for emptiness, you know, then I think he didn't feel so bad. To have exhale is great, you know, joy for us, rather than inhaling. But he, you know, he tried to, you know, inhale- take another inhale, you know. He thought he cannot take inhale anymore- inhaling anymore. But if he could try to, you know, exhale as we do, then, you know, more easily I think he could take another inhaling.

So exhaling is very important for us. So to die is more important than to try to [be] alive. Because we always try to [be] alive, so we have trouble. Instead of trying to [be] alive or active, if we try to be calmer and die or fade away into emptiness, then, you know, naturally we will be taken care of. Buddha will take care of us. Because we lose mother's, you know, bosom [laughs], we are not anymore her children, you know. So if we like, you know, the emptiness like we, you know, like we, you know, feel your mother's bosom, then mother will take care of you. The moment after moment, you shouldn't lose this kind of, you know, practice when you practice, you know, shikantaza.

Various secret of religious practice is in this point. When they [Jodo-shu] say, "Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu," [3] you know, they wanted to be Amida Buddha's children. "Namu Amida Butsu, Namu

Amida Butsu," you know. That is how they repeat Amida Buddha's name in their practice. Same thing is true with our zazen practice. Zazen practice is not different from their practice. If you know how to practice shikantaza, and if they know how to practice-how to repeat, excuse me, Amida Buddha's name, cannot be different, you know, as long as Amida Buddha's, you know, their practice is Buddhism. As a Buddhist, we have same practice in different way.

So we can, you know, enjoy, we are free, you know. We feel free to express ourselves, because we are ready to fade, you know, into emptiness. If you are trying to, you know, to be active and special and trying to do something, you know, you cannot express yourself. Small self will be expressed, but big self does not appear from the emptiness. From the emptiness, only great self will appear. That is shikantaza, okay? [Laughs, laughter.] Not so difficult [laughs] if you try, if you really try.

Thank you very much.

---

Sources: City Center transcript and notes on back of original tape case. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/28/00).

[1] kalpa (Sanskrit) or kappa (Pali): "world-period"; an inconceivably long period of time; an aeon. cetana (Sanskrit): "volition" or "don't think."

[2] The text in brackets is from a note on the back of the original tape case.

[3] "Veneration to Buddha Amida" or "Veneration to the Buddha of Boundless Light."

#### **4 - Sesshin Lecture, Day 5**

Wednesday, June 09, 1971

Sesshin Lecture, Day 5  
San Francisco

[I thought there was another day of sesshin, but today is our last day.]  
[1]

I think you, you know, have understood- (Can you hear me? Yeah? Not so well. Okay? Mmm?) You have understood what is zazen as your practice. But I didn't explain how you sit-I didn't give you instruction how you sit in detail, but I told you, you know, how I practice

shikantaza-or zazen. Maybe that is my way, so I don't know how another teachers will, you know, sit, I don't know, but that is anyway my shikantaza.

I started this practice, actually, maybe two-two years ago, after I went to [2-4 words unclear; one earlier transcript states, "cross the creek at Tassajara"] [laughs, laughter], not because I saw many good place to sit, you know. There's two [or] three caves where you can sit. But not because of that. Perhaps some of you were swimming, you know, with me at that time. Some beautiful girl students [laughs, laughter] and Peter [Schneider?] was there [laughs, laughter]. And as you-I cannot swim, actually [laughs], but because they were enjoying swimming so much, so I thought I may join [laughs]. But I couldn't swim. But there were so many beautiful girls over there, so I tried to, you know, go there [laughs, laughter], without knowing I couldn't swim [laughs], so I was almost drowned [laughs, laughter]. But I knew that, you know, I will not die, I will not drown. I shall not be drowned to death, you know, because there are many students. So someone will help [laughs]. But I was not so serious.

But, you know, feeling was pretty bad, you know. Water is, you know-I am swallowing water [laughs]. So feeling was too bad, so I stretch my arm, you know, so that someone catch me [laughs]. But no one [laughs, laughter]-no one helped me. So I decided, you know, to go to the bottom [laughs, laughter], to work, but that was not possible either [laughs, laughter]. I was, you know, I couldn't reach to the bottom, or I couldn't get over the water. What I saw is beautiful girls' legs [laughs, laughter]. But I couldn't, you know [laughs], s- [partial word]-take hold of their legs, you know. I was rather scared [laughs, laughter].

At that time I realized that we will never have good practice, you know, unless we become quite serious, you know. I knew that I was not dying, you know, at that time, so I was not so serious, so I-because I was not so serious, you know, I, you know, had very difficult time. I thought if I, you know, knew I was, you know, anyway, I was dying, you know, I will not struggle anymore. What I could do is to stay still, you know [laughs], if I am dying, you know. Because I thought I had, you know, another moment, so I couldn't become so serious.

Since then, you know, I started shikantaza expecting, you know, another moment, moment after moment I tried to sit, you know, as if I am dying, you know, in the water. That helps a lot, you know. Since then my practice improved a lot. That is why, you know, and I tried so long time, and I think I am quite-I have good confidence in my practice, so I told you, you know, how I sit my shikantaza.

It was very interesting experience, you know. I was, you know, I was among beautiful girls [laughs], you know, and that sort of thing, you know, reminded me of Buddha's overcoming demons, you know [laughs, laughter]. I am sorry, you are not evil, but, you know, beautiful [laughs]

demons [laughs, laughter]. But if I am dying, you know, those beautiful girls will not help, you know. If I am really dying, not because of water, but because of my, you know, sickness or something, it will not help.

So we can sit, you know, with demons and beautiful girls, and, you know, or demons or snakes. You know, snakes is okay, you know [laughs]. When I am dying, you know [laughs], it will not hurt me, you know. Anyway, I am dying, so it is okay. And they are with me. They will be happy to be with me, and I am very happy to be with them. In that situation, everything is with us, and, you know, we are happy to be with them, by not being hurt or helped or disturbed. But usually it is difficult to feel in that way because we have always involved in gaining idea, expecting something in future. So usually it is very difficult. But when you-at least when you practice zazen, you should not be caught by, you know, you shouldn't be involved in gaining idea.

The most important thing is to confront with yourself and to be yourself. Then naturally, you know, you can accept things as they are, and you can see things as they are. You will have perfect wisdom at that time. That is why I told you my way of zazen.

Now, as Katagiri-sensei[2] told you last night, you know, you awaken, you know, from the dream. By "dream," you know, he means, you know, our usual everyday life, which is involved in gaining idea. And when you expect things, you know, in various selfish way, that is actually the dream you have. But after awakening from the dream, you know, what you mean [need?] is another to come back, you know, to actual life, which include your dream, you know.

Your dream is actually, you know, in your everyday life. Actually, you cannot stop dreaming, and you will have also-your life will not be so different from the life you have in your dream. A dream is something you-in dreams, something you experienced, you know, appears. So actually [laughs], not much difference, you know. What you do is maybe same. But when you realize that this is dream, it is our life from Buddha's viewpoint.

When you, you know, when you are able to sit, you know-practice shikantaza-and when you experience shikantaza, and when you understand the meaning of shikantaza, the meaning of your everyday life will [be] completely different. [Laughs.] Do you understand [laughs] how different it is [laughs]? If you don't understand, maybe you are not yet practicing shikantaza, maybe.

What will be the difference? You have freedom, you know, from everything. That is, you know, the main point. Usually you have no freedom from things you have or you see, you know. But if you experience, you know, or if you understand the experience of shikantaza, you will have freedom from things. And you will enjoy, you know, your life in its true sense because you are not attached to



anything.

We say always do not attach to anything, but, you know, literally it does not mean, so much, attachment or detachment. Detachment is not actually opposite of attachment. Attachment can be detachment, you know. Detachment can be attachment too. So words [laughs] doesn't mean so much, you know. "Detachment," you know [laughs, laughter]. "Attachment" [laughs]. Doesn't mean so much, you know.

Anyway, you know, if you become really happy, you know, really happy, and if that happiness, you know, continues, maybe that is detachment, you know, what we mean. Most of the happiness you have is a kind of happiness which you, after having that happiness, you will be [feel] regret, you know. "Oh," [laughs], "it was," you know, "at that time," you know, "we are very happy, but now [laughs] we are not so happy," you know. You will feel in that way.

But real happiness will last in your mind always and encourage you when you are not-in your adversity or in your happy life too. When you are successful, you will be, you know, you will enjoy the success, and you, you know, even though you fail, it is also good [laughs]. It will encourage you. Not encourage, but, anyway good. You can feel, you know, the feeling of-you can enjoy the feeling of failure: "Oh, this is pretty good." [Laughs, laughter.] "Not so bad as I thought," you know. That kind of feeling you will always have.

So you have always satisfied with things. So you have always enough. You don't want too much, you know, as you wanted before. Even though, you know, you start one-hundred-day sesshin from next morning, you can do it [laughs]. You will not be discouraged. You will not say, "I cannot do that," after five days [of] sesshin, "It is too much," you know [laughs]. You don't say so. "Okay, let's do it," you may say, you know, because you know you can do it.

In your life, you know, if you come to a great difficulty, you know, like you came to big mountain-not like Tassajara. Tassajara has many ways to go through [laughs], but big mountain doesn't have any passage, you know. Looks like so, actually, but, you know, even though you go Nepal, you know, there is way to get through. One-hundred [-day] sesshin is difficult if you, you know, do it. You can do it. Even though you die, nothing happens [laughs, laughter]. It is okay, you know. Something will happen anyway [laughs]. So you are always, you know, happy, and you will not be discouraged.

Dogen-zenji explained this kind of feeling, you know, in Tenzo kyokun, Instruction to the Head Cook, you know. Even though you think, "I cannot cook with this kind of poor material," but there is way to cook. If you really want to, you know, want to make your friends happy you can do it anyway. If you have big mind, kind mind, and joyful mind always. That kind of mind arise from shikantaza. As long as you expect, you

know, anything in future, you know, you cannot, you know, do things well. When you don't expect anything and just do it, something will happen there. That is actually shikantaza.

The kind of life-and the kind of life-next point is, kind of life you choose will, you know, will be different. Before you may like something great, big, and beautiful [laughs]. Number one, you know, in California [laughs, laughter]. Number one Zen Center, and Zen practice, you know, Zen practice monastery in America, in the world. Even better than Japan [laughs]-Japanese monastery [laughs]. That will be, you know, what you want before you have right practice. The things you choose will be different and way of life you take will be different.

Your life, you know, from your age of hippie [laughs], is very different, I think. Time of hippie, you know, [is] different. Very Buddhist-like. That is why you like Buddhism, maybe. But if you become a Buddhist, your life will change more-more-you will be super-hippie [laughs, laughter], not usual one. Your style of, you know, your lifestyle is-looks like very Buddhistic, but not enough. And, you know, when you have that kind of, you know, strict practice and when you ignore your practice, your weak point of practice, then eventually you will have good practice. More and more you will understand what, you know, Zen master said and appreciate their life more and more.

After my lecture, I thought about what I said, you know. Usually I forget, you know [laughs], what I said quite easily, but [laughs] the lecture I gave you was pretty serious one, so [laughs]-result of actual experience, you know. So I thought about it, you know, and I thought-I think I put emphasis on some hard, you know, practice, you know, difficult, hard practice: "Don't expect," you know, "next moment," or something. "Don't move!" [Said with mock seriousness.] [Laughs, laughter.]

But I am sorry but I have to say so, you know, because your practice looks like too weak, you know. I want it [wanted?] to make you stronger, you know. But actually what I meant was you need, you know, even though your-that your practice is not so good is okay, but that you move is maybe okay, but, you know, if you lack confidence, you know, zazen cannot be zazen. If you, you know, are not strict enough with yourself, and if you have-if you [have a] lack of confidence, then it doesn't work. That is why I said so, but what you will-what makes your practice deeper and deeper, and the experience, you know, better and better, is usual effort, you know, usual effort-day-by-day effort to sit. That makes your experience, you know, better and better.

In China and in Japan there are many teachers who attained enlightenment, you know, like this [laughs] [snapped fingers]: Chht! [Laughs.] Like this [snapped fingers again] [laughs, laughter]. You may think so, but actually that was the result of many years practice or many times of failure. This is Dogen-zenji's famous words: "That you

hit," you know, "a mark," you know, "is the result of ninety-nine times failure." [Laughs.] The last arrow hit the mark, but that is after ninety-nine times failure. So failure is okay actually. But each time you, you know, hit the mark, each time you shoot you do it, you know, with confidence, you are sure to hit the mark. That is, you know, important. So Dogen-zenji said, "Ninety-nine failure is okay." [Laughs.] So anyway, I will [laughs] continue to try to hit the mark that doesn't work.

So each time you sit, you know, it is necessary for you to do your best in your practice. Anyway, if you only sit, you know, [in the] cross-legged position for forty minutes, "That is zazen," you may think. But that is not zazen. If it is preparation, it is okay. Like you practice yoga, it is okay. But, you know, the most important point should be, you know, done-all your effort, physical and spiritual.

That is why, you know, we must have good breathing. Anyway, when you do something physically, breathing follows. And if your way of breathing is not appropriate, you know, you cannot do any physical work. Even [when] you sew, you know, breathing should be-should follow. When you lift some heavy things, you know, breathing should be completely, you know, controlled, or else you cannot lift heavy thing. You may say, breathing-anyway you can take breathing, but breathing-if you want to, you know, have good breathing, you know, it is not so easy. Your posture should be right, and your mudra should be right because your mudra is a symbol of your, you know, mentality. If spine is not straight, your breathing will not be deep enough.

So if you think about those point-how to make, you know, how to control all of your mental and physical, you know, effort. Of course it takes time, you know. Enlightenment does not come when [until] you are in perfect control of your mind and body, you know. You cannot accept it. You don't feel you have enlightenment. Or, in other word, when your mind and body [are] completely one, then enlightenment is there actually. Whatever you hear, whatever you think, that will be enlightenment. So it is not the sound of bamboo hit by a stone or color of plum trees that makes them enlightened, but their practice, you know, is there. So they attained enlightenment. So enlightenment could be many-so in your everyday life, you know, you have, you know, always chance to have enlightenment. Whatever you do, you know: If you go to restroom, there is, you know, chance to attain enlightenment. If you cook, there is enlightenment. If you clean floor, there is enlightenment.

I think we are very fortunate to have various teachers. It is not just, you know, happened in this way, but previous, you know, human effort came to this point. Your culture, you know, is, you know, came to this point where you want to study Zen. Japanese Zen tradition came to the point that we need some revival. It is not-this kind of feeling didn't happened-arised in Japan just, you know, ten or twenty years. But pretty long time, this kind of, you know, movement was there.

So far as I know, Oka Sotan-roshi,[3] you know, was the-all the source of-source of all the teachers, you know-source of power of all the teachers. Tatsugami-roshi,[4] you know, studied under Harada-roshi.[5] Harada-roshi's, you know, teacher was Oka Sotan. My teacher was Kishizawa-roshi,[6] and my master was Suzuki So-on,[7] and their teacher was, you know, Oka Sotan-roshi. Yoshimura-roshi's[8] teacher, you know, is Hashimoto-roshi.[9] Hashimoto-roshi's teacher is Oka Sotan-roshi, you know.

At Komazawa [University] there were, you know, good scholar of Buddhism-Eto Sokuo.[10] He was my classmate-my teacher's classmate-master's [Gyokujun So-on's] classmate when they were studying at Komazawa. At that time, Oka Sotan-roshi was head of Komazawa.

So if we, you know-things didn't happen, yeah, to Zen Center just by chance. If we don't know what to do, if we study, you know, Oka-roshi's teaching, Kishizawa-roshi's teaching, or [Kodo] Sawaki-roshi's [?] teaching, you know. Answer is there. [Sentence finished. Tape changed.] [... because all those teaching],[11] you know, came from one source. He was a really great, you know, teacher. Not only he was a great teacher for his disciples, but also for laymen who studied under him he was a great, you know, teacher.

I wanted to tell you, you know, something about how to extend our shikantaza to your everyday life, you know, today, right now. But-and I-I, you know-I take out the interpretation of precepts by Oka Sotan-roshi. And I read, you know, preface of it [laughs], preface, which was written by Kishizawa-roshi. And in the introduction of, written by Kishizawa-roshi for Oka Sotan-roshi's interpretation of precepts, he referred to Oka-roshi's, you know, precepts lineage, which was wrong [laughs]. Which was wrong.

Kishizawa-roshi knew, you know, under the, you know, many-after many years study under Oka-roshi, what is right lineage. Lineage should be like this, he knew-Kishizawa-roshi knew what-how it should be. But Oka-roshi's, you know, his teacher's lineage was wrong because Dogen-zenji's lineage consist of two lineage: Rinzai and Soto. And came to Dogen-zenji one from Nyojo[12] Soto lineage. Another is from Myozen, [13] Rinzai master, disciple of Eisai.[14]

But his lineage is just Soto, you know-Oka-roshi's. So, you know, Kishizawa-roshi have to ask him why. "Why is this, you know? It is wrong," you [he] said, "But your lineage is wrong" [laughs]. "What is that?" you know. When he asked him, you know, Oka Sotan-roshi, you know, his face changed, and tears came down from his eyes. "Yes, it is wrong." And he started to talk about his lineage.

When Oka-roshi was young, he wanted to go to Komazawa University-

Komazawa College-you know, to study Buddhism. He wanted to go there. But his master Token[15] did not allow him or could not afford to send Oka-roshi to school, so he didn't say yes so easily. So, you know, he said, you know, "I want to study hard and become a good teacher and give precepts, you know, jukai[16]-ojukai-having ojukai-e and precepts to many people, so let me study more." And his master Token was pleased: "Okay, then you can go."

But after he finished schooling, he came back. At that time he was making, you know, wood print, you know, for lineage, you know, to make, you know, lineage paper, okechimyaku.[17] Some of you already received my okechimyaku when you received, you know, rakusu. His master was making which is wrong, so Oka-roshi explained, you know, in detail, it should not be like this, you know. It should not be just lineage of Soto, it should be Rinzaï and Soto.

His teacher agreed: "Okay, maybe I was wrong, but," you know, "this lineage is the lineage which Kankei-zenji[18] had"-also famous teacher-"Kankei-zenji had. So according to Kankei-zenji's lineage, my lineage is not wrong. But if Dogen-zenji's lineage is like that, it should be like that," you know, he said. So-and then-and he said, "I will make another wood print."

But Kishizawa-roshi-you know, when he came back and saw him-when Kishizawa-roshi-Oka-roshi saw him again, he, you know, he had-he was making-he finished half of it already, which was quite good. And his-Token-his teacher-Sotan-roshi's teacher went to some specialist to make it and studied how to make it and, you know, tried to do it again.

But as Oka-roshi came back, you know, he made it although it was not complete. But he made it. And show it to him. At that time, you know, Oka-roshi ag- [partial word] now-his face changed again, and tears came down, especially when he said, "This is the okechimyaku," you know, "lineage paper for you when you have big," you know, "ojukai-e. This is for you." When he said so, he almost cried and teacher and disciple cried, you know-what do you say-hugging and cried.

And then teacher said-Oka-roshi said, "This lineage paper is okay, although it is not," you know, "exactly [as] Dogen-zenji had it. It is okay. As long as," you know, "this wood last, I will use it." So that is why Oka-roshi's lineage paper is wrong. Because it was wrong, Kishizawa-roshi accused [him], you know, why [that] it is wrong. So when he was accused, again he [Oka] cried. Oka-roshi was that kind of person. It is not usual, you know, scholar or usual great Zen master. Not usual at all-very unusual. When, you know, why we say Dogen-zenji is so great is not because of Shobogenzo maybe, but because of his sincere practice, not only as a Zen master but also as a man, you know, as a human. He was the most sincere student of Buddhism. Oka-roshi was that kind of teacher, you know.

I didn't know actually, you know, what we should do with our old okesa after, you know, Yoshida-roshi show us which-how should be right traditional okesa, you know. I didn't know what to do. But, you know, when I took out [Oka-roshi's book on the precepts], I didn't know idea of solving this problem, you know, by Oka-roshi's help. But when I, you know-I wanted to know what will be the interpretation of precepts not to act [do] unchaste act, you know. So I wanted to know about it. But what I found out is that, you know, preface [by Kishizawa-zenji], you know, I haven't read that part. It was just, I thought, it is just introduction [laughs]. But, you know, when I need it, you know, it appears in front of me like that. You may say that is just by chance, but I don't feel in that way [laughs]. If you say things happen just by chance, you know, all the things happen just by chance [laughs]. When we don't know, we say, "Things happen by chance."

Katagiri-sensei and I, you know, discussed very hard about that point-what should we do? [Laughs.] We had no answer for that. It is not things-not that kind of thing we can ask Yoshida-roshi or someone else [about]. We should solve this problem just between us, who are responsible for this.

You think, you know, things happens, you know, in this way in America, at Zen Center, you know, but it is not just by chance. It is, you know, result of many years of many peoples' hard work, sincere work. It is not just, you know, way of propagating Buddhism. To us there is no idea of Buddhism. What is the truth will be always our, you know-main point is what will be the truth.

As Katagiri-sensei said, you know, last night, breathing should be upright to the sky. And we should sit on black cushion without moving, so that we can, you know, grow to the sky. That is, you know, how you practice zazen, how I practice zazen, how Katagiri-sensei practice zazen-as a priest, as a layman, you know. There is no difference in its-in the virtue, whether you are layman or a priest, if we know what is the purpose of practice and how we should grow-what will be our way of life as a Buddhist, you know. Only difference is, you know, we put more emphasis on the truth. Usual people do not respect truth so much, you know-little bit different [laughs].

But, you know, eventually you will find out which is more important, as you have already found out. We cannot be fooled by anything so easily, you know, and we shouldn't fool anyone. We must "settle ourselves on ourselves," as Katagiri-sensei says, you know. Excuse me [laughs]. "To settle one's self on one's self," you know, that is very important point. How you do it is to be yourself on each moment. Whatever you do, you must do it, you know. You shouldn't expect someone's help. You shouldn't be spoiled by some shelter, you know. You should protect yourself, and you should grow upright to the sky. That's all, you know. That's all, but little bit different, you know. Maybe we are crazy [laughs, laughter]. According to them we are crazy, but we think they are crazy

[laughs]. It's okay [laughs]. We will find out pretty soon which is crazy [laughter].

Okay. Thank you.

---

Sources: City Center transcript and notes on back of the original tape case. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shohaku Okumura-roshi and Miyagawa Keishi-san. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/22/00).

[1] Sentence in brackets is from original transcript. It was not recorded on tape and is thought to have been added by Brian Fikes, the original transcriber. A note in the original transcript stated: "There were many blanks in the first couple of sentences, which I filled in. -Brian F."

[2] Dainin Katagiri-roshi (1928-1990): Japanese Soto Zen master who first came to the United States in 1963. He was Suzuki-roshi's close colleague in the early years of San Francisco Zen Center, and he went on to establish the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center.

[3] Oka Sotan-roshi (1860-1922): a professor at and ultimately president of Komazawa University in Tokyo. He was the first in a series of lecturers on the Shobogenzo at Komazawa [Carl Bielefeldt, Sati Conference, MS p. 3]. His master was Nishiari Bokusan (1821-1910), the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo, from whom he received dharma transmission. He was teacher or master of Ian Kishizawa, Eko Hashimoto, Gyokujun So-on, Sawaki Kodo, and Sogaku Harada. He served as abbot of Daiji-ji and was named as the first abbot of Antai-ji temple in Gentaku, northern Kyoto, Japan. Shohaku Okumura stated that Sawaki Kodo and Eko Hashimoto studied with Oka Sotan at Shuzen-ji. [See also SR-71-06-12.]

[4] Soto Zen master and ino-roshi at Eihei-ji monastery in Japan for many years. A teacher or master of Jean Ross, Grahame Petchey, and Philip Wilson (all students of Suzuki-roshi) while they attended Eihei-ji. He visited Tassajara to help establish monastic forms and practices. He was head of training at Tassajara for the spring 1970 practice period and for two subsequent practice periods.

[5] Daiun Sogaku Harada-roshi (1870-1961): Soto teacher and abbot of Hosshin monastery in Japan who, together with his dharma heir Hakuun Ryoko Yasutani-roshi (1885-1973), employed koans in the Rinzai tradition as well as Soto shikantaza. Harada-roshi and Yasutani-roshi had several Western students, including Philip Kapleau (see, e.g., *The Three Pillars of Zen*).

[6] Ian Kishizawa-zenji (1865-1955): a leading interpreter of Dogen's Shobogenzo in his time, and author of a 24-volume commentary on it entitled Shobogenzo zenko. He received dharma transmission from Nishiari Bokusan and succeeded Oka Sotan and Gempo Kitano as official lecturer in the Shobogenzo series (the Genzo'e) at Eihei-ji, a position he held for thirteen years. Shunryu Suzuki attended him at Eihei-ji monastery when Kishizawa was seido (distinguished visiting priest in residence). Kishizawa served as third abbot of Antai-ji. After Ian Kishizawa left Eihei-ji, he moved to Gyokuden-in, a temple close to Shunryu Suzuki's own Rinso-in. Shunryu continued to study with Ian Kishizawa from 1932 until Kishizawa's death in 1955. [See Carl Bielefeldt, Sati MS, p. 5-6.]

[7] Suzuki So-on (c. 1877-1934): Gyokujun So-on Suzuki, Suzuki-roshi's master. He was legally adopted by the Suzuki family and received dharma transmission from Suzuki-roshi's father Sogaku Suzuki. He served as abbot of Zoun-in monastery, where Shunryu Suzuki began his monastic training.

[8] Ryogen Yoshimura: Soto monk who came from Japan to San Francisco in 1969 to help Suzuki-roshi. (See Wind Bell, 1970, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 30.) He died at a young age after returning to Japan.

[9] Eko Hashimoto-roshi (d. 1967) was known as a scholar of Dogen's Shobogenzo and an authority on the origins of the traditional okesa. He was Dainin Katagiri-roshi's second master at Eihei-ji (Wind Bell, 1971, No. 1, p. 3).

[10] Eto Sokuo was a scholar at Komazawa University, Tokyo, when Suzuki-roshi was a student there. He was a classmate of Suzuki-roshi's master Gyokujun So-on and served as fourth abbot of Antai-ji. A specialist in Dogen's Shobogenzo, he edited the first popular version of that work (Tokyo, 1939-1943, 3 vol.). He is given credit for instigating the new era of scholarly interest in the Shobogenzo that continues to the present. He also urged a new emphasis on a combination of scholarship and practice. [See Carl Bielefeldt, Wind Bell, Winter 1998, p. 21; MA thesis.]

[11] Text in brackets from note on back of original tape case.

[12] Tendo Nyajo: one of the lineages of the Soto school of Zen.

[13] Myozen Ryonen (also Myozen Butsuju), 1184-1225: early master of the Oryo school of Rinzai Zen; dharma successor of Eisai-zenji. Dogen-zenji's teacher.



[14] Eisai-zenji (also Myoan Eisai or Zenko Kokushi), 1141-1215: early master of the Oryō school of Rinzai Zen; dharma successor of Chinese Oryō master Kian Esho.

[15] Tokan Mitetsu-roshi.

[16] Ju-jukai: the Ten Major Precepts; jukai is the ceremony of administering and receiving these precepts. The letter o- is an honorific prefix. The suffix -e possibly means "realization."

[17] okechimyaku: a genealogy of Zen succession.

[18] Koga Kankei-zenji: 61st abbot of Eihei-ji.

## **5 - Zen Center Students**

Saturday, June 12, 1971

Zen Center Students  
San Francisco

We say "Zen Center student," you know. Or, we say "Zen Center." But it is-tonight-today-I want to make this kind of idea clear, you know, as much as possible. Although, you know, I say, "You are Zen Center students," and although you say, "You are Zen Center students," you say, "I am Zen Center student." I don't know! [Laughs.] I am not so sure who you are. But to me, as long as you are here, you know, to me you are Zen Center students. [Laughs.] That's all. And if you go out from this building, I don't know who you are. [Laughs.]

Do you know who you are? [Laughs.] Is there any particular, you know-do you belong to some particular, you know, religion? Are you member of some particular church, or member, you know-do you strictly belong to some group? I don't know. Perhaps not. Most of you does not belong to any group in its strict sense. But some of them [you] may belong to-strictly belong to Zen Center. And if someone belong [laughs] to Zen Center in its strict sense, and some of you do not belong to any school and yet practicing our way in the same building, you know, how that is possible [laughs], you know? How is it possible to practice, you know, same-some certain way, you know, with someone who strictly belong to some group. How is it possible? If that is not possible, you know, should I accept student who belong to Zen Center in its strict sense? Should I do that?

Maybe some student thinks in that way, but, you know, I accept, you know, students from various religion. Some of you may be Christian. Some of you may be Rinzai students. Some of you may be, you know-may, you know, still, you know, have some other teacher in your mind-

always, maybe. But still I accept them. Why is it possible for me to accept students, you know, from various religion as a Zen Center student without any discrimination? It's, you know-we, you know-I or we (same thing [laughs])-if I say "we" [laughs] you will be very much concerned about word "we." If I say "I," it may be okay, you know, but if I say "we," [laughs] it looks like, you know, there is some, you know, group, and so-called-it "Soto" or "Rinzai" group or, you know, Soto group. So if we say "we," you know, you may not feel so good, but to me it is same thing, you know. "We." "I." Same.

But anyway, at Zen Center, anyway, you know, I can accept students from various religion without any discrimination. That is why I must explain-I feel I have to explain why we sew rakus, you know, why we keep our precepts, you know, Buddhist precepts [laughs]. If I say "Buddhist precept," again you will not-some of you will not feel so good: "Buddhist precepts." you know. You think, you know, Buddhists have some particular precepts, but our precepts is not like that. So it is necessary for me to explain what is Buddhist precepts, why you sew rakus, you know, why you wear rakus.

I cannot, you know, or I have no intention to explain precepts in its traditional, you know, way, but I want to explain it as much as possible in some way who-in some way which you can understand, and which I, in some way, which I feel, you know, saying truthfully how I feel about precepts.

First of all, precepts, we say, or explanation of precepts-for an instance, Dogen-zenji or some other teachers-Bodhidharma-it's the precepts is, you know, something which everyone has, you know, as its-as his own nature. That is precepts. It is not, you know-precepts is not something which was decided by Buddha. Precepts is originally-precepts is something which makes Buddha Buddha, you know. Because of precepts he became Buddha. So precepts is first, and Buddha appeared, you know, next.

Before Buddha appear there were precepts. And so in this sense, before, you know, Bodhidharma appeared-came to China-there were precepts. So before everyone, you know, come to this world there is precepts. Everyone has the precepts in its true sense. When you come out, you know, you may be already, you know, male or female [laughs], so accordingly, you know, as soon as you take some form, there is some reason why you became-appear-in this world as a man or as a woman. And naturally women has their own way, and men has their own way. So, naturally various way of life will appear, and between boys [?], you know, according to his character, inborn character, or his physical, you know, condition, there must be various way of life. That is actually our precepts.

So, woman-a woman-who has more complicated physical, you know, body, has more precepts, and that is quite natural [laughs], you know.

You-a woman has more complicated-emotionally and physically, they are more complicated [laughs, laughter], so naturally a woman must have more precepts than [laughs] a man has. That is quite [laughs]-if you say, you know, that is not fair [laughs, laughter], it doesn't make sense, you know. It shouldn't be like that. If a woman has same precepts as a man has, that is not fair [laughs, laughter]. That is how precepts, you know, become written-down precepts.

And, you know, if so, you know, why should we say, you know, Buddhist precepts or Christian commandment or precepts, you know? According to the way of life, there are various interpretation of our true nature, our way of life, but originally it is, you know, just, you know, human nature.

According to the human nature, we have various precepts, and according to the condition we live, we have various precepts, that's all. When we, you know, transmit the precepts, we put emphasis on this point, you know, not each of 250 precepts, you know, but the, you know, original, you know, universal point which is, you know, universal to everyone, which is available to everyone, which, in some way, which everyone can accept it. We transmit our precepts. So instead of emphasizing-put emphasis on various, you know, precepts, one by one, we put more emphasis on our original human nature or buddha nature.

To realize what is our human nature beyond various way of life is, you know, our way of transmitting precepts. So explanation of each precept is how, you know, each precept appeared, or why we must have, for an instance, sixteen precepts, and how we can accept, you know, the precepts as their original, you know, nature is how you study precepts. And if so, intellectual, you know, study does not make sense. If you stick to-if you want to study, you know, precepts just by your head, you know, sixteen precepts, you can, you know, compare one precept to the other. And you-

But it is difficult to accept as just one precept, you know, which is the source of all precepts. It is not possible to understand, to accept precepts in that way by your mind only, so physical practice should follow. And if you, you know, come to the point where you should observe precepts one by one, then you will see what is the true meaning of the precepts. Before you, you know, face to the problem, precept is there, you know, and you are studying precepts.

But if you face to each problem you have, then, you know, just study of precepts doesn't work, and you should, you know, make some decision which way you take, you know. Usually there is good, you know, promising way, and, you know, maybe there is dark way and there is, you know, promising way. You can see some light ahead on you, you know, so you should make some choice. Then there is actual precepts, you know. So that kind of precepts could be found out when you face to real problem. That is actually how you observe precepts, how precepts make sense, you know, how precepts help you.

It is big mistake, you know-precepts show you, you know, always, you know, some certain way for you before you try to go, you know. When you try to make trip, you know, the sign will make sense, you know. If you-when you do not drive [laughs], sign does not make any sense. If you study sign, you know [laughs], from San Francisco to Los Angeles, you know, there could be various sign from San Francisco to Los Angeles, but [laughs] to study the sign doesn't make any sense. But if you drive a car from [laughs] San Francisco to Los Angeles, you know, what you do is just to follow the sign, and sign make sense.

So life is first, you know, your actual life is-way of life is first. And to accept various things which may happen to you in your future as it is and try to make some trip, you know, is the most important thing for you. So in this sense, you know, whether you are Buddhist or Christian, you know, for us it doesn't matter. Each one has each one's own problem, and that, you know, that problem, there is no diffi- [partial word]-no problem-Christian problem [laughs] or Buddhist problem. Because if, you know, you uselessly compare Christian precepts to Buddhist precepts, you know, you create problem. But if you are concentrated [on] actual life, moment after moment, and if you are sincere and honest on your life, you know, then there is no difference between Christian precepts or Buddhist precepts.

There is no name. Sign is just a sign-which way to go, you know. If you understand in that way, if you-if your way of life is concentrated on that point, there is no need to, you know, think about if this is Christian science or Buddhist-Christian precepts or Buddhist precepts. It doesn't matter. And what Christian people think is right is right for Buddhists too. If there is two ways, you know, something is wrong [laughs] with precepts. There is only one way for you to go.

But there is a problem again, you know, problem of right or left, good or bad. Mostly for us, you know, the problem is the problem of good or bad. But this is quite simple too, you know. And no one find it so difficult which is good and which is bad [laughs]. Because you want to-because of your ego-egoistic, you know [laughs], desire, you know, you want to make some excuse when you take wrong course. At that time you may say, "Buddha said" [laughs] or "Christ said" to make some excuse for you for going some wrong course. "Buddha put more emphasis on," you know, "more emphasis on sight-seeing trip, so maybe better to go through Santa Cruz instead of [laughs, laughter] [Highway] 101, because Buddha put emphasis," you know, "on it. So it may take more time. Although I have to arrive to Tassajara ten o'clock, but we have to," you know, "go around Santa Cruz. Maybe we will arrive at eleven o'clock. But Buddha said so [laughs, laughter]. I will go through Santa Cruz to Tassajara." That is actually, you know-when you say "Buddhism" or "Christianity," mostly, you know, you are making some excuse. But way is very simple, and there is-best way is to see sign, just to see sign. There is no problem actually.

Another point is when you observe precepts in your everyday life, if you-if you really, you know, want to know what is precepts, you should be concentrated on what you do. You shouldn't even think about precepts, you know. Then naturally you will, you know, find out your own way. That is something, you know, practice, you know, closely related to Zen practice. If you know-if you make trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles every day like driver, then, you know, you don't have to think so much the way you go to-about the way you go to Los Angeles. The only thing is to go to Los Angeles without having accident [laughs]. That is more important thing, you know, for a man, you know, who is driving car always. That is the point, you know: not precepts, but to be concentrated in each time, in each moment, in his driving. That is the most important point.

When Oka Sotan-roshi[1] was young boy [laughs], his teacher, Token-roshi,[2] told him to buy bean curd, you know. So he went to the store. On the way, he saw, you know, picture for advertising acrobatic [laughs] theater, and he was standing, seeing the various picture in front of the building. And while he was watching it [laughs], he heard, you know, bell of his own temple. It was sign of meal time [laughs]. He was supposed to come back to the temple with bean curd and cook [laughs]-finish cooking before meal time, but he was watching the picture so long time without knowing what time it was. Hearing the bell, he noticed, you know, his duty-what was his duty. So he, you know, dashed in the store. "Give me tofu!" [Laughs.] As soon as old [laughs] man gave it all to him, he dashed back. But on the way what he noticed was he left his hat [laughs] in the store. So he ran back again to the store. "Give me! Give me! Give me!" And the old man said-old woman said, "What?" "Give me!" He didn't s[ay], you know-he meant his hat, but, you know, he was so-his mind was so busy [laughs, laughter] and the word "hat" didn't come out. "Give me! Give me! Give me!" "What? What? What?" [Laughs, laughter.] And at last he could say "my hat." "Oh, your hat is on your head! What is matter with you?" [Laughs, laughter.] Again he dashed back to his temple with his hat. That was the story, you know [laughs].

The precept is something like his hat. Precept is always on his head [laughs]. Because he tried to find out, you know, because he wanted to say "hat" or "precepts," you know, it doesn't work, you know. If he has always, you know, his hat, then nothing to, you know, think about it. That is actually how we should keep our precepts. So we rather put, you know, an emphasis on actual practice or zazen, how to be concentrated on what we do, moment after moment.

In sesshin time I talked about shikantaza. I feel, you know, I met you,. you know-I haven't met you for so long time. We-several-most of you were sitting for five days, and some of you, you know, just-I am seeing some of you for the first time, I feel, you know. But actually, we were discussing about-I was make my-our practice clear, you know, what is

shikantaza.

In short, shikantaza is to live in each moment. That is shikantaza-how to live in each moment. So it is, you know, you can apply shikantaza in your everyday life. And point is to be concentrated what you do in its true sense, without seeking for anything, you know, inside or outside. To do something-if you do something, you are with everything. When you ignore your actual activity, you know, thinking about something else, that is not real practice.

So real teaching is not, you know, outside of you; it is not inside of you. It is-when you do something, there there is real teaching, and there there is real practice. If you miss, you know, real practice in your everyday life, you will be regret[ful] later, you know. If you are doing your best, that is only way to, you know, to be yourself and to be with everyone. When you are with everyone, you are keeping our precepts, you know, without knowing, you know, whether you have your cap on your head, you know. Even though you don't notice it [laughs], your cap is here. If you become you yourself, and if you-if your practice include everything, moment after moment, you know, precepts-more explicit precepts is always with you.

That is, you know, another point maybe which is more important than verbal transmission of [or?] verbal precepts. If I tried to explain those precepts, it takes time. But how you keep it, in short, is to live in each moment, to be sincere with yourself always, without looking around. If you come here, you know, you must be you, that's all [laughs]. If so, you know, why is it necessary to say you are a Christian or you are, you know, Hindu? Why is that necessary?

It looks like, you know, we are-we are-I am trying to put you in some form, like zazen practice, but it is not so. Actually it is not so. Why we-I put emphasis on form of practice is that is the only way, you know, to have real concentration. If you miss, you know, one instruction which we may give you, there is no real concentration. If your back is like this, you know, you don't have-it is impossible to have deep, good, smooth breathing [laughs]. When you are like this, you know, when you feel as if, you know-to have-excuse me-to have good breathing is explained in-by Dogen various way, you know, using various characters. But, you know, good breathing means smooth, you know, breathing-smooth, smooth, deep breathing. And it should be calm, and it should be strong, without, you know, having any broking [breaking?]. You know, if you take breathing in this way, if you stop [laughs] at somewhere, it doesn't go through. When you have good posture, breathing, you know, could be very smooth and deep. And it should go-it should reach to your tummy, you know. You should feel in that way. But for a lady, maybe it is something different from my feeling. It looks like, because you have extra organ here, I think, you know. So ladies' breathing does not reach to the bottom of your tummy. You don't feel it in that way, maybe. But should be pretty deep, and feeling must be as if it comes to the bottom

of your tummy. Actually breathing does not reach to your bottom of the tummy [laughs]. You know, it may come to the bottom of your lung, but it doesn't reach here. So same thing will be true with ladies' breathing, I think. The feeling should be like that [tape turned over], [you know. Deep breathing][3] ... feeling, you cannot be concentrated on what you do, if you want to do it properly.

When an artist, you know, of, you know, calligraphy or Japanese sumi ink, you know, artist work, you know, even though he is not in perfect posture of zazen, you know, they apply that posture in their work. So for them, one stroke or one line, you know, expresses many things, as our practice include everything, you know.

So that is why, you know, that may be the difference between usual, you know, art and Zen art. It-you know [laughs]-it is-full concentration is on one dot, on one line. And the way if you see the way they do it, you will understand it. Mostly, you know, they have the brush on his right hand, but, you know, which is working more hard-harder than his right hand, his left hand [laughs]. So you may say he is, you know, working by left hand with a brush on his right hand.

In the same way, whole way, same-all his whole body is working on one line. Maybe it is true with your art. Should be true, you know. If you're, you know, painting just by hand [laughs], by right hand, you know, like this [gestures], you cannot work properly. Some way, you know, your left hand should help right hand, and whole body should make your brush or your hand work freely to express something. So if you actually-if you become one with everything, if your brush, you know, include or express all of your effort, and if he is completely one with everything, you know, he can work in its true sense.

So that is why we put emphasis on, you know, on our posture. Some-you may say someone cannot, you know, sit. If he cannot sit as much as possible, you know, he should keep his back straight, and he should find out how to be concentrated on his, you know, activity. There must be some way to be concentrated on what you do. So while you are sitting, without dreaming of anything, you know, if you can express yourself fully in your zazen, there there is actual practice which include everything. If you have that practice, Buddha is with you, Bodhidharma is with you, and every sages should be with you, actually with you. At that time, who is Christ, who is Buddha, who is Bodhidharma, who is Dogen, you know? Who they are? It is you yourself.

You know, how is it possible for Buddha to exist forever? The only way is to exist with us. That is only way how he can exist. How is it possible to various sages to exist in our human history? Actual, you know, history is with you, and there is no need to think about it, because you have it. You are with them always. When you think about him, he is, you know, with you with some form. When you do not think about it, still he is with you. And that point should not be forgotten. You think if you-when you-

only when you have his image with you he is there. That is, you know, not real, you know, being. Real being is always with you, when you do not even think about him. That is very-actual truth, you know. I forgot, you know, who said so, but when you think about him, he is always with you [laughs]. That is very simple, you know, words and very beautiful words. There were some more, you know, words like that, you know: "When you think about him, he is with you, but if you do not think about him, where is he?" [Laughs.] Where is he? You don't-you think he is not there anymore. That is very shallow, materialistic, you know, understanding. You are not sincere enough. You put him-put them in some book and put them in bookcase, that's all. That is why he suffers [laughs] in bookcase. If you do not put them in bookcase, he is always with you. Can you deny this fact? No one can deny this fact.

If you understand, you know, various sage in that way, you know, can you be just Buddhist? Or can you be just, you know, Christian? You cannot. You say, "I am Christian," but actually you are not only Christian but also Buddhist. That is very true. When you become you yourself, when you do not put them in bookcase, you know, how is it possible to say, "I am Christian" or "I am Buddhist"? Maybe next question will be, "Then why you wear Buddhist robe, and why you sew Buddhist, you know, robes?" That will be next question, but I don't have time to [laughs, laughter] talk about it right now.

But more important thing this spirit, you know, this practice, this sincerity, you know. Even though, you know, you may laughed at what Oka-roshi did when he was just a boy, but he was good priest [laughs], even though he was so small. He was very good. He must be scolded by master when he came back to [laughs] his temple, you know. They had to wait maybe another thirty minutes [laughs] before they ate, so he must be scolded. Even though he is scolded, he was a good boy, you know. There is no wonder about that point [laughs]. You cannot say he was-he didn't-he was not observing precepts. He faithfully observed, you know, precepts, and he put his hat always on his head. But sometimes [laughs] he forgot about his hat, that's all.

Did you understand? And I think I am so happy to see you, you know, from various religions. It is okay with me, and you don't have to feel this is Zen Center-special building for Soto priests [laughs]. You don't have to feel in that way. Here we are doing our best, you know, to live with people in its true sense. That's all.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joe Galewsky (3/26/99) and Bill Redican (7/28/00).



[1] Oka Sotan-roshi (1860-1922): a professor at and ultimately president of Komazawa University in Tokyo, where Suzuki-roshi graduated. He was the first in a series of lecturers on the Shobogenzo at Komazawa [Carl Bielefeldt, Sati Conference, MS p. 3]. His master was Nishiari Bokusan, the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo, from whom he received dharma transmission. He was teacher or master of Ian Kishizawa, Eko Hashimoto, Gyokujun So-on, Sawaki Kodo, and Harada Sogaku. He served as abbot of Daiji-ji and was named as the first abbot of Antai-ji temple in Gentaku, northern Kyoto, Japan. (One of Oka Sotan's disciples, Zuirin Odagaki, was the second abbot of Antai-ji and is informally considered its founder. It is traditional to name one's teacher as the titular founder.) Shohaku Okumura stated that Sawaki Kodo and Eko Hashimoto studied with Oka Sotan at Shuzen-ji.

[2] Token-roshi:

[3] Source of words within brackets is a notation on the back of the original tape case.

## **6 - Sewing and Wearing the Buddhist Robes**

Saturday, June 19, 1971

Sewing and Wearing the Buddhist Robes and How It Relates to Our Practice

San Francisco Zendo

Last Sunday I told you that, whatever religion you belong to, it doesn't matter when you come and sit with us. That is because our way of sitting, of practice, is for you to become yourself. Katagiri Roshi always says, "to settle oneself on oneself." To be yourself. When you become you, yourself, at that moment your practice includes everything. Whatever there is, it is a part of you. So you practice with Buddha, you practice with Bodhidharma and you practice with Jesus. You practice with everyone in the future or in past. That is our practice. But when you do not become yourself, it doesn't happen in that way.

So if you come here and sit with us, you're not only sitting with us, but you are also sitting with everything, including animate and inanimate beings. Dogen Zenji said, if your practice doesn't include everything, that is not real practice.

It is not that after practicing for long time, you attain enlightenment and your practice includes everything, and you can practice with everyone. When you join our practice, your practice includes everything. And if you think that in two or three years, after your practice improves, that your practice will be perfect enough to include everything, that is a mistake. Something is missing in that practice. The sincerity is missing.

When you do practice, forgetting yourself, or where you are or how long you are there, then your practice includes everything. When you say "I practice zazen at Zen Center." "I" and "Zen Center" are extra. You're limiting your practice by the idea of "Zen Center" or "my practice." When you say "my practice," the practice is very small. When you say "Zen Center," practice is very limited. When you forget all about those kinds of ideas and just practice, then, at that time, your practice is perfect and includes everything, past, present and future. That is the point of practice.

If you have this kind of spirit in your practice, you will not be happy with lazy practice, or be involved in the ideas of "how long," or of "what kind" of practice it is. You will not be so happy to hear the words "Buddhism," or "Zen," or "Rinzai," or "Soto." You'll be bothered by those names.

You may ask me, "Why do you wear this kind of robe all the time? Why do you sit in the same way all the time?" Tomorrow we will start a sewing sesshin, an okesa or rakusu sewing sesshin. You may think we are wearing some special robe but actually it is not so. The way Buddha made this robe was, as you know, that he collected the various materials on the street, or at a graveyard, and he collected material which was thrown away by the people. There were big pieces and small pieces, so after cleaning and purifying them, he sewed them together in this way.

This kind of design is planned so that you can use big and small pieces of material. Small pieces can be used for the smaller parts and big ones can be used for the big parts. The color also cannot be a bright, beautiful color because the materials Buddha used were old. So whatever it was, Buddha used it, and it became his robe.

He said that when human beings first appeared on this earth, they had a very long life and were very big. Much bigger than you are. They were very big. But, gradually, people became smaller and smaller, like the Japanese (laughs). But you shouldn't think that a big robe, bright in color could not be used for Shakyamuni Buddha's robe. That would be a wrong understanding, he said. A bright colored robe could be a robe for Shakyamuni Buddha. What this means is that, whatever color it is, it could be Buddhist robe. Only when you forget all about what color it is, or what material it is made of, can it be our robe. It could be silk, it could be linen, it could be cotton, but when we use it, it is not silk or cotton or linen. It is Buddha's robe.

When we say "Buddha's robe," it is just a robe, just that material. When this material is just this material, it is not any particular material. It is part of the universe. Not this material. Because you say this is for this table, or that stool, it is special. But if this is just this material, then it could be mine, it could be for Buddha, and it could be for you. This is exactly the same practice as your zazen practice. When you just become you, then that is how that practice includes everything. When we let this

material just be this material, without saying mine or yours, then this material could be for everyone. And it is something more than material to cover this stool.

With this understanding, we make a robe. You may say, "that is a Buddhist robe," but we do not make our robe just for ourselves. We are making something greater, which will include everything, which could be everyone's. So if there's a certain way to make a robe, that way summarizes this real practice in something we wear. Anyway, we need some thing to wear. Especially when it is cold, you must wear something. So maybe it's better to wear something by which we can express our real understanding so that people can join our practice. That is why we make a robe.

If you miss this point, our robes will not be our robes, will not be Buddha's robe. Only when we understand this point and can make a robe with this spirit, is it Buddha's robe.

Right now you're listening to me, but each one of you should live in the world with this spirit we have been talking about. Strictly speaking, you shouldn't listen to me; you should do it yourself, you should be you. You should have your own way of life with this kind of spirit. Then all of you, each one of you, is a Buddhist. When you force your way on others, when you think Buddha's way is the best way, Buddhism cannot be Buddhism. Buddhism is not one of the many ways, but, rather, each one's own way. It is not the Japanese way or the American way.

Because I am Japanese, I am doing things the Japanese way. That is the only reason that I behave like a Japanese. I don't say the Japanese way is the best way of all. If you think that way, that cannot even be the Japanese way. When a Japanese person becomes Japanese, then he is really Japanese. He can be understood wherever he goes. There's no need for me to change my way. If you really want to make an okesa or rakusu, it will be Buddha's robe. If you feel as if you are imitating Buddha's robe, then that is not Buddha's robe.

So if you really want to be a Buddha, or Buddha's disciple, naturally you will make and wear Buddha's robe. But that does not mean propagating Buddhism. It just means that you really want to be a Buddhist. That's all. If you really want to be a Buddhist, through and through, naturally what you say and do will be like what Buddha did or Bodhidharma did.

That point is rather confusing. Before, I said that if you really become you, you include everything. Right now I'm saying if you're a Buddhist, if you really want to be a Buddhist, you will naturally want to wear Buddha's robe. The reason I wear this robe is that this robe symbolizes that spirit in its true sense: the spirit of using material as it is, and of being me, myself. Because this robe symbolizes that spirit, I wear it. So when we wear those robes, there's no contradiction. Do you understand?

[Response and question:] "No. Roshi, you said there's no contradiction, but you just said that robes are only worn to be a disciple of the Buddha and not to propagate Buddhism, but just before that you said you wear the robe to express your understanding so that the people can tell....?"

Roshi: Not to propagate Buddhism, but to help them understand what each person's way should be. That's the difference. A non-Buddhist may think I am a Buddhist, but I don't think I am a Buddhist. If it is necessary for them to call me something, or to call myself something, maybe, for the sake of convenience, I can be a Buddhist. That's okay. I am happy to be a Buddhist.

[Another question not intelligible--clarified by someone in the audience as:] "If you don't think you're a Buddhist, Roshi, what do you think you are?"

Roshi: You need your name, so it is okay to have a name, but it is not necessary to stick to my name just for the sake of convenience. In Zen Center we have some rules. On the one side, the rules are to guide our practice, and on the other side to encourage our spirit. Often, people want to be someone special: "I am Buddhist," or "I am Zen Master." (laughs) So to discourage us from sticking a label or name on ourselves, we practice zazen and we have rules and rituals. Unfortunately, people may think they are practicing the Soto way, and, therefore, the Soto way is pretty good. We may become very proud of the Soto way. That is the danger, so, I must have a big stick!

Question: Isn't there the danger that people may want to wear those robes or special costumes to be something special? And is it necessary then to wear those robes to be called a Buddhist?

Roshi: If you going to discuss something like this, that kind of question arises. We are now in this building, and I'm giving a lecture and you are listening to me. That's all. (laughs). So now I'm explaining why I am talking and why you are listening. That's all. I started to explain a little bit about what a robe is. Anyway, we have to wear something, so to encourage that kind of spirit, we have this kind of thing.

Question: What do you think we are?

Roshi: I don't know. If you say that I am Suzuki, that makes me think more. Something like, "That is Suzuki's name," [laughs] so maybe it would be better not to have any name. But I don't feel good if you think, "he's so great, and I'm so small." Small Suzuki and ... [laughs] Great Suzuki. Perhaps it's better not to think about it so much. Actually, that is practice, you know. You asked me, "What do you think you are?" but I am trying to forget who I am! [general laughter] Maybe that is a pretty interesting discussion. You get the point.

Soto Zen Buddhists have very elaborate rituals and a very elaborate practice. In one way, it is an advantage, but in another way it may it will create some problem for you. So we must have a strong spirit, so that we don't get lost in our practice. When you have a strong spirit, then the Soto way will help you, but when you rely on this kind of practice too much, you will be lost completely. You must be very careful, and when you become very careful about this kind of danger, then your life will be taken care of pretty well. When you have real spirit, this kind of practice will extend into your city life. And you will be well taken care of by Buddha. Naturally, the rules are provided to help to protect us from that kind of danger. Without knowing that it is a danger, we become proud of our danger, and that is terrible.

This is a danger not only for Soto students, but for all human beings. We suffer from this kind of pride or selfish satisfaction. We have no time to be satisfied with anything. We must continue to do one thing after another; we have no time to stick to any one thing.

Thank you very much.

## **7 - Sesshin lecture: sewing sesshin**

Sunday, June 20, 1971

Sesshin Lecture  
San Francisco

This sesshin-we call it "sewing sesshin"-sesshin and, actually, rakusu sewing-okesa-sewing sesshin. Our okesa is not just-just symbol of our teaching, but it is actually dharma itself. But unless you have proper understanding of it, the rakusu is something which you wear as a symbol of Buddhist. But that is not proper understanding.

The proper understanding of our zazen or rakusu is same, not different. Proper understanding of zazen is, at the same time, proper understanding of rakusu. So unless you have real experience of zazen-zazen experience, rakusu is not actually rakusu; it is just something which you wear. It is not dharma itself.

You may think I told you yesterday[1] about rakusu-okesa, and okesa Buddha made-okesa. Gathering various material and sewed together and design it in this way after the shape of paddy field. But here[2] Dogen-zenji says, refer to the ten-ten names of okesa.

By the way, Dogen-zenji wrote more than 95 fascicles of teaching about transmitted teaching. And two of them is about okesa, two of-two fascicles about okesa. "Kesa-kudoku" nomaki and "Den-e" nomaki.[3] So you may understand how important okesa is for us, you know, and those two fascicles are very long in comparison to other fascicles.

"Kesa-kudoku" means virtue of okesa, and "Den-e" nomaki means

transmitted-about transmitted robe-"Den-e." He refers to ten names of okesa or funzo-e. [4] Funzo-e means, you know-fun is dung or dung. Fun [is], you know, something dirty. Zo is to "rubbish" or "dust." E isrobe.

And-one[5] is goshaku-e: robe bitten [chewed on] by cow or animal, you know. And the second is mat- [partial word: "material"?] robe made by material-made of material which was bitten [chewed on] by rabbits. And [third is] robe made of burned [material] partly destroyed by fire, you know, like if someone smoke, you know. There may be many holes in the material, so eventually he will throw it-throw it away-that kind of material. [Fourth,] gassui-e is material which was thrown away by ladies because of menses, you know. And fifth is child-child bed? [I.e., child birth.] Child bed. What [do you call it]? Child bed. Material-made of the material, you know, tainted by, thrown [away] by-because of the child bed material. Oh. Do you understand [laughs] what I mean? And sixth is material which was, you know, which was-which covered the altar of shrine, you know, some old material which was used in the altar of some various, you know, shrine-shrine of various deities. And seventh is made by material which is thrown away in graveyard. And eighth is material made of material which is offered to god, you know, when someone prayed-pray something for god, then they offer material to god. And [ninth is] some material which a king or-king used. Or [tenth is] material which you pick up on the street. Those are, you know, with those material-those material could be okesa.

So usually, you know, the material which usual person thrown away, we pick up and make okesa. The point is-so okesa is not always could be made by some dirty material, you know. Whether it is dirty or not dirty is not the point. The material which people thrown away could be our okesa. This is the point. So Dogen-zenji says whether it is beautiful embroider[y] or silk or leather, it doesn't matter. Material is-we should not say okesa should be made by some dirty material, you know. Whether it is dirty or clean or beautiful or not beautiful is not the point. This point is very important, but, you know, it may be rather difficult to-for you to understand.

From here, from two pages, he talks about this spirit which is rather difficult to explain. You could understand only by practice. Only if you understand what is zazen you will understand this point. You may say your zazen is sometime-your zazen is good and sometime your zazen is not good, you know [laughs]. Sometime your zazen will be sleepy zazen [laughs], drowsy zazen. "Oh, this is not zazen," you may say. You will understand, you know, your zazen in that way, but true zazen, you know, is not, you know-true understanding of zazen cannot be like that. Zazen is not sleepy zazen or drowsy zazen or good zazen. When you, you know, you are free from the idea of good zazen or bad zazen or sleepy zazen, then, you know, you have right understanding of zazen. Anyway, you must practice zazen. If I say so, you know, it is okay, you know, to sleep in zazen [laughs]. You may understand in that way.

If I-if you say, you know, "Whatever you wear, that is okesa." Dogen-zenji actually say so, you know, in here. He refer to the Third Patriarch of India-India.[6] His-he was-no one knows whether it is true or not-he was born with-with robe [laughs]. When he was born, he wear, already, okesa [laughs, laughter]. Dogen-zenji said, "What kind of robe is it? Is it," you know, "a silk? Is it leather? [Laughs.] What kind of robe is it?" And his robe is not traditional robe, you know. When-when he, you know-before he became a Third Patriarch in India, it was usual wear it, you know, because he was wearing always. After he joined the order, you know, his robe became robe.

So robe-understanding of robe is something more than you understand. So if you say-if you understand robe [as] just something-some material to wear, it is not perfect understanding. This morning I said you should, you know, be concentrated on every stitch, you know-every stitch-as you are concentrated on your breathing. "Concentration," we say, but that is not actually point. Actual point is-real point is to become one with what you do-to become one with your practice. So anyway, you know, in your practice, you should try to be concentrated on each stitches-on each stitch, and someday you will understand what does it mean. Not immediately [laughs].

I think you are lucky, very lucky, you know, to have robe, you know, like this, which was brought by Bodhidharma from India and which is transmitted from Bodhidharma to the Sixth Patriarch.[7] And that robe is-is now in Obai-zan-Obai-zan monastery.[8]

And various king [emperors], for an instance, Daiso, King [Emperor] Daiso, at the end of Tang dynasty, sent his messenger to the monastery and asked [for] the robe. And Dogen-zenji, you know, referred to the letter which was presented by the king [emperor] to that monastery. And he referred to the many various events which happened to those famous monasteries. Not only, you know, we have transmitted robe but also we have, you know, at the same time, we have proper understanding of robe, and based on actual practice of zazen transmitted from Bodhidharma and the Sixth Patriarch.

Usually if I say "teaching" or "practice," it could be-it could be one of the many practice, you know. If I say "religion," it could be one of the many religion. But if you really understand what is zazen, it is not so.

Recently I am putting emphasis on this point. What kind of practice we have at Zen Center? This is very important point, not only for us, but also for all the people who are interested in religious practice. If we-if we lose this point, we will end up, you know, sectarians. If you really want to be free from sectarianism, you know, we should know this point. We should have this point. Until, you know, you really accept this point, you should continue our practice. Then, you know, all-all the people who are practicing religious practice will be your good friend, and

you can help them a great-a lot, instead of fighting [laughs]. Even though you do not fight with your mouth, you know, your mind is always fighting. No good [laughs]. That is not religion, you know.

Everyone-as every religious people notice-already notice this point, and they know how bad they are [laughs]. Still, they stick to some idea. Some of them, you know, in disguise of non-sectarianism [laughs], still they are developing sectarianism. Even though they say, "We are not sectarian." But actually, they are sectarian from my viewpoint or to my-to me, to my eyes, I know-I can tell [laughing] quite easily whether they are sectarian or not. Although they may say, "Oh, Suzuki-roshi is terrible sectarian [laughs]. He stick to Soto way." Yes, I stick to Soto way [laughs], but I am not so bad sectarian as they are [laughs, laughter]. My mind, is, you know, always open, you know. They are my good friend, although I wear Soto robe, although I respect Eshun Yoshida-roshi's[9] special robe, I am not sectarian. I wish you can understand this point. At least my disciple should understand this point.

And he [Dogen] refers to, also, various okesa like gojo-e[10]-seven-strip robe, five-strip robe, nine-strip robe. Because, you know, a five-strip robe is for your usual, you know-the robe for when you work, you know. Small one. That is five-strip robe. And seven-strip robe is-you use when you practice zazen with people. That is seven-strip. And nine-strip robe is you use when you officially or formally-when you practice formal practice for some special person, or for your nation, or for your teacher, or when you take service. And there are many more kinds of robes, but strips-nine strips. Up to one hundred is, you know, very formal one.

You know, you should know [the reason] why he refers to this kind-many kinds of robe is [that the] robe should be always with you, you know. He put emphasis to wear or to have robe always with you, you know. It is not some special thing you wear, you know. That is wrong idea. That is something which you have always with you, like the Third Patriarch in India's robe. He was born with robe, so for him it is not possible to take it off [laughs]. His skin is already robe. Those are the most important point when you have-when you want to have proper understanding of okesa.

This kind of lecture is maybe too special[ized], so may be difficult for you to understand, I know. If I have some more time, I can answer your question. That would be better-better, I think. If you have question, please ask me, and if you have wrong understanding, I must correct you. Hai.

Student A: What is the meaning of the rice paddy? Why-why is the rice paddy mentioned?

Suzuki-roshi: Rice?

Student A: Rice field related to the rakusu. What does that mean?



Suzuki-roshi: Oh. He, you know-when Buddha was asked to-to make, you know, some robe like uniform for his disciple, by Bimbisara,[11] King Bimbisara, you know, he was thinking about the loo- [partial word: "look"?] design and he saw paddy field, you know, or-and he thought, "This will be-" you know, "we should design our robe in that way. Big patch and small patch. Big and small. We can use various kinds of material if we design in that way." That is how robe was originated.

But spirit of making robe was not too fair in-ordinal [ordinary?], you know, viewpoint which we human being [are] liable to have. We have many weakness-weak points. Because of that we will create wrong understanding of things: not only robe, but also whatever you see because of our human nature, you know. We create many misunderstanding. So how to be free from that kind of misunderstanding or attachment and to develop human nature properly was his, you know, point. But design was just, you know, made when he saw paddy field.

Student A: What is the meaning of the design on the maneki?[12]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Yeah?

Student A: Yeah. The design?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, that is-I don't think that it-that is just to keep, you know, keep two-two parts tied together. It is pine, you know, pine leaf. That is, you know-in Japan, pine symbolize-pine is-pine tree is-is supposed to be-first of all, it is always green, and pine tree lives long long time, and it doesn't change its color all year round. So we have some special feeling about pine, and that pine leaf we use in various way, you know, that design. When you make some-some furoshiki,[13] you know, we put pine leaves [on them], you know. I think that is why maybe better to ask Yoshida-roshi [laughs]. He may have some reason-she may have some reason, but I think that is more very common, you know, for Japanese in Japanese culture to use pine leaves. You notice, you know, many-we have many pine-tree design or pine-leaves design. We like bamboo also. Bamboo.

Student B: Where does the rakusu ceremony originate?

Suzuki-roshi: Originate?

Student B: Yeah. How long-how long has the form that we are using now been practiced?

Suzuki-roshi: At least we, you know, we can find in-maybe in Japan, you know, originated by Dogen or more older maybe. Every school has this kind of ceremony, you know. Each school. Dogen-zenji studied, you know, various school, and he had some confidence, you know, in the

way he observed those rituals and background of those rituals.

Student C: Roshi, why do we use new materials?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student C: Why do we buy new material to make robes?

Suzuki-roshi: That is wrong understanding, you know. He says, in his book, "Sometime you can use new material. Don't be," you know, "caught by new material or old material or beautiful or not beautiful." Okay? New material is okay; silk is okay [laughs].

Student C: Even synthetic?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm?

Student C: Even synthetic? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Synthetic is okay. That could be his understanding, you know. You-we are liable to, you know, to go [to] one extreme. That is, you know-Dogen-zenji didn't write. That is, you know, maybe our human nature, you know. We want to rely on something: this extreme or that extreme, you know. If-if you do not care for something beautiful [laughs], you stick to something dirty [laughs] and feel better. If you cannot afford to have gold or a diamond [laughs], you will collect some stone-something. That is human nature. That way we lose our freedom.

So when we see things-as-it-is, you know, then any material can be, you know, can be robe. The color-why, you may then ask, why do we use subdued color? [Sentence finished; tape turned over.]

... color is. Or buy new material and cut, you know, without using whole of material is to put emphasis on non-attachment: to destroy or get rid of or to be free from our human tendency which will create problem for us. That point should be, you know, rejected. Human nature is good, but because of one weak point, it doesn't work [laughs], you know. So that point should be, you know, if we can take care of that point in some way, we-any material can be, you know, robe. That is, you know, how you make robe by various material. Do you understand?

So there is some point which you cannot change [laughs], you know. Whether you are Christian or Buddhist, this point cannot be changed [taps on something repeatedly]. If you, you know, change this point, Buddhist cannot be Buddhist, you know. A Christian cannot be good Christian. Everything will be mixed up and destroyed because of-just because of this point, which we call, sometime, "attachment." You see? Do you understand? That is very-that is our enemy, maybe, which does not exist, but we-we create because of idleness. Because we do not work hard enough, we create this problem. Okay? So you can buy

material. This is okay.

Student D: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student D: I'm trying to understand this point sometimes. It seems like what you said was because human beings have a certain nature of attaching to things, that we set up some rules or some forms. For example, when Lisa asked me what should be made out of robe materials. The first thing is that people are kind of-human beings have a funny nature, and they want, you know, there's always attachment to things. So one of the things we do to destroy that kind of attachment is to set up a rule.

Suzuki-roshi: Set up? Destroy? Not destroy-after destroying, you know, that attachment and set up rule. That is wrong, you see? Big difference, you know. Difference between after destroying attachment to set up rule. You know, if you can only take care of-destroy is wrong, you know, to say-if you say "destroy," is-that is wrong practice, you know. Human nature has some weak point, but we must take care of it. That is what I really mean-not destroy.

But anyway, after taking-taking good care of this point, to set up some rule and, you know, it's wrong, you know. To take care of this weak point we have rules, you know, and if we-if only take care of this point, there is no need to have rules [laughs]. Whatever you wear, you know-your skin-even your skin like Third Patriarch of India. Even your skin could be robe. That much you know, freedom we have.

If you really be a Buddhist, you know, then there is no-not necessary to have rules if you wear robes. But I say until you can forget all about what you are wearing, you know, eventually you will not, you know-you will forget all about what you are wearing, you know. If you come to that point, you know, robe is not, you know, always necessary. You see? It is not-after you become real Buddhist and wear robe. That is wrong [laughs]. And before you become real Buddhist, you should wear robe [laughs]. Before you have-you can take care of yourself, you should follow, you know, you should be incubate-incubate [laughs, laughter]. When you are strong enough, you should be-get out of hospital [?], where there is no rules. I don't know when you can do that [laughs]. Do you understand the point? If you have point, you know, it is okay, you know.

Student D: I still don't understand. It seems as-it seems like you say even though we have a rule, if you really understand yourself and sometimes even though the rule says use old material, you can use either old or new material. Doesn't make any difference, which is fine from the point of view of somebody who understands themselves. But from the point of view of somebody who, you know, is trying to follow

the rule, let's say. You know, I mean, when I see a rule that says "okesa should be made of old material," then it seems-of course, you know, any-whatever material I get, I'll take, but it seems that if I were going to actually make it on my own, I'd go out and get old material. Otherwise, it just-I can be very lazy, then, with all the precepts. I could say, "Well, uh, there's the precept that says don't kill, or a precept that says don't speak ill of others," let's say. But I say, "Well, in terms of real understanding, of course I can. It doesn't make any difference." So that-that-that-that intellectual understanding of precepts sometimes is just an excuse for my being lazy, you know, and it's very difficult for me to know when I am having a broad mind, you know, when I'm having a big mind, and when I'm just being lazy.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I-I understand. You are feeling, you know, that something is missing [laughs]. That is, you know, what I want-really what I want to say, you know. You know, I don't want to say-maybe I'm-if I say I will discourage you, so I don't want to say, but if you, you know, really feel in that way, I have to say [laughs]. The point is, you know, in comparison to Buddhist in Japan, you know, you can practice or you can-you can be-you are [in an] easier situation to practice Buddhism. Maybe, you know, we should know this point.

I-I know what kind of difficulty Japanese Buddhist has and what kind of life Zen Center students have, you know. If you compare, you know, Japanese students to Zen Center student, you know, I don't know what to say. It is so different, you know. You may criticize Japanese, you know, young Buddhist. You may criticize them because they do not practice zazen as you do in Zen Center. But maybe Japanese young Buddhist may criticize us, you know, [for] having too easy [a] practice [laughs]. You know, you-you-if you want to-if you want to practice, you can do anything here, you know. You are well supported. You don't have to, you know, worry about anything. And so, you know, maybe for you it is too easy to practice our way.

You say-you said, you know, it is better if we do not try to find old material and make robe. Just buy old [new?] material. But actually it is much more easy to buy something. Under this circumstances, you can also can collect old material. Also it make long, long-it take [laughs] long, long time [but] you can do. But if you must support yourself by working, you know, on the city-in the city, if you are always collecting old materials [laughs] for your robe, you cannot work on the-in the street-in the city. So you lose your income. It is, you know-same thing is true in our management, you know. We-you can sew your okesa, but actually when you live-Japan is not any more poor, but [laughs] if you were born in some poor country where you should work all-always that is not possible. You know, it is much better to buy some material at the store. It is hard-it is very hard even to buy new material, but that will be what you can do. In poor country, even though you want to find out some old material, you cannot find, because they use it [laughs]. You see?

Student C: Actually, Roshi, that-that was-what I meant though was that, like, you just go down to the basement of this building in the laundry room, there is a [one word unclear: "corner"?]-

Suzuki-roshi: There are a lot!

Student C: -where everybody throws away their clothes.

Suzuki-roshi: That is-that happens only in America! [Laughs, laughter.]

Student C: But there's-there's enough material down there for about at least five okesas. And it wouldn't take very long to put it together.

Suzuki-roshi: You do it! [Laughs, laughter.] You just do it, you know? When you can do it, you know, when you know how to exactly-after learning, you know, exactly how to do it, you can do it. You see? But to learn it already very difficult, you know. Unless you don't use new material, you know, it is almost impossible how to teach you, you know. When someone-when you teach how to sew rakusu some other people-there's maybe paper [pattern] is much better-best, you know, when you take pattern, when you learn how to measure. Old-buy old material, it is not possible.

So in some way, your practice is very luxurious. I feel in that way. You are, you know, children who were born in rich family. Whatever you want to do, you can do it. But that doesn't happen [laughs] in some poor country. American cannot be always rich, you know. It is not fair! [Laughs, laughter.] You-you lose; you do not notice this point. So I am afraid, you know, if you could be a real good Buddhist. I am stuck-I am, you know, I am thinking [about] this point a lot. That is my worry.

So maybe [laughs] that is-that is reason why I couldn't support okesa sewing in the practice so much before, you know. It is too luxurious practice. Only in Japan-only [in] Heian Period and people who were born in noble family could do this. They did it before Kamakura Period, but because of that, Buddhists were lost in their practice, because it was too aristocratic practice, you know. Even though you gather old material and spending, you know, a lot of time in each stick-stitch, aft- [partial word: "after"?]-when you make one stitch they bow many times and took up the needle and, you know, sew okesa stitch by stitch in that way. That was good practice, they thought, but because of that, Buddhists were lost. How about that! [Laughter.]

So, after that, you know, in Kamakura Period, Zen-Zen Buddhist, Nichiren, and Shingon was angry about that kind of luxurious practice and stood up and, you know, open new Buddhist way to, you know, city people. That was how new Buddhism arised in Kamakura period, after losing, you know, their practice, in Heian Period. So sometime I feel as if I [laughs] we are practice, you know, [in] Heian Period practice [laughs]

instead of Kamakura Period practice.

So you shouldn't be lost in that-that kind of practice, you know. You feel very good. You feel you are very devotional, good student, but that is your feeling. Do you understand? So we must see what we are doing, you know, from various angle, and we must feel the crisis of the world, you know, by your skin. Then you are not Buddhist. Okay? To be, you know, to feel resistance to the old culture is-I can agree with that, but to be lost from this world is terrible mistake.

Anyway, we are born-you are born in this country, and this is your motherland. You shouldn't be-you should not be lost from this motherland. I am not nationalist [laughs]. I feel terrible, you know, if you-if you are lost from this world. Okay [laughs]? That is, you know, my feeling.

Student D [?]: I understand how it applies to the rule about material, but I'm not quite sure how-how it applies to other precepts as given [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Maybe, anyway, you are trying your best, you know. And we are trying our best, so something will result. Don't be too idealistic or too luxurious [laughs], okay?

---

Source: Original tape transcribed by Joe Galewsky (3/26/99) and checked against tape by Bill Redican (12/20/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] SR-71-06-19 (transcript only; no tape).

[2] Probably the fascicle "Kesa-kudoku," in Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[3] nomaki: fascicle.

[4] Also no-e. Eihei Dogen: "The usual method of the buddhas ... is to see rags as the best material" ("Kesa-kudoku," Shobogenzo; G. Nishijima and C. Cross, ed., 1994, Vol. 1, p. 127). From the footnote to that sentence: "'Rags' is ... (FUNZO-E). ... (FUN) means excrement, and ... (SO, pronounced ZO) means 'to sweep' or 'to be swept' [as in soji]. ... (E) means robe or clothes or clothing. ... (FUNZO) represents the Sanskrit pamsu-kula, which means a dust-heap or a collection of rags out of a dust-heap used by Buddhist monks for their robes. ... (FUNZO-E) has been translated either as 'rags' or as 'a robe of rags,' according to the context" (ibid).

[5] Dogen's ten types of rags are: "1) rags chewed on by an ox, 2) rags gnawed by rats, 3) rags scorched by fire, 4) rags [soiled by]

menstruation, 5) rags [soiled by] childbirth, 6) rags [offered at] a shrine, 7) rags [left at] a graveyard, 8) rags [offered in] petitional prayer, 9) rags [discarded by] a king's officers [footnote: suggests uniforms discarded by promoted officers], 10) rags brought back from a funeral" ("Kesa-kokudo," Shobogenzo, Nishijima and Cross, Vol. 1, pp. 145-146; see also "Den-e," *ibid.*, p. 163, for a similar list).

[6] Shanavasin, the third Indian Patriarch.

[7] Daijan Huineng (Daikan Eno): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Zen Patriarch.

[8] Mt. Obai (Huangmei) is where the Fifth Chinese Patriarch, Daman Hongren (Daiman Konin), received transmission and established his monastery. In the "Kesa-kudoku," Dogen wrote that the robe was deposited in the Pao-lin-ssu (Baolin, Horin-ji) temple, built in 504 on Mt. Caoxi (Sokei-zan) of Southern China.

[9] Eshun Yoshida-roshi: Teacher of okesa sewing in the lineage of Hashimoto-roshi. Abbess Blanche Hartman and others studied with her at San Francisco Zen Center. The "special robe" is probably the Nyoho-e (True Dharma Robe) style of okesa. Eko Hashimoto-roshi (teacher of Katagiri-roshi) learned the Nyoho-e pattern from Kodo Sawaki-roshi. Sawaki-roshi in turn had studied, at Koki-ji temple, the style of okesa sewn by the 18th-century Shingon and Ritsu master Jiyun Sonja. Jiyun Sonja had reconstructed the traditional pattern for the okesa from the Mahavagga and other Vinaya-pitaka texts. [Source: "Notes on Okesa Lineage at Zen Center," an interview with Shohaku Okumura-roshi, 23 February 1996, recorded by Shosan Victoria Austin.]

[10] Also gojo-gesa. Gojo-e is the five-strip robe; shichijo-e is the seven-strip robe; and kujo-e is the nine-strip robe.

[11] King of Magadha and lay disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha.

[12] The square patch of fabric, sewn onto the uppermost part of the rakusu's neck strap, upon which the pine stitches are made.

[13] Square piece of cloth used for wrapping items such as gifts.

## **8 - Everyday Life**

Tuesday, June 22, 1971

Everyday Life  
San Francisco

I don't know where to start, you know, my talk, but anyway what I want to discuss with you tonight is how to, you know, apply our practice in your-to your everyday life. That will be the point of my talk.

Whether you are a layman or priest, you know, we are all bodhisattvas,

you know. We are taking bodhisattva vow and we are practicing bodhisattva way. And as you know, bodhisattva way is to help others as you help yourself, or to help others more-before you help yourself. That is, you know, bodhisattva way. We put so much emphasis on helping others. This point is very important when you try to figure out what will be your everyday life, you know, what will be the relationship [between] zazen practice and your everyday life. Because you forget this point, you cannot extend your practice to everyday life.

Because, you know, as a Buddhist we should see things-as-it-is, you know [laughs], to see things-as-it-is, to observe things-as-they-are-that is the most important point. When you practice zazen, you know, actually you don't see anything, you don't think about anything. But even though you do [are] not aware of what you are doing, you are actually one with everything; even though you don't see, but you are actually with everything. So you know everything. You see things, you know, not with our naked eye, but our true eyes, you know. Even though we don't hear, but [laughs] actually we are with everything. We are practicing with everything, you know, actually. When you don't think, when you [are] one with your practice, you know, at that moment, even though you don't see, you are already with everything and you are actually seeing things, you know, and you have perfect understanding of everything. That is our practice. And we feel in that way when we don't think. I said "feel" but [laughs] maybe "to feel" is not correct word. That is, you know, our practice.

In that way, you know-but in your everyday life, you know, you have to see, you have to think, you have to act. But the way you see-you should-but you should know or you should understand the way you-usually way you see things [laughs] is actually whether actually you are seeing things-as-it-is, you know. You may say that "I cannot see things-as-it-is," because of our emotional, you know, because of our pink glasses [laughs]. I see things, you know, "All things are pink," you know. But I say that is because of your glasses. Actually things are not pink. All the things are not pink. But you may say, "That I cannot see, that I have pink glasses is part of [laughs] the way I am," maybe, you know. So in this way, so far as thinking mind goes, there is no point to solve this problem.

But if you, you know, know the point of our practice, you know, you will not be rely[ing] on your thinking mind too much or your eyes too much-naked eye too much. Whether you are seeing it or not seeing it, or hearing it or not hearing it, or thinking about it or not thinking about it [laughs], anyway you are one with everything. That point is more important than your way of feeling, you know. You may, you know, feel various way, but you can ignore, you know, some particular understanding of things, or you can ignore your feeling, you know, the way you feel about things, about your friend, about your teacher [laughs]. You can ignore it. Anyway, whatever I feel, he is my teacher, he is my friend, he is, you know, my husband or my wife or my children.



So actually, you know, what you have, you know, around you is anyway something you should work on, especially when, as a Buddhist, you know, the purpose of life is mostly to help others, you know [laughs]. If so, whatever it is-whatever it is, you have to work on it. That is so-called-it, in Japanese, ichinyo zammai[1]-to be fully involved in the activity you take, moment after moment.

Usually, you know, we feel we have lot of choice in our life, you know. Even your wife you think you can change it [laughs]. You have lot of choice. But I don't know whether that is possible [laughs] or not. You may think in that way-you mind think in that way-you feel in that way, but actually, you know, what you have, you know, is your husband or your wife. You cannot change it. Tomorrow [laughs] maybe you can change it.

Maybe you say-you know, someone said very interesting thing. "Maybe I-I may wait," you know. "Maybe better to wait until I feel to do so." I don't know what does he mean "to do so"-anyway, to do so is quite natural. "I'll wait," you know, he said. That makes sense, I think, but that is too passive, you know, to me or we Buddhists. It is too-not lazy, but too passive. If you have-it is pretty good, you know, to wait until what I want to do is quite natural for me to do. Pretty good, you know. Much better than to change it, you know, to do it immediately. To be patient is pretty good, but, you know, there must be something, you know, to do without being just-instead of being just patient, you know, just wait. Instead of waiting for the chance to do something, it's better to work on it. So moment after moment, if you work faithfully, you know, on it, your true life will start. But if you are waiting, or if you want to change your way, or if you make too much choice, you know-take too much choice-you have no time to live on this world [laughs]. You know, pretty soon you will die. You will be as old as I am now [laughs] very soon. Without changing over your way, when, you know, you are trying to change your circumstances.

You think you are helping, maybe, your wife or your husband only [laughs]. But actually it is not so. You may fail, you know, even though you make best effort to have good family life. You may fail maybe, you know, we don't know. But even though you fail, you know, to help your family, you are helping actually many people around you, you know. "Oh, he is so good," or "She is so very good wife," you know. If you give your friends or your neighbor that kind of warm feeling, actually that is how you help people. Things happens in that way.

Now I have, you know, many students, you know, so if I am helping only one student, it looks like I cannot help the rest of the student [laughs]. But I don't think so, actually. To help one student means to help rest of the students, in its true sense. And if you only let me do so [laughs], I can do it, you know, but most likely you don't allow me to do so, so I have to make an appointment [laughs]. Yvonne [Rand] has very difficult time to arrange my appointment. That is not what I want to do,

actually. Whatever you do, you know, if you do it with your warm heart, sincerely, then it means that I can helping-I am helping the rest of the students.

Do you know why we have-we call our-the-we have the Wind Bell,[2] you know? "Wind Bell" means, you know, comes from Dogen-zenji's famous poem, Wind Bell.[3] Whichever-whatever the wind may be, you know: east wind or west wind, south or north wind-it doesn't care. It's just ring, all day long [laughs]. And he doesn't know what he is doing. All day long he is doing something. He is busy. He is helping others always, without being involved in north or south or east or west, good or bad, strong or weak, good sound or bad sound. That is actually our practice, isn't it?

Anyway, when you sit without any idea of discrimination-just sit-then you are you, and your practice include everything, and you are helping every-people. With this, you know-not confidence, but-with this feeling or, you know, in this way you practice zazen, and in this way you, you know, work on what you should do. So if your, you know, bodhisattva mind is not strong enough, you know, you may think I am [you are] not doing something well or good, you know. Better to [do] this or to-better instead of doing this, better to do something else. But when your way-seeking mind or bodhisattva mind is very strong, then you do not discriminate.

So to see things with this bodhisattva mind and to see things just [with] discriminating eyes-there is big difference, you know. So to see things-as-it-is-if you want to see things-as-it-is, you must have good practice and good, strong bodhisattva mind, and ready to accept your surrounding as-it-is. In prosperity or adversity, you know, you should act-you should manage your life maybe as a ship always, you know-as a sailing boat crossing the ocean. Whatever the wind is, you know, they have to [laughs]-you have to manage your boat. So that is some Zen master-I think it was Ummon[4]-"to drive wave-follow waves and drive waves." Follow waves and drive waves. That-he means-when he say so, we have, you know, unusual skill in our-in managing things: driving waves, following waves, and driving waves. Not much idea of driving waves, and yet so negative so passive, you know, to follow-just to follow: Following but driving [laughs]. Driving but following. When you are completely with your surrounding, that kind of activity will appear, will be your own. That kind of power or skill comes from real zazen practice with right spirit.

I think most of you have wrong idea, you know, about freedom or things-as-they-are [laughs]. When you say "freedom" or "things-as-they-are," is not what I mean, at least. You are not, you know, seeing things-as-they-are, because you have some special glasses, and through them you are seeing things. And each person has different glasses, so your opinion will not meet, you know [laughs]. So the more you has to, you know, manage our group, the more you will be get in

confusion [laughs], because you stick to your own, you know, eyes, your own understanding. And if, you know, you see things without glasses, things-if the picture you have is things-as-they-are, then, you know, naturally everyone will agree with what you see, and you have to agree with some other person's understanding. But even so-even you cannot agree, you know, because you have on your glasses, you know, even though you cannot agree, sometime, you know, you should take off your glasses. "Oh!" [Laughs.] "But I need this glasses," you know. "As a teacher, I must have this one." [Laughs.] So excuse me. I must wear this. Maybe what you said is right. If you, you know, realize what kind of glasses you wear, then you can easily agree, you know. Without knowing that you have special glasses-as a student, as a teacher, as a officers, as a rokuchiji [5] [laughs], so, you know, it is-things become very difficult. So when, you know, with this understanding, many good virtue will result, you know: humbleness, soft mind, or clear understanding, or sometime sharp judgment, you know.

[Laughs.] By the way, we like bamboo very much. We Japanese like bamboo [laughs]. Someone said, you know, when I came to America, "That is Japanese bamboo bonsai." I couldn't figure out what did he meant, you know. "That is Japanese bamboo bonsai." Anyway, most people knows we Japanese like bamboo. Actually, what he means-Japanese bonsai is very expensive [laughs]. That was what he meant. "Oh, that is Japanese bamboo bonsai." [Laughs.] But for us, bamboo is not something very expensive, you know. Bamboo, first of all, has very good nature. If you want to cut it in two, it will be-you know, if you-before you cut it [completely], you-it will split in two. Ffft! You know. If you want cut it [in] four, it will exactly split in four. And, you know, even though bamboo is ten, maybe thirty feet long, you can split in just-you can split just in two, you know, from the root to the [laughs] top. It will go in that way. No other plant can be spread-split so nicely, you know. That is, you know, nature of bamboo.

But if you have that kind of wisdom, you know, to see things-as-they-are, even though it is not bamboo, you can split right in two, as Nansen [6] cut the cat right in two-Whack! [Laughs.] Students amazed. "Oh!" [Laughs.] They didn't have, you know, they didn't have time to criticize his killing cat or violating the precepts. Whack! It happened in that way, and when they realized, you know, the problem is all gone. [Laughs.] That kind of, you know, activity or wisdom will appear only when you can see things-as-it-is without trying to see, or when you solve the problem without trying to solve the problem. How you can do that is just to sit.

In China, you know, there were a famous scholar. After they studied many things or heard many things, they-he rinse his ears [laughs] to get rid of what he had learned. So when you have, you know, this kind of practice, even, you know, wisdom of-wisdom resulted by studying for long long time, going through many thousands of books, it is, you know, you should, you know, rinse your ears. You don't need it. Because of

that you can hear.

That kind of, you know, freedom you will have-how? First of all, you have to have bodhisattva mind. And next, you must be concentrated on what you do. And your life is-must be based on our pure practice, shikantaza. Not so difficult thing, actually, but you make your life difficult because of your glasses. Or because of-because you create, you know, many ideas. And because you have too much choice.

When you have too much choice, even though you think you had-you have good-you made a very good choice [laughs], but it doesn't help so much. It's better to do your best in your adversity, or it's better to spend your time, whether you like it or don't like, in some kind of situation which you may not like. And experience you have through that kind of, you know, situation is pure experience: something you feel you did-something good, you know, may not be so good, you know. But something which you did anyway, whether you like it or not, because you have to do it, I did it-you did it. When you say so, maybe what you did will be very good. And your experience will become-will be with you and helping you, as a part of your blood. Think about this point, you know. If you are sincere-if you are very sincere student-

But most people want to do it because you [they] like it. That is-I don't think that is good way. If you like Zen Center too much, you should go [laughs]. If you don't like it, stay here [laughs, laughter]. But anyway, you have freedom [laughs], so you may not stay. That is trouble [laughs] you have in America. But actually it is very much so. So my way of encouraging people is little bit different, you know. That is why my people say, you know, my students say the more you grow up, the more I become difficult [laughs]. You know, I must be always difficult with you. It is very difficult for me to be difficult with you, but [laughs, laughter] I am trying to be difficult with you [laughs]. I think that is the best way to help you, you know.

I think you have the point, you know, I want to say. Do you have some-do we have some more time? Would you-do you have some question? Hai. Please speak slowly. Uh-huh?

Student A: Did I understand you to say that whatever you want to do or whatever you feel that you should do or want to do, you should do it now or work on it now?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: Does that mean that-say that there's some situation in your life that you want to change, that you should change it now, or that you should work on changing your wanting to change it? Does that make sense to all you ... [2-3 words spoken to other students unclear]? In other words-

Suzuki-roshi: Change? Oh.

Student A: Are you saying that you should work on what you want to-on what your situation is now-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yes. Uh-huh.

Student A: -not work on what you might like your situation to be?

Suzuki-roshi: Whatever the situation may be, you know, at that moment you should work on it. That is, after all, you know, in one words, that is the point. But as it is not so easy thing, you know, so I am talking about many situation you may have with your surrounding, you know, so that kind of things makes my talk long-longer-made my talk longer. But in short, you should, you know, be always with people, and you should make best effort on each moment in the situation you are, without being discouraged or without being arrogant, you know, without having much discrimination, you know. Like you sit, you know, anyway. That is the point. And what is your point of the question?

Student A: Well, the question is, let us say you have a feeling that something is wrong for you. Let us say, you know, you are in school and you feel I shouldn't be in school, or I am in a particular job, but no, this is not the right job. Is your feeling that you should try to work with that job or with that school situation and see what you can do with that?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Student A: I see.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is, you know, after all that will be better, you know, better than changing your job. But if you have to change, you know, like someone said, you know, "Let's wait." You may say to yourself, "Let's wait until I can," you know, "leave with a good reason." Or situation makes you leave, you know. Maybe even though you try, you know, your best to improve the situation, you know, they may, you know, urge you to leave, maybe. So at that time, the best way for you or only way for you may be to leave. But we must make best effort always. So if you stick too much about your idea, you know, you will lose the point. You may be happy with them to give you some reason to leave [laughs], so are a little bit, you know-you have more freedom than they have.

Student B: The idea of helping others-

Suzuki-roshi: Idea of?

Student B: -can for me sometimes is a problem because although I think about that, sometimes when I actually look [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.] ... it doesn't actually appear that that is

actually what I am doing. I guess it's like realizing that my ego is there all the time. And it-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: To say it-to say that I'm trying to help others gets to sound silly to me-

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah.

Student B: -and it gets to sound like a lie, when I actually look at what I am doing.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Looks like you are lying.

Student B: I don't know exactly what my question is, except that I-to tell you that I meet that problem sometimes.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes.

Student B: So it seems to me sometimes that actually the way to help others is to forget all about helping others, in a way. To forget about them. It seems like vanity or pride-

Suzuki-roshi: Vanity or-yeah.

Student B: -sometimes to say that.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. You are not honest with yourself, anyway, you know. You feel-you may feel in that way, you know. But if you go through that kind of, you know, difficulty, or, you know, at that-at this moment you may feel in that way. But if you continue to do-to keep that feeling, then you will have pretty big experience, you know, and you can test your spirit. Before you realize how important it is to have that kind of spirit, it looks like, you know, you are not honest enough or you are not strong enough, you know. That is, in another word, lack of confidence in what you do, and you feel as if it is, you know, hypocrisy or something, you know.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student C: Um, along that line, to help others or to practice with people, um, I guess sometimes you might get angry or just to meet the situation as best you can, you know. I sort of look [?] upon this idea of trying to be a saint [as] sort of ugly, you know, in a way. You know, you've been-I feel this-I don't know, you know. I feel-I get angry. Um. I don't smile sometimes. I do smile sometimes. But I don't know, you know. I just-I just have the same sort of feeling. I can't-to just meet the situation, it seems to me that I can-

Suzuki-roshi: Sometime if-

Student C: -to try to meet with it, but, you know, not to go out and try to be a saint in that [4-5 words unclear] ... the same thing-a carbon copy.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. The thing what I am talking [about] is the fundamental spirit we must have, you know. If the center of your spirit is strong enough, whatever you do will be-will work, you know. You may be angry sometime-that is okay. And if you do not lose the center of the, you know, effort, you can be angry-very angry [laughs], maybe more than usual people be, you know. You could be angry. But you should not lose the spirit. You should not try to escape from it or, you know, you should be-you should try to be with them-with him, you know. Or you should not discriminate him. You should be-you should [laughs]-that is the taste of the work. Ffft. [Laughs.] You know? He may be very angry if I keep work [laughs], but, you know, it is okay. It is much better to smile, you know [laughs], when we-I feel, you know, angry with him, I must be angry completely. Then anger will work, if you do not lose the spirit to live with-to be with him, to practice with him.

Student C: Sort of not to run from him.

Suzuki-roshi: Not to escape, or not to make choice. Hai.

Student D: When you're confronted with the suffering of other people in the world that's caused by things like war and hunger, what kind of responses can a bodhisattva make which are consistent with right practice?

Suzuki-roshi: Bodhisattva? If you, you know, if you are [in] India, you know, for an instance, I haven't been in India yet, but if you are [in] India, your practice will be naturally different from the practice we have here. But it is-or, for an instance, you know-this is, maybe, you know, good example. Right now America has a kind of difficulty, you know, your country. And that kind of problem is our problem, you know, so we-instead of criticizing your policy, how to help them will be, you know-how to help them in its true sense will be-if you, you know, want-if you want to help them but when you cannot help directly, you will have some, you know, urge-you will feel some urge. And that kind of urge should be directed to encourage your practice-stronger, you know-to make yourself stronger, and to be ready to, you know, help your country, you know, or your society. That kind of spirit is-must be always there. Even though you do not join your, you know, peace movement, you should feel some urge, you know, some necessity to work on it. You shouldn't put the problem aside, you know. You should practice our zazen amidst of the problem, feeling the urge of practice. Then through your practice you will grow, you know, and you will have more spirit and more power, and you will be ready to help people.

Student D: Is there a way to combine action with [2-3 words unclear], you know, sitting practice besides personal practice in a way that, for instance, if you join the peace movement, that that would be part of your practice? Or if you worked and lived in a community, you know, doing things in that community, could that be part of your practice, as well as sitting-not excluding sitting but as well as sitting?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I think so. I think so, but if you-actually, you are right here, you know, so you must have good practice. Your practice should not be weak. Then you will be ashamed of yourself, you know, not to join them.

Student E: Roshi, you said before, Roshi, that, you know, we should-well, in order to see things-as-they-are, you know, we must have the bodhisattva eyes, and in order to have that, we must be able to involved fully with whatever we are doing. But it seems that there's like a problem with that as there is with, one might say, the idea of trying to become a saint, is that you have-

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah, that is very cheap idea, you know, to be trying to be a saint or a sage, you know.

Student E: If, um-

Suzuki-roshi: It is a kind of escape, you know.

Student E: I mean, if-

Suzuki-roshi: Without being sage you can, you know, you can do many things before you become sage. You know, if you are trying to be a sage [laughs], what will you do if you couldn't? You know, in my-when I was young, people worked hard to get some money to help others [laughs]. You know, if he cannot earn money to give somebody, what he will do, you know? Before, even though he has no money, there is-there are many ways of helping people, you know. It is not just after you have money you can help others. Before you, you know, have a lot of money, you can help others. And with this spirit, if you practice continuously, maybe you will be sage, you know, some day, I don't know [laughs].

Student E: Roshi, what I meant was, um-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Oh, excuse me. [Laughter.]

Student E: I mean, well, like, when Cody [?] was talking about, you know, in terms of, you know, like we'd have some idea of being good, or that idea or the idea of being involved fully with what you are doing, you know, that-when you have that idea in your head that can be like a problem too, I mean-especially if you have a lot of trouble being involved in that way, because it seems to me that, you know, when you



go about-when you start out to do something, you say, "Here I am, and here is the activity I will do." It was, uh-and then pretty soon you find yourself, you know, your mind has wandered completely from what you are doing, you know. So you bring it back, but if you get attached-at least, you know, it's been my experience-I like kind of get attached to that, you know, it's just, you know, then the mind just becomes like a turmoil, like a stream of muddy water. So, um-you know, on the other hand if I-sometimes I don't try, you know, sometimes I feel like if, you know, I don't make an effort to do something [?], it seems to confuse me, you know, which actually creates confusion. I don't ... [3-4 words unclear], you know. I think maybe I'm not doing enough [2-3 words unclear]. But-I was hoping you could say something about this.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Uh. You know, anyway, I understand your feeling, but you have to check your feeling more, you know. First of all, you should check, you know, whether that kind of feeling arise from some selfish, you know, idea or arrogancy, or, you know, because of not enough, you know, effort. Maybe sometime it may be because of laziness, you know, lazy idea. So if you don't, you know-if you are not involved-if you cannot do with people [who are] right now with you, then it is a kind of arrogancy, you know. "You people do not know what is most important thing. What you are doing is not so important." You should do things, but you don't have enough courage, you know, to convince them to follow you, you know, or you have not enough courage to be responsible for that, you know-what you will do. And you are thinking, you know, your mind is wandering. That is not so healthy practice. Do you understand?

Student E: I'm not sure I could follow you.

Suzuki-roshi: You know, if you see someone actually acting in that way, you have some feeling, you know. "Oh, that may be how we should help people." So it-you need some good examples, and you need some good friend if you want to do something better, you know. That if-if you act or-without good friend, without someone's real support, you know, and without, you know-that you haven't good support means, you know, your practice is not there. Still somewhere else. That is why people doesn't support you-do not support you. So if you really, you know, feel in that way, immediately people will support you. Some actual fact should follow with your idea, you know. So just to depend on someone who may lead you to some, you know, good way-that is not good way, you know. Don't you think so?

Start [hits cup or stick on floor or other hard surface] right now [laughs], before you think about it [laughs]. Even though you join the group, you should have your friend to go with you immediately. That kind of, you know, element is-when that kind of element is lacking in your activity or movement, you know, you will be led in wrong direction. If someone-if there are many people, you know, who want to do something good by-under some suggestion, you know, it is very easy to

lead them wrong way, you know. Anyone can lead them, because you are like a sheep. That is not healthy, you know, structure of our society.

I, you know, I am sorry, but I feel that kind of tendency in our young generation. We are not strong enough, and our feet is not on the ground. You see? So you must be much stronger and thinking about, you know, result of your, you know, result of your movement, or result of your-each one's acting in each one's feeling, you know. Something is missing is very true, you know. What is missing? You should know exactly what is missing. Even though you don't know what to do with this society, but you should exactly know what point is missing. You cannot depend on anything, anyone. You should know. That is why I am talking about, you know, how to apply our practice in our everyday life. I said, "everyday life," but this spirit could be applied in your movement in future. And you will know what kind of practice you must have. It is not just, you know, sitting-sitting in Zen Center is not whole picture of our practice, you know. It is the picture of your movement-your young generation's movement.

Okay? Yeah. Some more effort is necessary. [Strikes cup or stick again. Laughs.]

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joe Galewsky and Bill Redican (5/1/01).

[1] ichinyo zammai: ichinyo = oneness, non-discrimination, absolute unity; zammai or sanmai (samadhi, Sanskrit) = nondualistic state of meditation.

[2] Wind Bell is the biannual publication of the San Francisco Zen Center.

[3] WIND BELL-by Eihei Dogen

Hanging in space by his mouth

His whole body is his mouth

East, West, South, and North Wind

He does not care

Always, he talks in many ways

about Prajñaparamita for others

Tsu Chin Tsun Ryan

Tsu Chin Ryan

The above is Dogen's rewriting of a verse by his master Tiantong Rujing (Tendo Nyojo, 1163-1228). See, e.g., Steven Heine, *The Zen Poetry of Dogen* (Boston: Tuttle, 1997, p. 141). The translation reproduced here was probably by Suzuki-roshi.

[4] Yunmen Wenyan (Ummon Bun'en): 864-949. Chan master of Tang China.

[5] rokuchiji: by tradition, the six operations officers of a Japanese Zen monastery.

[6] Nanquan Puyuan (Jap. Nansen Fugan): 748-835. Dharma successor of Mazu Daoyi (Jap. Baso Doitsu).

## **1971 juli (11)**

### **1 - Real Precepts Are Beyond Words**

Friday, July 02, 1971

"Real Precepts Are Beyond Words"  
City Center

[Today I would like to][1] ... lecture about precepts. I- When I say "precepts," the first thing you will think of is something like Ten Commandment or ten grave prohibitory precepts. But Zen precepts is not like that. The Zen precepts is- To study Zen precepts means to understand zazen. So it is- Another interpretation of zazen is precepts. Using words-word "precepts" we explain what is Zen actually.

The purpose of receiving precepts, observing precepts, is not just to remember what we should do or what we shouldn't do. And how we observe precepts is to practice Zen or to extend our practice to our everyday life. So the idea of precepts is completely different from the usual understanding of precepts.

The precepts, you know, which is - Or foundation of precepts or- True meaning of precept-precepts is various way of understanding of one reality, one reality which is always with you-reality, which cannot- which is not indivisible in three, or in sixteen, or in ten. Tentatively we divide- we explain it from various angle, but that is just words. Real, you know, precept is beyond word. We cannot- If we talk about it, it is not real

precepts already. So if you think precept is just to observe some various rules is precepts, it is very different or very far away from the true understanding of the true prac- [incomplete word: "practice"?]-precepts.

So, the first precepts of sixteen precepts we observe is-how can I [laughs] put into English word one reality which is not-which cannot be divided in three or sixteen-one reality, precept of one reality. You may call it "emptiness," or you may call it "the absolute." That is one reality, you know. That is the first precept we receive-we observe. So [as] you may know, this is the most important-maybe most-I cannot say the most important [laughs], but this is the m- [incomplete word: "most"?]-

Anyway, all the precepts start from this precept. Without understanding this precepts, our precepts doesn't make any sense. One reality which we cannot divide [by] three or six or sixteen. It can be understood in great scale; whatever there are in this world or in this universe, or what kind of rule we have, or what kind of truth we can observe in various way, or moral code, or rules, or theory we scientist observe, are all those truths is included in this big scale of the precepts.

We understand the precepts in various ways. Science-scientists understand his own way, and various people understand religious way. There must be various way of understanding of it, but the-what we study, what we observe is the one precept. That is the precept you will receive-when you receive precepts, sixteen precepts. You will understand then, you know, how you receive precepts. How you receive precepts is just practice zazen, just to be yourself. Then you can observe the precepts.

Ahh. It looks like I'm talking about something [laughs] about heaven [laughs], but it is not so. I am talking about each one of you and myself [drinks water], and about the water and about the stuff [laughs]. When, you know, stuff is really stuff, this stuff include everything. When you just practice zazen on your black cushion, your practice include everything. And you practice zazen with Buddha, with various patriarch, and with all sentient beings. That is, you know, what I always repeat over and over.

Whether your practice is good or bad, it doesn't matter. If you accept your practice as your own, then that practice include everything. At that time you have precepts which include everything as the absolute being include everything. We say, you know, something which include everything is the absolute. But it is actually it is more than that. It is beyond our understanding. You may- You may think if you add, you know, all of you and all the being which exist in this universe, then that is the absolute. But it is not so, because that absolute can be understood by your mind, you know. Something which you understand is not already absolute, you know, because your mind limit the real understanding of the absolute. When you understand, it is not so. When you don't understand and when you just sit [laughs], when you become

just a stone or stuff, you know, then you include everything. That is, you know, our zazen practice.

This is so important point for us. If we lose this point, you will be easily caught by some idea or some experience in your, you know, practice. "My practice is good, very good. Recently I saw Buddha in zazen. [Laughs.] Various buddhas-all the buddhas came to me [laughs, laughter] and admired my practice." [Laughs, laughter.] You are laughing, but it is actually that kind of practice exists. And they practice this kind of practice very sincerely. But even so, it is good practice- But even so, compare-comparing to the practice "just sit," you know, you can't-it is beyond comparison [laughs]. Just to sit is much better than to see all the buddha in the world [laughs]. Do you [laughs] understand why is it?

That is the point, you know: to know how important practice it is just to be yourself. When I couldn't read Zen book in English, you know, Alan Watts said, you know, "When a stone is completely stone [laughs], that is real stone," he said, you know. That is what he put, you know, our-that-Zen into word. When a stone is really stone, that is, you know, when a stone is stone through-and-through. That is really a stone.

Not only that is really stone, or when it is really stone, the stone include everything. The stone cannot be, you know, picked up by anyone when a stone is really stone. When- Because it is not stone, you know [laughs], so someone may kick it. But when a stone is really stone, you cannot do-you cannot do anything with it. When a stone is really stone, you cannot, you know, pick up. Even though you think you picked up, still, you know, it is a part of the universe. It is you that-who thinks you could picked up, but actually you didn't, you didn't. It is still a part of [laughs] the universe. You cannot pick up whole universe. If you say so, "I picked up whole universe," where are you? [Laughs.] You are ghost. You are outside of the universe. That is just delusion. Nothing exist outside of the universe. All what exist is inside of the universe, you know.

So, that you say you picked up a stone is big delusion. Stone is still stone. You cannot do anything with it. If you understand this point and sit, that is how you receive precepts. This is-

Only one way to observe precepts, perfect precepts. There is no other way to observe precepts. This precept is called- I don't know what, how to interpret-precepts which is-which is not dividable in three. Why we say three is there's two more.

Another point of this precepts is you say, you know-as you know, we say "dharma" and-no, "buddha, dharma, sangha." I am talking about-I have been talking about dharma [buddha] precepts, which cannot be divided in three.

And next one is dharma precept. Dharma. It is, you know, law of the universe. There is- In some way, you know, always things is going. If you throw something, you know, away it will eventually come to the earth because, you know, things, because of the theory of the gravitation. So what- There's some rules, you know, in the way of things exist. So if we say "rule," that law or theory, that theory or rule include everything. There is nothing-nothing exist out of-free from the law or theory. That is dharma.

When we say "freedom" [laughs]-even though you have complete freedom, you say "I have complete freedom from everything." But if you exist outside of the law or theory, you are ghost [laughs]. You are, you know, you are- That is your own delusion. Actually nothing exist outside of the rule. And that is called-the second one is called pure-pure law or pure precepts.

Why- "Pure" means not dualistic. When something is in duality, it is not pure, we say. When we- When things is not dualistic it is pure. Usually, you know, when you say "pure," pure is opposite of impure. And when you say "good," good is opposite of bad-a pair of opposite. Good and bad is pair of opposite. Then there is already pollution. Good air [laughs] or pure air. So, when we say "pure," it means non-duality. Non-duality.

When you sit, you know, if you say, "My practice is good," it is already dualistic. Whether you say "good practice" or "bad practice," you are right there and sitting [laughs]. You cannot say "good practice" or "bad practice." There is some reason why someone's practice is like this or someone cannot sit with her back straight. There's some reason, and you cannot say "good" or "bad." That is how she practice zazen. For her there is no other way to sit for two days' practice. She is making her best effort, and she practice zazen just to, you know, make her effort-complete effort. To be complete being, she is sitting. Not to attain enlightenment or not to keep her from being fall into the hell [laughs]. He is just sitting. She is just sitting. No one can criticize her practice. If she criticize her practice, you know, she is not making her best effort. When she is making her best effort, you know, she cannot criticize. She will not be regret about is-about her practice. That is her own practice, and day after day, if she continue this kind of practice, that is how we exist or how we live as a good Buddhist. That is how we keep our prac [incomplete word]-precepts.

Anyway, there is some rule, you know, some reason why each person exist here. There is some reason why plant is plant and stars are star. So when we say "dharma," dharma include everything. And dharma is another name of the Buddha, the Absolute One.

The third one is sangha. "Sangha" means to keep harmony, to be harmonious. You know, when Buddha and the law of the universe is not two. And when someone who is practicing zazen and Buddha and his law is one, that is complete harmony. It is more than harmony [laughs].

It is actually one.

So, after all, we say, after all, one indivisible ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.] ... the precept which is indivisible in three, or which is indivisible. We say "three precepts," but it is not three. We cannot divide in three. So we say "precepts which is not divisible in three." But we can, you know, explain it in three ways. "My practice is, you know- My zazen is precepts itself." That is one interpretation-one way of understanding the precepts.

There's rules, you know. If I do something good, result will be good. You cannot [laughs], you know, escape from the law of karma. If you understand that way, then that law include-that rule or law-include everything. We say "law of karma," but you cannot escape from karma. Nothing can, you know, escape from the karma. There's some rule-always rule. Rule is following you-not following you, you know. It is how everything exist. So, you know, it is same thing with Buddha himself. When we say "Buddha," Buddha, you know, acts with karma, by karma, or for karma. So karma and Buddha is same. And we, you know, Buddha's disciple, is always one with Buddha. We cannot escape from him. So we say "indivisible" precepts. We cannot divide in three.

Now you are listening to my lecture; or you may, to study Buddhism, you will read many books. The books you read is not Buddhism itself but explanation of this, you know, truth. "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." If we explain it like this, it is Prajñāparamita groups-study of Prajñāparamita group-sutra of Prajñāparamita group. If we put emphasis on how to be buddha, why we are buddha, then that is study of Lotus Sutra. What is the- If we study koan, what do we study? What you study by koan is what is the relationship between our practice and the reality. How we, you know- Why we- How we have a glance of the truth or enlightenment or Buddha, which is always one, which is not divisible, which cannot be explained in words. That is, you know, how you study koan. Through koan, or through koan practice, you will have a glance of the truth. "Oh, this is reality!" That is koan practice. Whatever you say, whatever you write, it is a kind of way-it is one of the way to put the reality into words. If you are an artist, what you work on is how to, you know, convey your understanding of the truth.

To-so to study Buddhism, of course, include-is included in our study of precepts. Precepts is not just to observe ten prohibitory precepts: Do not kill; do not steal, you know, that is not [laughs]-that is, you know- It is precepts. It is really precepts, but that is not- Even though you observe ten precepts completely, it is not how you observe our real precepts.

So we are not interested in to explain 250, more than 250-a little bit more-I don't know how many more, three or four [hundred] more precepts for [laughs] for a man and for a lady more than 500. I'm sorry to say. Each time I say [laughs], I-some of you maybe may not like it.

But, you know, as I always say, female has more complicated [laughs] spiritually and physically complicated, you know, activity. So the rule should be more complicated. That is, you know, quite natural [laughs]. So man is more simple, and- "Too simple" means, maybe, not so good [laughs]. Simpleton? Simpleton. [Laughs, laughter.] So, you know, I am not proud of, you know, having half of the precepts as a lady has, you know. I'm not proud of it. I'm so simple [laughs]. I'm so foolish, maybe.

But anyway, it is not the point to observe those precepts one by one after another. The point is how to be yourself, how to be a lady-a lady. Then you have precepts. You have complete precepts. When you are just lady, you keep more than five hundred [laughs] precepts. Actually, even though you keep written precepts-five hundreds of written precepts-you may not be completely a lady. But when- The best way is just to be yourself. Then precepts are with you always.

People may ask, "What are you doing," you know, "in Zen Center? What kind of practice you have in Zen Center?" There are many ways, maybe, but, in short, to be one's self is the purpose of our practice. How to be one's self, one's self is our point of practice and how to keep the precepts-Buddha's precepts. And this-those are the three precepts-the three indivisible precepts.

And next one, I'm [laughs]-I'm not continuing my lecture any more [laughs], because you may be hungry-you may be hungry if I continue [laughs, laughter]. The other three is the three collective pure precepts. Collection of all the goodies [laughs, laughter]. That is another three precepts [laughs]. How about it? "Collection of all the goodies precepts." [Laughs, laughter.]

And ten- We have ten more: that is ten [grave] prohibitory precepts. You shouldn't eat too much, you know, even though we have the three collective good [pure] precepts. That is sixteen precepts. And we tentatively, you know, explain the framework of Buddhism by the explanation of the precepts. So it is not just precepts. It is not just rule. It is direct explanation of our life and Buddha's teaching and zazen practice. That is why it is important for you to receive precepts.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Sara Hunsaker (4/99) and Bill Redican (2/8/01).

[1] The first part of the sentence was not recorded on tape. The phrase in brackets was added by the transcriber.



## 2 - Precepts

Tuesday, July 06, 1971

Precepts

San Francisco

I want to continue my talk about precepts-Buddhist precepts. And last time I talked about the indivisible three treasures, which is buddha, and dharma, and sangha. But we have three-we say "three treasures," but the three treasures could be understood by you in three ways. It is indivisible, three precepts, because it is one: buddha, and dharma, and sangha are actually one. It is not three. So we say indivisible three treasures.

The next one is, actually, since we have Shakyamuni Buddha who attained enlightenment, realizing the indivisible three treasures. And what he told was dharma, which was-as he realized what is the indivisible three treasures, he talked about it. That is dharma. And his disciples are sangha. So this is-we call this three treasures, is called "manifested three treasures." And right now we have, you know, temples, and in temple we have buddha, you know, big or small, or bronze or wood, or gold or wood, wooden buddha, bronze buddha, buddha image. That is buddha, you know, for us. And we have scriptures, you know, many scriptures, piled up somewhere [laughs], sometime in library [laughs]. Those are dharma too. We call it dharma. And sangha-sangha is priests and-priests or nun-priests, nuns, and laymen and laywomen. They are, you know, all sangha. Those are, you know, also three treasures. Three treasures, maintaining, which maintains Buddha and Buddhism as a religion. So those are called, maybe, juji sanbo[1] -"maintaining three treasures," the three treasures which maintain or sustain Buddhism, which protect Buddhism.

Tonight I want to talk about Buddha's-excuse me-three treasures, manifested-the manifested three treasures. It is not different, but the difference-difference is, difference between indivisible three treasures[2] and manifested three treasures[3] is-Buddhism which was told by Buddha is the manifested three treasures, manifested buddha. And Buddhism which exist, you know, before Buddha, even before Buddha, that is indivisible three treasures. After Buddha, you can say "he is Buddha," you know; he can say "this is Buddha." And this is the teaching which was told by Buddha. That is dharma. And those are Buddha's sangha, which include priest, and laymen, and laywomen-Buddha's sangha.

So we can tell by our eyes, you know, which is buddha, and which is dharma, and which is sangha. But indivisible three treasures cannot say this is dharma, or this is buddha, or this is sangha. This is the difference. And-and for us it is very important to figure out the

difference between Buddhism which was told by Buddha and Buddhism which actually exist, whether Buddha, you know, came out on this world.

But because you don't-most people thinks if Buddhism is the teaching which was started by Buddha. Maybe most people thinks in that way. And some people may say before Buddha there were many sages, and Buddha is one of the sages we have had-we had before. Those sages, you know, in-we have had besides Buddha is also-we include those sages. Where [laughs]-where are they [laughs] now? They are not, you know, they are not indivisible three treasures; they are not included there. And they are not manifested, you know, three treasures, because [laughs] manifested three treasures are Buddha, and the teaching he told us, and his sangha. Those are manifested three treasures [laughs]. Where are they now [laughs]? For an instance, here is Amida Buddha, you know [probably pointing to the statue of Amida Buddha in the buddha hall]. Where is he? We-it looks like they have no place-Buddhism has no place for other sages [laughs]. Very sectarian, maybe, you may say. But we have actually [laughs]-we reserve-they have reserved seat [laughs, laughter]. You must think, you know. That is a koan for you. Where are they?

There are many questions. If you think more, you will have many questions. And as a Buddhist, it is necessary to figure out those questions clearly, and you have to answer for this kind of question [laughs]. What you should study now or tonight after listening to my last lecture is, first of all, to have full understanding of indivisible [pronounces it "indivisible," laughs]-indivisible three treasures. Unless you understand this indivisible three treasures, you cannot be perfect Buddhist. This is very important point for us to understand. Even, you know-of course, to have full understanding of it, it is necessary for us to practice. Actual practice is necessary. You cannot, you know, understand it, you cannot figure out by your mind. Actual practice is necessary. What you understand, you know, will be-if it is not buddha or sangha, it will be law of the Buddhism or law of the universe. Or if it is not the law of the universe, it may be something, you know, which exist in this universe: trees or mountains or river.

And it is almost impossible to know what is dharm- [partial word]-what is buddha. The buddha is so-called-it "emptiness" or "nothingness." That is actually buddha. And if you think you can figure out what is nothingness, what is emptiness [laughs], if you say "I know what is emptiness," that is not emptiness. [It is] somethingness-some idea or something. How you can figure out-how you can tell what is emptiness is to full understanding of mountains or river or each one of us. What is a stone? What is a cat? What is a dog, you know? When you know actually what is a dog, what is a cat, you know yourself, you know. Only when you know yourself you will understand what is mountain, what is a dog, what is a cat. And you will understand cat is not just cat. Cat is you too. You are cat. [Laughs] At the same time, you are a dog too [laughs,

laughter]. And if you think it is ridiculous for you to be a dog [laughs, laughter], then that is, you know, usual understanding. It is not indivisible-indivisible truth. That is why, actually, we must have practice. Unless we have practice, we cannot reach this, you know, core of the teaching.

People may say Buddhism is atheism because we do not have any particular, you know, buddha to worship. So they may say Buddhism is atheism. Or they-it is not monotheism. People knows about this point. But many people say Buddhism is pantheism, but it is not so. Atheism or pantheism or monotheism is the religion which you can teach by-by your thinking mind. You can figure out what is, you know, what is god.

But Buddhism is beyond our understanding. It should be so. Every religion actually should be so, but Buddhism puts emphasis on this point. Because-I think Buddhism is very good religion for American people [laughs, laughter] because you like something, you know, you like something which you can figure out, you know. If we say you cannot figure out what is buddha, you will be discouraged: "Oh, Buddhism is no good." [Laughs, laughter.]

At least for you, religion should be some mystical-mystic religion will be pretty good for you, but not exactly [right?]. Religion should be some religion which will give you some advantage in your life. That is most appropriate religion, not only for American people, but for almost all the human nature-human being. Or else no one will not be-no one will [be] interested in religion. But we, you know, we Buddhists [are] concerned about this point very much, because of the weakness we have-weakness, which weakness that we cannot satisfy with nothing. That is the [reason] why we suffer, why we have difficulties in our life. Only when we can [be] satisfied with ourselves and with what we have and with how we are, then we will have complete freedom from everything. And that is how we, you know-how we-how we become completely-how we have complete renunciation.

You may say that is almost impossible, you know, or utterly impossible; but actually it is not so. There is some way. Because you think so, it is not possible. When you say it is not possible, you stick to your gaining idea, and you still continue to play game with things. You are not-you are not serious enough with yourself. You need something, you know, some-something to make [you] feel good. We Buddhist feel very sympathetic with people who cannot [be] satisfied without anything when they are already buddha. Because they need- [partial word-"need"?]-they want something more, they cannot be a buddha. That's all. So it is [a] pity, you know [laughs, laughter], isn't it, you know? Having, you know-being well-qu- [partial word-"qualified"?]-completely qualified buddha-for some completely-for a completely qualified buddha, just because he needs something more, a little bit more, he cannot be a buddha [laughs]. How silly, you know [laughs, laughter], we are if you really know yourself. This point is not, you

know-this is the point we do not notice. And this is the point why Buddha appeared in this world.

So Buddha's enlightenment is just to be himself, you know, and when he become he himself, he found everyone to be a buddha, and everything was buddha. When just knows-when just-when he just know who he was, then everyone were buddha. Everyone is buddha. That is how he attained enlightenment. And his teaching was how we, you know, his teaching is actually let everyone know why we are not buddha, why we cannot be a buddha. So actually it is mostly about human nature.

So his teaching is about our human nature. So that is why we say if you study Buddhism, you will be a good human being. And when you are good human being, then you are also-when you know your bad points, means you know you are originally Buddha. Same thing. At least if you listen to his teaching, you will know why you are, you know, you have suffering as a human being, and how-that is how you can [be] free from suffering. The same teaching will work in two ways.

Actually he was talking about himself-about himself as a person who was born at certain time, at certain place. If so, what is Buddhism [laughs]? Where is Buddhism? Buddhism is each one's own nature. In this sense, that each one's own nature is called also "buddha nature," because it is about how we-how Buddha lose himself and how a buddha stays himself. So it is all about each one of us.

So if you say Buddha attained enlightenment or Buddha started Buddhism, it is so. But even though he didn't start, he didn't appear in this world, Buddhism is there as long as we are here. So there is nothing new, you know, for us to study. But Buddha's teaching will give you some light, some light to know yourself. So in this sense we have dharma-the light by which we can see ourselves like a mirror is Buddha's teaching. But all what we will know is about ourselves.

So here in manifested three treasures, same thing is true. Buddha, and sangha, and teaching is one. We are buddha. Or "sangha," we say, but each one of the sangha-member of the sangha is buddha. And his teaching we say, but that is just light, you know, to know ourselves. So actually there is no special teaching which we should remember, which we should recite. There is no need to recite sutra [laughs], in its true sense, but it will help anyway [laughs, laughter]. So if you-if you should respect, you know, pay homage, you should pay homage to yourself, and it means to pay homage to buddha and to the dharma. That is the structure of Buddhism.

So same thing is true with the manifested three treasures as three treasure indivisible-[having trouble pronouncing it; laughs.] In-di-vi- [Students help with pronunciation.] Okay anyway. [Laughs, laughter.] Better not to, to bite my lips. [Laughs, laughter.] Anyway, same, not

difference. Not different. But because our mind is not so clear, so we must to give good understanding of Buddhism, we have precepts. So precepts is not something to observe literally. Through precepts we should know the structure of Buddhism, and point of Buddhism, and core of Buddhism, and spirit of Buddhism. That is why we accept precepts.

And the maintaining Buddhism, three treasure of-which maintain Buddhism, like scriptures, or priests, or bronze Buddha. You-if I-you don't, you know, you don't-I think you do not find much meaning in bronze Buddha or scriptures, maybe, you know; especially you don't [aren't] interested in bronze Buddha at all [laughs]. You say it is idol, you know, idol worship. Buddhism is idol worship because all of us, you know, every day bowing to Buddha. Right now we bow to Buddha nine times. It is-Buddhism is nothing but idol worship. [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah, that is maybe your feeling.

But, you know-buddha-in this category of maintaining buddha include various sages who are actually-actually helping people, whether he is Buddhist or not. That is for us also buddha. It is not because we are so generous [laughs], but because we have clear understanding of buddha-who is buddha. Each one of us is already buddha. Why various sages who are, you know, helping people are not buddha? They are all buddha. We say "buddha in other world." "Other world" is-means, you know, not in this society, or not for Buddhists. Other world-other world can be Christian world or some other religious people's world. This point should not be, you know, missed. We really pay homage to those sages.

This is a brief explanation of the triple treasures we have-precepts of triple treasures. Maybe to have-having clear understanding of triple treasures, our triple treasures, and to have right practice, we should make those points very sure, through practice, and through intellectual understanding, and through discussion. If we do not discuss this point fully, we will not have good practice in its true sense, and we will be lost. Even though you, you know, practice hard and you make great effort, you will be lost. So that you may not lose yourself in your practice, in your religion, we should accept those treasures which was transmitted from Buddha to us. Actually, Buddha realized this point, and [it was] carefully discussed by various teachers and patriarchs so that we might not lose our way.

You can criticize, you know, Buddhism from various angle. That is necessary. If it is not necessary for you, it will help someone else, you know, even though [laughs] you end up in your criticism. It will help people-someone else. For your own sake, for other's sake, you should criticize Buddhism. And you can fight with Buddhism, even. If you don't fight with Buddhism strongly enough, all human being will be lost. Only when you fight with Buddhism, then actually you are helping .... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

You should study Buddhism on those points by all means and from various angles. But as long as you are fighting with it, you are not-not yet [laughs] Buddhist-you are outside Buddhism. But from Buddha's viewpoint, he is Buddhist, and even though he feel he is not Buddhist. Buddhism is, you know, this kind of religion. You should know what is Buddhism very clearly. And if you [are] going to be a Buddhist, you should be prepared for this kind of problem which you will have because you became a-only because you became Buddhist. If you, you know, were not Buddhist, you will not have any problem, maybe [laughs]. Only because you became a Buddhist you will have many problem [laughs, laughter]. Fighting, you know-through fighting-this kind of fighting, you can help people in its true sense. If you want to be protected by the Three Treasures, it is not the way to accept the Three Treasures. This is the spirit we receive our precepts. This is why you become a Buddhist. [Sighs.]

Maybe I think better to have a question-and-answer time for, maybe, how many minutes? Twenty minutes? Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: What do you mean "fight with Buddhism"?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: What do you mean "fight with Buddhism"?

Suzuki-roshi: Buddhism. [Laughs.] Buddhism. In its wide sense-

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Did you hear, Roshi?

Student A: To fight with Buddhism.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, "fight with Buddhism."

Student B: Fight with Buddha.

Suzuki-roshi: To-to have doubt-you know, to wonder what it is, to have many questions about Buddhism. That is mostly what I meant. We-we do not use any weapons, so it is impossible for you to fight with gun or- [laughs]. Yeah. Hai.

Student C: I've come here off-and-on, but the people that seem to be studying here the longest never seem to ask any questions. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Asking-what did he say?

Student B: He said the people here-that practice here the most never

ask questions.

Suzuki-roshi: They do. Yeah. [Laughs, laughter.] Will you ask question then? You can ask question. [Laughter.]

Student D [Ed Brown?]: It's because our legs hurt so much where we live [?] [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: Do you have some question? You have-you must suffer eighteen minutes more. [Laughter.] Do you have some question? Did you have some outline of my talk? Hai.

Student E: Could you say something more about emptiness, or void, or pure nothingness?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. [Laughter.] Who said? To wondering why? [?] [Laughter.] Because I cannot say anything about this, I talked so long time [laughs, laughter]. It is impossible to say something about it, you know, but it is possible. The only way to know what is emptiness is to be you, you know. Then that is emptiness. Do you understand? We have-nothing has its self-nature. So if you-the only way to have it is to be a part of it. It is not good. If I say "part of it," it is already creating some question or [laughs]-a question for you, but to be a part of it, to be one with everything. Then, when you are actually a part of everything-all things, you are all thing. When you think you have your own way, or you have your own self-nature, then you are not part of all things. So you are something. When you are completely a part of everything, you don't exist anymore. [Takes a drink of water.]

When you dip a water by this cup, you know, and when you say, "this is water," you know, this is not water anymore. When you empty it to the river, it is really water. It is flowing endlessly. It doesn't stay anywhere. If it stay someplace, it may not be true water anymore. But actually it is-it cannot stay anywhere that is water. We think it can stay here, but this is just because I think, you know, "here is water in the cup." But it doesn't actually staying here; it is going, you know, away. So when water is really water, it is nothing, you know; no self-nature. There is no water. You cannot catch it. So, in this sense, we can say "nothingness." Water is nothingness. Nothingness-because it is nothing, it is water, true water. When it is true water, it is nothingness. So everything is nothingness, and everything is everything, just everything. Anything can be everything, and everything can be nothing. This is a kind of technique [laughs, laughter] to talk about-nothingness. When you know, when you become familiar with this kind of technique, you may say, "I understand what is nothingness." [Laughs, laughter.] Then you don't understand. So when you don't know anything, you really have Buddhism. So better not to be concerned about nothingness too much. [Laughs, laughter.]

Do you have some-did you understand what I am saying? No?

[Laughter.] That was good. If you say "understand," you understood- maybe you have understood something else. That is your own understanding. Don't ask question about nothingness, you know. You will be- you must surrender, anyway, if you ask question about nothingness. Maybe I have to surrender too [laughs]. Some other question?

Student F: You say it is necessary to have doubt.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: What about- is it necessary also to have faith, to be able to try out Buddhism?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Student F: So sometimes- sometimes you need faith and sometimes you need doubt?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, but doubt- big doubt should follow, you know, the confidence to try out. But actually we are trying out, you know, even though we die, we are still trying in some way [laughs]. Isn't that true? Even though we have no physical, you know, body, we are still trying. Physical body seems to act quite easily. But, you know, true- my true nature cannot cease to act. It is going. Even though there is no more earth, still something is going on, endlessly [laughs]. If you, you know, if you [are] discouraged by something which may happen to us, it is lack of understanding of our true nature. If you know, really, what we are, we cannot [get] discourage[d]. Even though your small mind may be discouraged, but your big mind is still going [laughs]. It is okay, you know. Some more question?

Student G: Is it possible to study Buddhism without doubt?

Suzuki-roshi: Without-?

Student G: Without doubt.

Suzuki-roshi: Without doubt? Yeah, if possible, that is better.

Student G: Why?

Suzuki-roshi: If that is possible- if you have some- if you are on the track, you know, maybe you can go without doubt. That is why we have various, you know, practice: So that you can go on and on without much difficulty we have, you know, various rules and rituals.

Student H: If you doubt, when you doubt, pretty soon you're doubting so much that- how do you know that you're on the track, if you're doubting all the time? How do you know for sure, you know, when the



right thing?

Suzuki-roshi: It is not necessary to be sure. Anyway [laughs, laughter], you will not be lost. That is very true, you know. You think you will be lost. When you think you will be lost, then you have something wrong with you. You know, you may be-you may have very small mind.

Student H: Okay, that's the case with certain people who are called schizophrenic. What happens to them? They go off and then something happens to them, and what, what is it?

Suzuki-roshi: So I think if our society, you know, is supported this kind of big mind and spirit, we will not have so many, you know, mentally disturbed people. The-why they feel they afraid of being lost is, you know, they are not fully supported by big mind. They are, you know, always confronting with his own small mind and some other small mind, like his parents' or his brother or sister, his neighbor. They are all, you know, involved in small mind, so he has to confront with small mind always, so he will be always discouraged. His mind cannot be so broad and big. And when he has big mind he feel as if he was lost, you know, something wrong with himself-with him, when-because everyone has small mind, you know. When everyone has small mind, and he-even though he have big mind, he feels as if he was lost. That is, you know, the trouble-trouble of the society who has not supported with this kind of big mind.

Student I: Why have all this weakness, and desire, and struggle? What is the sense in it?

Suzuki-roshi: Struggle?

Student I: Yeah, why is it-what is the sense in all of this-these-having small mind, having weaknesses and desires? Why?

Suzuki-roshi: Reason why is, you know, not to-actually, we do not have small mind, so-called-it "small mind" to suffer, but to support ourselves we have small mind-to know what actually we are doing, inch by inch. That is small mind. If you call it small mind, but if it doesn't cease to act, you know, going on and on, that is actually big mind. So if you lose the background of the small mind which is big mind, then small mind end up in small mind for you. It is actually going, but you don't feel so, and you are always afraid of something will happen to you. That is fear, you know. That is why we suffer.

Student I: I know; but my question is why was all this created in the first place?

Suzuki-roshi: Which practice?

Student I: Why was all this created, all this-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is-

Student I: -you're given that, kind of, climb out [?] of small mind. The whole process. Why? What's the sense of this?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Why we have that-why this kind-why we are created in that way?

Student I: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. It is something which is difficult to answer [laughs, laughter]. But actually it is, you know-we are-the purpose of Buddhism is not to answer that kind of question, like Christianity. Who created, you know? Your question is something like, "Who is responsible for?" [Laughs, laughter.] What if? But no one is responsible for that. If you say someone should be responsible for that, you should be responsible for that because you change your mind little bit, you know. If you have little bit right understanding, you will be free from that kind of problem and you can and even enjoy the problem. So, actually, you are creating and you are responsible, but we are not talking about whose responsibility it is. But actually things is going in that way. That is nature of Buddhism; that is the nature of Buddha's teaching. He didn't, you know, say anything definitely, and he did not pick up any special cause.

It is impossible to answer when this earth or when this universe started, you know, when we are going, you know, and what is the limit of the universe. Is that possible? Not possible. This is important point also. If there is some limit, you know, or if we think there is some limit, it is not absolute anymore. Because we-there is no limit in universe, and things started [from] beginningless beginning and going to endless end. That is why, you know, we can believe in our destiny. If there is, you know, beginning and end, like Christian teaching, you can believe in God, but you cannot believe in our-each-each one of us. We can believe in our destiny. That is very important point.

And if Buddha have answer to that question, he is not Buddha anymore. He is not Buddha. Because he didn't-he was great because he didn't answer that kind of question. That we don't know anything about it is very important point. That we cannot answer for this is very important [laughs]. When you say "this is very important," it is not important anymore. You can compare, you know, to some other thing, and you can say which is important, then this is not absolutely important. You cannot depend on that kind of thing, which has some limit, which has some beginning and which has some end, because, you know, emptiness, which has no limit and no start-beginning, we can believe in it. Isn't that so?

This is very important. I am not fooling you. [Laughs, laughter.] [Sighs.]

Okay? If you really, you know, understand this, tear will come out. [Makes sound like crying.] You will really, you know, feel happy to be a Buddhist. Just now, we are-this is question and answer, so you don't have this kind of feeling. But if you struggle bad enough [laughs], you will, you know, feel how important point this is. Why-how you can struggle with this struggle is you-you are supported, you know, by something, something you don't know. But as we are human being, there must be that kind of a feeling, you know. You must live in such city or village or community. That is, I think, very important. So whatever community it may be, it is necessary to have community to-which have this kind of spiritual support.

That is why I respect Trungpa Rinpoche. That is a point, you know. He is supporting us. You may criticize him because he drinks like I drink water [laughs, laughter]. That is minor problem. He trust you completely. He knows if he is always supporting you, in its true sense, you will not criticize him, whatever he does. And he doesn't mind whatever you say [laughs]. It's not point, you know. This kind of spirit is necessary for-for human being, without clinging to some special, you know, religion or form of practice. [Sighs.]

[Laughs, laughter.] You have ten minutes more [laughs, laughter]. You have to sit ten minutes more, okay? Some more questions?

Student J: Yes. A change of pace: Why do you carry that wooden appendage?

Suzuki-roshi: This? Yeah. Uh-huh. When you find it difficult to understand me, I whack you! [Laughs, laughter.] Okay, I [probably making gesture; laughs, laughter]-it's much better not to have this, you know. I am very short-tempered [laughs, laughter], so I may rely on this too much, you know. When I cannot express myself-whack! [Laughs, laughter.] If I haven't this, I must try hard to make verbal communication. So it may help without this, but as I am pretty old, I must have-depend on this a little bit.

Student K: Does anyone ever hit you with it?

Suzuki-roshi: [In a whisper.] Don't ask me. [Laughter.] I [am] ashamed of myself [laughs, laughter]. Hai

Student L: I know by the way I feel when I come to Zen Center that it's very important to be with people who are practicing zazen-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: -who are practicing kinhin and practicing eating silently.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: But I have to spend a lot of time away from Zen Center, and with people who listen to music [3-4 words unclear] who never think that there's anything else but small mind. And while I keep trying to remind myself that I'm a Buddhist, I feel very different from them-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student L: -and it causes me-causes me a lot of problems.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student L: It's difficult for me to be myself outside of the sangha, outside of the Buddhist community.

Suzuki-roshi: But then you mean that, you know, what you mean is if you are always in city, without knowing Zen Center or some religious group, you know, then you think you will feel good, your life will be good?

Student L: I-I-I don't-

Suzuki-roshi: I think-what I'm saying is if you don't know Zen Center, if you live in the city without knowing Zen Center or religious group, then do think you will be happy?

Student L: No, I [one unintelligible word-"really"?] like Zen Center. But there's a lot that isn't Zen Center. I can't spend all of my time here.

Suzuki-roshi: But that is why we are here and you come here. Even though you have difficulties, it is good to come here, and you shouldn't be so impatient. It takes time. We, we started Zen Center quite recently, not so long time ago, and it is quite natural for us to have various problems. Even though we have problem, the problem we have is very important problems for human being. That is why you come here. I don't think we are-I can help you, you know, I can help you so much. As much as I can, I shall be with you, that's all. And I am-I shall be very glad if you carry on this kind of work-that's all, you know. Don't think you can, because you come here you can solve-you will have very good, you know, everyday life. Whether you have a good everyday life or not is out of question. We should not be concerned about it too much, so much. But we should know what is right and what kind of life we must have. That is more important thing for us to know, you know. To-that much confidence we must have, even though we cannot help people so well.

Okay? I'm sorry I cannot help you, but-but I can help, you know, you to have big confidence in your way of life. And if you have confidence in your life, you will have, you know-the rest of difficulties you may have is not so big problem for you.

Thank you very much.

-----  
Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Jeffrey  
Schneider and Bill Redican (9/26/00).

[1] juji: receive or maintain. sanbo (also sambo): three treasures  
(buddha, dharma, sangha).

[2] ittai sanbo: one, absolute, and non-dual truth (ittai); the three  
treasures (sanbo) viewed as one.

[3] genzen sanbo: to become manifest, to realize manifestly (genzen);  
the three treasures (sanbo) as they actually exist(ed) in the world.

### **3 - Precepts II**

Saturday, July 17, 1971

Precepts  
San Francisco

[In my last lectures][1] ... I explain about our precepts. As you must  
have found out, "the precepts," we say, but it is nothing so unusual-it is  
just about the things as they are and about what we are. And that is  
precepts. You may wonder why then is it necessary [laughs] to accept  
precepts. But this is very important point. I want you to understand. It  
is very very common understanding which you can accept quite easily.

You know, what I say-what I said was there are three-the three kind of  
precepts. One precept is-first one is indivisible three precepts.[2] Even  
though we say "three," but that three is one. So it is not possible to-  
cannot be three. It is actually to repeat one precepts three times from  
various angle. That is the first one.

There's- In- Where things exist, there is some rules. And rules, we say,  
but it is nothing but way of-it is nothing but the function of great being  
which we cannot understand. It is something which is beyond our reach.  
But that something [is] always doing something, or has some function.  
So there is some rule in the way of-the function of the great being. But  
the function and the great being is one, not two, in Buddhism. But in  
Christianity, God is here, and it gives some rules to everything. That is  
more Christian understanding. But in Buddhist-according to Buddhism, it  
is not two. So this point is called "harmony." Harmony does not mean  
harmony between each being, but harmony between the function and  
the great being. Those are one.

The Buddhist are very realistic. Buddhism are very realistic. So we do

not seek for who does this, when this earth started, who created those things. We don't think in that way. We accept things as it is. And if we cannot, we do not try to think about things just by my mind, but before we think, we accept things. So when you see or accept things as it is, the function and something, great being, is one. When you think, "Who did it?" [laughs] then it become two. But when you just see it as-as scientist see something, you know, observe something, then it cannot be two. Sometime it is great being, its function, and sometime great being is some big being which is-which has always function. You know, they are not two; that is one. This is-this understanding is actually understanding of everything and understanding of universe and understanding of ourselves.

And next-next one was manifested three treasures. Manifested three treasures are-three treasures was found out by-which was realized by Buddha.[3] What Buddha realized was about great being and about the function of the great being. And when Buddha found out the truth, he himself became Buddha. And he realized that he himself is also the function of great being and function-it-the great being itself. Buddha is great being. Buddha himself was great being, and his activity is activity of the great being.

So he became one with great being and one with the function of the great being, and when he talked about it, he had many disciples. And that was the Buddha's group, Buddha's disciples, which is called "sangha." That is manifested three treasures.

And later, we have instead of Buddha himself, we have Buddha image and we have Buddha scriptures, and we have many bodhisattvas and Buddha's disciples-descendant. And here we include various sages who is actually manifesting the truth itself, who is actually talking about the truth, maybe in some other way, not only this world, but some other world. That is another three treasures, which is protecting, which is-which maintains Buddha's teaching.[4] That is another three treasures.

But if you-and relationship between zazen and those three treasures is if you practice zazen actually, you are buddha. Or even though you don't practice zazen, you are buddha. But you, you, you feel or you experience buddha nature, and you-whatever you do after you have this experience, that is buddha's activity. So we ourselves, through practice of pure zazen, is three treasures-various kinds of three treasures: indivisible three treasures, and manifested three treasures, and maintaining three treasures. We ourselves. That is [laughs] what I told you.

It is quite, you know, it is too common, nothing interesting [laughs]. Why is it necessary, then, to accept the three treasures? There is some reason, a big reason. You say it is very common, but to know, you know, to know how important it is to do things very common and to be interested in something very usual and common [laughs].

I'm drinking water now, but it is not sweet. It is very plain: no taste at all. But why I drink it? Because something [is] wrong with me-my, you know, throat is not so good. So when I-or when I am very thirsty, to drink something common is very meaningful. So for-for-for us, you know, human being which is very egoistic [laughs], egoistic, [it is] necessary to have very common-to have very common liquor [liquid] like this. This is Buddhism. Before Buddha, actually, people interested in something unusual-unusual power or magic power or mystic being. And more and more they lost the ground they were standing on. As someone said, "Religion is opium." [Laughs.] It is very true. [Laughs, laughter.]

We Buddhists [are] more interested in zazen practice rather than LSD [laughs]. So as a Buddhist, it is very important to accept the three precepts and not to forget about how important it is- the three precepts which is very common. This is the point.

So we do not call you "Buddhist" if you do not accept precepts [laughs]. If you do not accept precepts- Even though you accept precepts, it doesn't make any difference. Although it doesn't make any difference, it is necessary to remain very common. To remain very common and usual, you accept precepts [laughs]. So that you-you are not involved in-involved in topsy-turvy idea, we say, you know, you should accept precepts. And you-if you are-if you decide not to be uncommon, not to be interested in something unusual. And we must study ourselves. Then that is Buddhist precepts.

And this is, for Buddhists, this is very important. Not only for Buddhists, but also for human being this is very important point. Important thing is not always interesting. Important, even though key is very small and usual, but without key you cannot live. Key is not usually-is not called; but key is very important. Without key, even though you have diamond [laughs], you cannot use diamond. But usually, you know, if you are not-when you are not mature, when you are young children, which is important, which do you like, key or diamond or something, you know, [like] candy? Which do you like? Children may take sweet candy rather than key.

Unless you-you are very sincere about your life, it is rather difficult maybe to be interested-to be interested in Buddhism, which is very common. That is why we have precepts. And this precepts-our precepts include the three treasures. But the three treasures [are] after all about yourself and about your practice-pure practice of zazen. So precepts and zazen practice is not different. It is all about ourselves.

So we say when we give precepts, we say, "Don't be involved in, don't be lost in other practice-other practice of other different, you know, practice of religion-religious practice." [Laughs.] Do you understand? But what we mean is very different. Don't practice; don't be involved in other religion, we say. Literally, if you understand it literally, Buddhism

is not different from other religions which is very sectarian. Do you understand the difference? Don't be involved in some other practice. It is so important to be just ourselves, without being involved in something curious, something mystic, something strange. This is very important for us. To be ourselves, to be free from everything is the most important point. If we are strong enough, when you are strong enough not to lose yourself, then you can practice various way, practice. But before-there is something for you to do before you do many things. Without foundation, without strong, you know, without, without establishing your freedom, or if there is some danger in you, danger of being lost in you, then we want you to accept precepts and practice more.

The young people right now are interested in many religion from East. But, you know, I-I feel if you come here, what I advise you is stay here. Why we-I say so is most of you are interested in some new, interesting, mysterious, or powerful religion. And you are, you know, repeating same mistake over and over. That was how we, you know, how human being [became] lost in our curiosity. We have been making wrong effort! You are heading to wrong direction. Difference may be this way or that way, not much.

So that is why I tell you "stay here." I don't want to be, you know, sectarian, and I appreciate various sages' or various people's effort to save, to improve our society. There are many good teachers, but actually there-there are not so many good students [laughs, laughter]. If I say some teacher is very good, maybe many of you will go to that teacher [laughs, laughter]. You know, the danger or, you know, it is not so wise to go to some teacher, even though he is good, you know, if you are not so good. If your attitude to study teaching is not good, it doesn't work. So until you have right attitude of receiving teaching or understanding teaching, I want you to stay here, until you become a good student. So study is not teaching, but practice.

When Dogen-zenji said we are not interested in teaching, we do not say, "This teaching is better than the other teaching," or deep or superficial. We don't say. But we [are] concerned about our practice [laughs]. It is very true. Don't you think so? Very true. There are many good teachers, but not so many good students.

How to be a good student is how to be he him- [partial word]-he himself, and ready to understand the true teaching. That is why we accept precepts-we receive precepts from Buddha. Buddha says in Lotus Sutra, people, you know, talk about something which is very convenient for them always [laughs]. But if-if I say Buddha said in Lotus Sutra "you should not be interested in mixing medicine, seeing stars, by practice of strange power, you should not attract people" [laughs]. Buddha said so. I think you must have underst- [partial word]-you will understand what he meant. Before you are interested in something unusual, you should be usual first, and you should have strong confidence in yourself. And



you should always try to be usual.

That is the main point of human practice, because we are always interested in something which is not true and we are not interested in something true. That is very [laughs], you know, accurate description of human nature. If Life magazine or San Francisco Examiner always, you know, tell you-write about something true, no one will buy Life magazine [laughs, laughter]. You know, there is something wrong. It is not true, but it is interesting [laughs, laughter]. So you buy it. That is human nature, and that is how to be successful in our life, in our society [laughs].

To know human nature is good, but we should not abuse the understanding of human nature. So if you, if you know this point, and if you are strong courage or confidence, then you can help people wherever you are, because wherever you go there is lot of mistake and lot of things you should correct. Maybe you need a lot of stick, wherever you go. Or you must talk [to] them: "What are you doing?!" [Laughs, laughter.] If you only have calm, open mind, you will see what we are doing. When you are interested in some special, interesting thing, and when you are lost in it, you cannot see anything. That is why we practice zazen, and that is why we receive precepts-we have to receive precepts from Buddha. After all, precepts is all about ourselves.

I wanted to tell you next-the next three-about next three precepts, but [laughs] before I started, I wanted to make it sure about your, you know, to make sure about your understanding so far I talked about. [Sighs.] Okay? If you have some question, please ask me.

Student A: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student A: [Few unintelligible words said as an aside.] Can we-can we rely on anything?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student A: Can we rely on anything?

Suzuki-roshi: On anything?

Student A: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-roshi: As Buddha said, why don't you rely on yourself? There is nothing, you know, you can rely on.

Student A: Can you rely on- You can rely on yourself?

Suzuki-roshi: You can- The only thing you can rely on is you yourself. If

you try hard to rely on yourself, you will, you know, rely on big self. When you rely on someone else, it means that you are relying on small self. The "someone" is projected small self, you know. When you say "he's bad," you are bad actually [laughing]. If you think more about it, you know, it is very-most of the-not always, but most of time it is you which is bad, not him. So to rely on, in other word, to rely on zazen, rely on nothing! [Laughs.]

Student A: When you feel, you know, when you feel he is bad, should you ever say anything, or should you always not say anything until you feel everything is okay?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah [laughter]. I think so.

Student A: When should you be honest? [Question unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Honest! Yeah. People say maybe I'm dishonest because I don't say so much [laughs], but it is not so. [Laughter.] I try-I'm trying to be honest, so I can not say so easily. I must see myself, you know, first. Uh-oh. [Laughs.]

Student A: Better not say? [Question unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: That's- Yeah, that is- We say if someone ask you, you should answer. If someone don't ask you, you know, don't say. It makes sense, because someone ask you-when someone ask some question, then I have something to talk about. But if no one ask me any question, I have nothing to talk about, because I should accept things as it is, as they are. So it is nothing-it is much more than to talk about. So may be better not to say anything.

This kind of practice is very important-to be silent. To be silent means to be open and calm. That is how to be silent. Like zazen. To be silent does not mean to do this. [Sounds as though he is covering his mouth. Laughs.] To open our mind, and to open our big mind, and to see things as much as we can-that is how to be silent-how to have-how you have-you obtain yourself-true self. Hai.

Student B: Roshi, without the experience, what does it mean to accept precepts or have confidence in usual activity?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Without experience-without experience, you know, without special experience, but usually we have many difficulties in our everyday life. And we have many problems. And how we-why do we have this kind of problem is something you should think [about]. And that kind experience-usual experience of difficulties will help you to have this kind-to accept this kind of precepts.

Student B: Paying attention to our usual difficulties is included in what you mean by accepting precepts?

Suzuki-roshi: Pay- [partial word: "Paying"?]-no.

Student B: Is the word "accept"? I don't-I mean, you accept the precepts on one basis. I would have to accept it on another. And for me, confidence comes from experience-some kind of understanding or something. So without it, I'd have to accept ....

[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over. Original tape case stated that a "student question" was asked as the tape was turned over.]

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yes, that- If a teacher is very good, he will help.

Student B: Apart from a teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: Apart from teacher? Apart from teacher?

Student B: Apart from [?] practice of truth. Accepting the precepts-truth or-

Suzuki-roshi: "Truth," you-we say; but truth usually, maybe, usually is one-way, you know, street. "Go! Anyway, go this ways"-that is truth, usually. But the truth-when we say "truth," truth can be, you know, various truths. So if you try to follow, you know, some direction only, or if you always depend on the, you know, sign, you will not find out the-your own way to go. So the best thing is to have eyes to read the sign.

I have this kind of experience when I was in Manchuria at the end of the war. The sign said, "We will not sell ticket. And there is no boat to Japan" [laughs]. That was sign. When I read it, there is ticket, we can buy a ticket [laughs], and there is a boat. [Laughs, laughter.] I understand in that way. [Laughs, laughter.] So I-because I didn't depend on, you know, railway transportation only, or some line or some company only, there is boat. I am quite sure about it. But the boat which does not belong to special line or ... [2 words unclear], or some special line. So whatever it is, it will give you some information. I rather rely on the carpenters' information who is working in harbor. "Is it dangerous to go to Japan right now? And how many-how many ships were, you know, damaged, and how long does it take until it get repaired?" They know much better than officers in station-railway station.

So whatever it is, you know, it will give you good information. But if you depend on something, some special thing only, and depend upon something which usual people may depend on, it means that as long as you, you know, you are not strong enough to go by yourself, you cannot find out your way.

So first of all, to know yourself and to be strong enough to live without

any sign, without any information, that is the most important point. Right now, what your question is, you know, about which way you go, but that doesn't help so much.

Student B: When- When I start shutting out the interesting things and the curious things, when I stop reading, and when I stop going to movies, and stop listening to music, I get very restless. If I had a strong desire to, to say, read an interesting book about Buddhism, should I go ahead and read, or should I sit zazen instead?

Suzuki-roshi: You can, if it is, you know, about Buddhism. [Laughs, laughter.] But, you know, some books are very, you know, encouraging-encouraging you to wrong direction, maybe. I think so. But not all the Buddhist book. But if you, you know, know the foundation of Buddhism, you-you-you will have eyes to choose book you read.

Student B: I can get very interested about a book on Buddhism.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: I can become very interested and fascinated about a book on Buddhism.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. [Laughs, laughter.] I don't- [laughs] That is not so good. [Laughs, laughter.] That is why we say you need teacher and you have to practice zazen, even though zazen will not help you [laughs], and your teacher will not help you, you know, so much. But he knows what you should do and what you shouldn't. So that will be the way for you right now. Or you can read any book you want to until you-you experience, you know, something. And you will know eventually what will help you and what will not. If you do not-if you-if you come here once in a while [laughs] to listen to this kind of lecture, I think it will help. I think I am helping you a lot [laughs]. Some other question? Hai.

Student C: Until you have eyes that can see, how will you find out what to do?

Suzuki-roshi: I say-if I say "eyes to see" it looks like, you know, you must have some special eyes. But it is not so.

Student C: Until you can see what to do, how do you know what to do?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Actually, that is not big problem. [Laughter.] It looks like big problem if you-before you, you know, come to the point to choose which way to go. If you go there, there is your way. But before you arrive at that point, that is problem. Or because you are lazy [laughs] and thinking about it, you know, and you are trying to find out some good way to go, you have that kind of problem. I- Yeah. If you actually come to the point to make some choice, it is not so difficult. You can depend on yourself pretty well.

You are raised in, you know, the idea of good or bad, which, you know, by some-some map, you know, to see. Here is your map for your life, so if you follow this map you may be okay. But that is not our way.

Student C: Several weeks ago in your lecture in the evening, you spoke about how the youth of today is not strong.[5] How does one know what to do?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is my problem too. I don't know what to do with you [laughs]. My stick is not long enough [laughs, laughter]. It is not so difficult thing, actually. If you-if we are with you, it is not so difficult. But if you ask me what to do before you give me some difficulty you have, it is almost impossible. Or we usually do not give any answer. It is impossible. We do not say, "This is bad and this is good," you know. Good or bad is-actually there is nothing good or nothing bad. The situation makes something good or bad. That's all. So we do not say "good" or "bad" in that way. Instead, we-our training is for to see or to have enough power or special power to be ourselves. That is our training-our way. So I cannot tell you how to live as a Christian minister will tell you. That is not our way, you know. Excuse me, but [laughs], do you-did you understand? Actually, it is not so difficult. Most of the people does something knowing that is wrong, yeah. But it is not difficult for him to know which is right and which is wrong under that circumstances.

Student D: Why does a good teacher have to have so many bad students?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: Why does a good teacher have to have so many bad students?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Good. Maybe he is so bad [laughs], so he must have bad students. It is so-there is actually-what I want to say is there is no special good teacher or bad teacher. The teacher who is always with you is best teacher. We have no-that-no such idea of good teacher or bad teacher or sage who knows everything [laughs], who tell you exactly what you should do next day or next year. You know, we-we have no, you know-I don't think we-we have good teacher in-in that way. Maybe for-for some time your practice will be [laughs] to be just yourself without being interested in something special. Without relying on me you should, you know, try hard to sit. Okay? We can sit with you. So that is only way. And we need some encouragement. That is someth-[partial word]-that is a kind of thing which I want to tell you about in next two-three lectures.

What is good and what is bad is big problem. For some religion it is not problem, because it is told already by someone, you know, some

teacher tell about things which is good and which is bad. So if you follow it that is a way, and your way has been to follow some special sage's words. That is why you became weaker and weaker. That is why I am telling you to be strong in that way.

Okay. Thank you.

-----

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Jeffrey Schneider and Bill Redican (9/26/00).

[1] The opening words were not recorded on tape. The phrase in brackets was inserted by the transcriber. Suzuki-roshi was probably referring to lectures SR-71-07-02 and SR-71-07-06.

[2] ittai sanbo: one, absolute and non-dual truth (ittai); the three treasures (sanbo) viewed as one.

[3] genzen sanbo: to become manifest, to realize manifestly (genzen); the three treasures (sanbo) as they actually exist(ed) in the world.

[4] juji sanbo [?].

[5] Possibly SR-71-06-22.

#### **4 - Non-Mystical Understanding**

Tuesday, July 20, 1971

Non-Mystical Understanding  
Tassajara

I wanted to see you earlier, but I was too busy so I couldn't come.

Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

Student: Yes.

Oh. Okay.

Anyway, it is very good to see you and Tassajara, which has improved a lot since I left here. Tonight my-I didn't have any idea of giving talk, but I-as, you know, we have many guests and some of you may leave tomorrow, so I decided to talk a little bit-maybe I said ten minutes [laughs]. But it is rather difficult to say something in ten minutes, so I don't know how many minutes my lecture last.

What I want to talk about tonight is something-some idea or some understanding of Buddhist which is not-may not be unfamiliar to you.

We observe things in two ways. We understand things has two-two side. One is phenomenal side; the other is, maybe, more ontological side. Something-some-most of us, you know, understand things from the light of difference, like big or small, black or-black and white, material or spiritual.

Usually, maybe, spiritual- If we say "spiritual," usually it is something which is not material. But, according to Buddhism, even though you say "spiritual" that is, you know, not much different from-different of physical or materialistic side. "Spiritual" or "materialistic" we say, but those are, according to Buddhism, not much different. It belongs to the understanding of phenomenal side of the reality-spiritual too, spiritual understanding too include phenomenal understanding.

The other side is, [as] I said, you know, tentatively ontological side-a noumenal side which we cannot see, you know. Before you [existed], something exist in dharma: big or small, black or white, heavy or light, spiritual or material. Then something, you know-before something looks like-looks like, something looks like spiritual and material. Things looks like spiritual sometime material, looks like, but there is-there is some, you know, something before it can be spiritual or material. Let's think [about] this point more: spiritual and material.

When you think something material is quite different from something which is spiritual, that is not Buddhist understanding. We understand spiritual and material is also, you know, it belongs to one side, you know. There is partition here [laughs], and spiritual and material also belong to this side. The other side is, you know-it doesn't belong to the other side.

So we say spiritual and spiritual things, spiritual being and materialistic being is one, not different. It belongs to this side. [Sighs.] Let us-let's think [about] this very carefully. If you think spiritual being is something different from material, then your life will be split in two [laughs]. One side of you want to be very spiritual [laughs]. The other side of you want to be material or physical or emotional. The other side of you may want to be more calm and good. So there is some separation. That is why you have-you feel that kind of separation. Is-your understanding is not clear enough.

For an instance, while you are alive, you know, you think you-as long as you have body, you are physical being and after, only after you die, you will be a spiritual being, you know. That kind of understanding is very usual understanding. You may understand in that way. That is why you have problem after this, you know. Or, even though you are still alive, if you lose your friend, then you feel very lonely because you think, you know, as-so long as your friend [is] alive, he is with you, which is

material or physical. But after your friend die, he changed into spiritual being, leaving physical body behind. People may call it "soul" or "spirit," but that is not our understanding. That is still the understanding you have in your mind-understanding of your mind or brain [laughs] in term of, you know, spiritual or material, because no right or wrong. Something, you know, something understandable and you cannot-you don't know the other side of something which you don't understand, which is not possible to understand. We do not-even though we do not understand what it is, but, you know, it is, you know, you cannot deny things which is not understanding by your small mind. And you will know that to understand things in term of big or small, black or white, man or woman, you know, is to put limitation to actual being. Actually. I am not just physical. I am spiritual too. But even though I say I am spiritual and physical that is also I put myself in limitation of spiritual and physical. But actual "me" is something more than spiritual and more than material.

So as long as you are trying to understand what is actual reality, what is actual "me," you don't-it is not possible to understand who you are. That is our way of understanding. If your- If your understanding can reach this point, there is something, you know, more than spiritual and more than material, more than right or wrong, more than man or woman, and that is reality, and that is actually each one of you. Then you will have renunciation from good or bad, life or death. You will be free from the idea of good or bad, life or death.

Even though you try very hard to be very spiritual, still you exist this side, ignoring the other side of yourself. That is why you suffer. If you really want to be-want to attain enlightenment and realize what is real you, you know, then you have to try to go beyond the idea of good or bad, life or death.

And how we can go beyond the idea of life or death, physical or spiritual, is zazen practice [?]. So in our practice we should not-our practice should not be involved in "good practice" or "bad practice." You should be just you, and you shouldn't think anything. If something come, let it come. But don't, you know, think about it in term of good or bad. Let it come and let it go away [laughs]. Don't say "this is good" or "this is bad." Or don't think "it is not good to think"-to have something in your mind while you are practicing zazen.

That is actually, you know, our zazen practice: to go beyond various ideas and to be just yourself. And that is possible. If you think about yourself or if you think about someone, you or he is not spiritual or physical. You cannot say he is good or he is bad. Even though he looks like [he is] doing something wrong, it looks like so to you or to the people it looks like so. But who say so? People say so, you say so [laughs]. But he is not good or bad.

This, you know, standard of society-this society-our people have some



kind of moral standard. Tentatively we have some moral code and say "this is good" and "this is bad." But it may change. If the moral code or standard of judging which is good and which is bad, then someone which was bad may be-may be good, and which-someone who is bad can be good tomorrow [laughs] or in one or two years. It is as you must have experienced. So our world is changing rapidly.

When I was young there were many moral codes, many idea, you know, [of how] we are involved in good and bad, idea of good and bad: "You shouldn't do this or do that." But more and more we have less moral code. As Dogen-zenji said, "There is-actually there is no good or no bad. There is no good and no bad. No good or no bad. No good; or, good is up to the time. Time makes-makes things good or bad; but things itself is-things-things themselves is not good or bad," he said.

It is actually how things go, that's all. And-by some rule, or there is some- It is just matter of cause and effect, you know. Things, you know, goes. Things exist now will result [in] some effect, and that effect will cause another effect. Things going in that way, that's all. Actually there is no good or bad. What is going that way is the point. What is going in that way? Something which is not good or which is not bad is going [laughs]. That is the reality. Things going in that way. Anyway, things is developing itself. By itself it is going. That's all.

So if we notice that who is developing, what is going in that way, something which is not good or bad is going in that way. And we-we say this is good or bad, that's all. We do not realize this point, and we say this is good or this is bad. I'm not talking about something, you know, invisible. I am talking about something actually we are-we have with us always. [Laughs.] Do you understand? But the difference between your understanding and my understanding is you understand things in term of good or bad. You think there is a good person and bad person, but we don't-I don't understand in that way. Things [are] just going in that way. Anyway, things are going in that way, and you call it "good" and "bad," that's all.

If we realize this point, we have already realization [?]. So when you sit in zazen, you are you. You cannot say, you know, "My practice is good." Or you cannot say, "I am bad person." Nor you can say, "You are-I am good person. My practice is perfect." [Laughs.] You cannot say so.

Anyway you are perfect [laughs] from the beginning. It is not necessary for you to say you are perfect. You are perfect, even though you don't realize you are perfect. That is why we say we are all buddhas and we have buddha-nature. And buddha nature [is] developing itself constantly. We understand things in that way. We say, "I am here, and you are there." It is okay, you know, to say so, but actually, you know, without me you don't exist. Without you I don't exist. [Laughs.] It is very true. Since I am here, you are there. Since you are there, I am here. [Laughs.] You may say even though I don't come to, I don't come

to, you know, Tassajara you exist here and waiting for me. That is [laughs], you know, maybe so. Maybe so, but that is not perfect. I am at-at-I have been at 300 Page, and you-with everything. I couldn't say goodbye to-to the building which is related to other things: freeway [laughs], and trees, and air, and everything, stars and the moon, the sun. If I was related to the sun and moon as you are related to the sun and moon, how is it possible to say I am there and you are here when we are always related? But just your mind says you are here and I am there, that's all.

So originally we are one with everything. That is very true. And if someone die, you may say he is no more. But is it possible for something to vanish completely? That is not possible. Is it possible for something to appear [laughing] all of a sudden from nothing? Because there were something, you know, it appears in that way. Something which is here cannot vanish completely. It can change its form. That's all.

So we are always one. It is just your superficial feeling to feel you are lonely. So if you are very sincere, and if you really, you know, give your-give up your small mind, then there is no fear and no emotional problem. Your mind is always calm, and your eyes is always open, and you can hear the birds as they sing. You can see the flower as it opens. And then nothing to worry, actually. And if there is, some-something to worry [about], it is a kind of, you know, treatment [laughs]-special treatment for you, as if you see, as if you read some interesting novel; as if some writer, you know, write [2-3 words unclear] about human life. It is interesting maybe, and to read it is very interesting. But it is not something to be afraid of or to be-to feel lonely. So we can enjoy our life fully when we understand things in that way. That is Buddha's-Buddhist way. [Sentence finished. Tape turned.]

[Note.-Side B of the original and master tapes was blank. But the early transcript continued with the rest of the lecture. The following was superficially edited but could not be checked against the tape.]

When I was flying back from the east the other day, I saw beautiful sunset. Sunset lasts pretty long time if you fly from the east. If you leave, for an instance, New York or Boston six o'clock, you will arrive at here nine o'clock, up in the air more than three-you know-13 or 15,000 or more-sometime 30,000 feet high. You know, when people think it is dark and there is no more sun. But still, if you are flying high up in the air, you have still sunset and you can see beautiful clouds. It is wonderful to see. But someone may feel very lonely, you know. But if you think you are-whenever you are, you are one with cloud and one with the sun and one with the stars you see, even though you jump out from the airplane, you don't go anywhere else. You are still with everything. That is very true. More than I say-more true than I say, or more true than you hear.

I am talking about something which is very strange or very mystical. You are mystic and I am not mystic. Your understanding is strange, but my understanding is not strange. Don't you think so? But it is you who feel in that way, just your superficial feeling feel in that way. It means that you are not truthful enough to the truth. Your feeling was not deep enough to feel something true. As Dogen said, people like which is not true-people feel which is not true, but they do not feel something true. [Laughs.] They like something which is not right. And they do not like which is true. That is very-what he said is very true. Don't you think so?

We must be ashamed of-to feel something very superficial. If you [are] ashamed of yourself you should practice hard. You should be sincere enough to be yourself. That is our practice and that is our effort-our direction of effort. We are-our practice heading to that way. But usually your practice is heading to wrong way. Again, Dogen said you shouldn't try to go south heading to the North Pole, heading to the dipper. You see-after lecture when you are going to your cabin you will see dipper. Heading to dipper it is impossible to go south. But people are heading to-trying to go south heading to north. And he says also, if you want to attain renunciation from birth and death, you shouldn't try to be out of birth and death-problem of birth and death. And the birth and death is our equipment for our life. Without birth and death we cannot survive. It is our pleasure to have birth and death. That is how I-we understand truth.

So don't be-in short-don't be involved in making too much home-made cookies [laughs] in term of big and small, good or bad. You should make as much, just as much as you need. Without cookies, without food you cannot survive, so it is good to make home-made cookies, but don't make too much. It is good to have problem, and without problem we cannot survive. So it is good. We must have problem. But not too much. You don't need to create problems for yourself when you have enough problems. You have just enough problems to survive. Any more than you need, you have just enough problem; the problem you have us just enough for you. That is so-called-it "soft-minded practice-soft-minded practice." Because your mind is too ... [Sentence not finished. Transcript says tape turned over here, but that is not correct. Maybe just a gap in the tape.]

After all, you can create you and big problem and for your children and for your wife. If some husband enjoy making home-made cookie, your wife will be upset [laughing]. Don't make so much. But that is not usually what we are doing. So if you really understand your life, it is not necessary to practice zazen even. It is not necessary for me to come or stay in America. If you just make home-made cookie just enough for you. It is okay for me to come back-back to Japan and to eat Japanese cookies. As you make too much cookies I have to eat [laughing]. I have to help you. It is not always so good job to eat home-made cookies. Actually that is what we are doing. If we realize this point and enjoy just enough home-made cookies, that is Buddhist way. And just-that is how

to enjoy life and that is why we practice zazen.

We do not practice zazen to attain special enlightenment. Just to be ourselves and just to be free from useless effort or tendency of human nature we practice zazen.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Jeffrey Schneider (4/99) and Bill Redican (8/23/99).

## **5 - Question and Answer**

Wednesday, July 21, 1971

Question and Answer  
Tassajara

We discussed already last night[1] about what is something which we can experience or which we can understand, and what is something which we cannot understand. I was trying to explain, you know, the difference [between] something which you can understand and something which you cannot understand, and how you, you know, have an approach to something which you cannot understand is by practice.

But it is necessary for us at the same time to have understanding of Buddhism. It is necessary to read, and it is necessary to listen to lecture, and it is necessary to think about what is Buddhism. That is also important. And most important thing will be to have actual, you know, difficulties in our human life. That is very important.

But as I told you, the problem-you have enough problem already [laughs, laughter]. So don't make home-made problems-cookies. That was what I told you last night. We are practicing zazen, so it is a great help. And those things-those points are very difficult and very important for our perfect understanding of Buddhism. If you mix up-mixed up those points, you will never understand what I am saying.

Tonight, again, I want to discuss this point a little bit more. And this side [laughs]-this side is the world of experience, world of study, and world of human problems. And the other side is-this side is [laughs] world of Buddhist practice to have approach to the reality, and let's discuss more about those kind-those points.

But to make your understanding clear before I start next talk, I want you to give me some question. The people who are sitting this side [laughs] give me some question about our practice. And people who are

sitting this side, give me some actual problem you have. Do you give me some question? And if you-by mistake-if you give me [laughs] wrong question, you have to come to this side. [Laughs, laughter.] Okay? All right.

Student A: Buddha spent six years sitting under the Bodhi tree. Bodhidharma[2] spent nine years in front of the wall. Huineng[3] spent fifteen. This is-is-is that a necessary part of the process to spend some period of tremendously concentrated zazen for a very deep understanding?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. [Laughs.] You can stay this side. [Laughter.] Her question is-she belongs to this part, and she is practicing zazen to have a good approach to the reality. And is it necessary for all the students who are sitting this side to sit nine years or fifteen years? Is that necessary? Buddha sit for six year. Bodhidharma sit for nine year. Is that necessary? Why is it necessary? That is her question. That is a very good question. Do you have some more question? [Laughter.] I-I will answer [laughs]. I want to save her point, that's all. I don't want to say same thing twice, so that is why I am asking [for] another question. Do you have some question? No? [Laughs.] Okay.

This-this side is, strictly speaking, people who are sitting even though you have buddha-nature. Buddha-nature you have. It is-this side-people who are sitting this side also have buddha-nature, but they think it is possible to, you know, it is-there is-this people who are sitting this side thinks if you read and if you listen to my lecture, you will understand what is Buddhism, you know. And you study Buddhism because you have various problem. So if-you think if you ask me some question, I can help your problem even though you do not actual[ly] approach to reality, it is possible.

Or the people who have-who have no time to practice zazen. That is most people is like that. Even though people who are sitting here thinks if you ask me some question, I will give you some good answer. It is-maybe I can help you [laughs], but if you do not have good practice and good approach to the reality, you cannot attain enlightenment even though you have buddha-nature.

This-the-right now the question is why then is it necessary for you who are sitting this side necessary to practice zazen. And it-this question is for-could be good question for the people who are sitting this side too. Even though we have buddha-nature and what does it mean to have buddha-nature is-? Even though you don't know what is buddha-nature, actually you have it. Actually you have it. But if you do not realize that you have it, it doesn't make any sense. Maybe that is why the people this side is practicing zazen. But if you do not-even though you are practicing zazen, if you think, "If I practice zazen, I will have some special experience, then that is enlightenment and that is purpose of

zazen." If you think in that way, you have to come this side [laughs], because you-he has same idea, you know. Even though you-I have-"If I practice zazen and attain enlightenment that will help you."

But enlightenment is not something like that. Enlightenment is something whether you realize it you have it. Whether you realize it or not you have it. But it is necessary for you to realize it, or else you don't know what you are doing. That's all. If you really know the meaning of zazen, that is enlightenment. When you know the meaning of zazen, you will know the meaning of our human life. That is enlightenment.

Enlightenment-even though you attain enlightenment, you have same trouble [laughs]. You cannot flee from your difficulties. The difficulty you have-if you know the meaning of the difficulty for you, the difficulty will help you. If you do not know the meaning of difficulty, it doesn't help. Same thing with zazen. If you do not know the meaning of everyday practice, even though you do not attain enlightenment, that zazen will not help you.

Once [a] disciple[4] of Baso[5] -Baso-when he was asked, "When-when wind is all over, air is all over, why do you use fan?" [Laughs.] You know, "When wind is all over, air is all over, then why do you use your fan?" American people do not use fan, but Japanese-Japanese does, especially when it is so warm. "Why do you use fan?" he was asked by someone.

And what he said-the answer was: "You know that wind is everywhere, but you don't know what is the function of the wind." It is, you know-wind means buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is everywhere. We have-all of us has buddha-nature. But if so, why is it necessary to use fan? Why is it necessary to practice zazen? That was the question. The answer was-you know-you looks like know that everyone has buddha-nature, but you don't know that it is necessary to practice zazen or to know-to realize the meaning of practice and meaning of enlightenment. So it means that even though you-you think you know everyone has buddha-nature, but actually you don't know what is buddha-nature even. That was his answer.

And disciple asked again: "Then what is actual practice?" he asked. And he just used his fan like this [laughs]. That was answer. "Oh, it is very hot." [Laughs.] He used the fan. That was the answer. Do you understand? That was answer. Just to, you know-without any idea that we have buddha-nature, why do we practice zazen? And just-when you just sit, then there is actually buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is there, if you really understand what is zazen. That was answer.

So until [laughs] you realize-you feel it is necessary for you to sit, and I cannot help sitting everyday. If you don't sit you feel funny. If you feel I have to sit anyway-until you feel in that way, you should continue and it may take-for Buddha-it took for Buddha six years. And after

Bodhidharma attained enlightenment, he sat nine years. Buddha who attained enlightenment-who was supposed to have enlightenment when he was born-Buddha, who came to this world after attaining enlightenment, needed nine [six] years practice. We should know-we should st- [partial word: "study"?]-know this point. Those who attained enlightenment, it is necessary to continue our practice. Those who do not know what is our practice also necessary to sit. For someone it may take very long time, but for someone it may not take so long time. But that is not problem, you know. Whether it takes one year or six year is not problem. Anyway, we have to continue our practice even though we have buddha-nature.

When we say, "everyone has buddha-nature," that is so-called-it "granting way" or "giving way." And when we say: "You have-you do not have-you do not know what is Zen, what is buddha-nature, you do not know anything about Buddhism." It is convenient-best world. It is-

One is positive way and one is negative way. Positive way is to admit you to have buddha-nature. The negative way is you do not have buddha-nature. You are deluded person. Because of your topsy-turvy [laughs] idea, you do not have buddha-nature. That is negative way of expressing the truth.

But negative way or positive way is based on the same truth-that everyone has buddha-nature. And real Buddhism doesn't stick to negative way or positive way. We are free from negative way and positive way. Then we-I must take off this partition [of the zendo], you know. This people who are sitting this side is-is treated by my negative way. You do not-you don't know what is Buddhism. You looks like [you] know what is Buddhism. You have a lot of knowledge about Buddhism. But you do not practice zazen, so you don't have buddha-nature in its strict sense. That is negative way. Even though I say so, I know that you have buddha-nature. And because you stick to some idea, you-you feel as if you have no buddha-nature and you have problem. That is negative way and taking negative way to you.

The positive way is encouraging way, you know, to encourage people, or any way if you sit you will attain enlightenment. That is positive way. But even though you have buddha-nature, I say you should sit fifteen years, nine years, or six years. People who are sitting this side [of the zendo], what I will say-your reading or discussion about Buddhism will not actually help you. You must sit, and you must have enlightenment. You should be enlightened. You should know the real meaning of practice. Because you don't know what is the meaning of difficulties. And practice-difficulty itself is practice. So that is why you suffer. That is what I will say to the students who are sitting [on] this side [of the zendo]. Anyway it means that you have to sit [laughs]. Then you will understand the meaning of difficulties and meaning of life and meaning of-real meaning of what you have studied by reading. That is our answer for that kind of question.

So Dogen says Buddhism is free from-true Buddhism is not just negative way or positive way. True Buddhism is free from-should be free from negative and positive way.

So flowers-"Even though you want flower to last longer, flower will fall. And even though you do not care for weeds, weeds will grow," [laughs] he says. The problem we have is same. So after attaining enlightenment-after sitting for a long, long time, you cannot be different from each one of us. A is A, B is B, a man is a man and a woman is a woman. It doesn't change. Same thing, same old [laughs] person, even though you attain enlightenment. And if you are satisfied with the same old person, that is enlightenment. And when you feel in that way, you will feel how important it is to practice zazen. That is, maybe, the answer for your question. Do you have some other question?

Student B: [Question is barely audible.] If I want to learn Buddhism and I live in a world that is very busy and stressed, and it doesn't permit me to have like a Buddhist nature-a true Buddhist nature, yet I would like to apply some of the principles of serenity and orderliness-harmony and orderliness to my living, yet I still really don't have that much time everyday to sit zazen in the middle of the street. I wonder if there is any way in the process of living [?] if you could meditate while you're on your way some place without turning your eyes from the car? [Laughter.] No, I am curious. I mean, meditation can be done while in action, if you are in a place where you could be serene [sitting?]-maybe waiting for the doctor? Is that at all-[laughter]. Well seriously!

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, good-good question. Yeah, very serious question. I am thinking about it a lot, you know. So-for us it-it is good question, you know. If we sit-if we think we are good students because we are sitting right here, and people are not-are not so good, you know, because they are involved in money-making [laughs] busy life, if you think in that way that is big mistake. I don't know which is-which is good student, you know.

Even though you are in city life, having a lot of problem, involved in-really involved in busy life, if you-the point-if the point you work on is not to seek for some teaching from us, you know, from Buddhism, but if you forget the idea [of] what is good and what is bad. Usually we stick to some idea only, or we are going [down a] one-way road [laughs]. We don't know the ways. There is another one-way road from different direction. Those who live in one street, they think this is the way car goes [laughs]. They are doing same thing over and over, sticking to one-way road. That is the problem.

So, if you free your mind from that kind of right or wrong, and think about what you are doing more, then you have to find out-you have to try to know what you are doing and you will be-you will feel you are-you are lost, you know. Why you feel you are doing something good? I think



because you think you are doing something good, you are doing same thing over and over with same idea. But if you think about your life more, you will realize that that is not actually [what] your way should be. That is necessary. If you realize that point, you will find out time to sit every day for 20 minutes or 30 minutes to think-to forget, you know, all about your old style of life. That is very [laughs] important. Even for Buddhist that is important. We Buddhists have some certain way-our rituals, you know. If we think-if we know that it is okay, you know, then he is walking-I am walking one-way street always.

If we [get] caught by our way of life too much, and if you think-if we think as long as we are observing this way it is-I am good Buddhist [laughs], that is big mistake. So there is-[not?] any concrete way for anyone. What we should do is-moment after moment, we must have very calm, clear mind to know what we are doing. Then, naturally you will know how important it is to have very calm mind. For an instance, you may have [laughs] young boys and girls, maybe, and if you think you-what you think is always right, it doesn't work. You should think with them. You should listen to them sometime with very calm-calmness of your mind. Then, if you listen to them, they will, you know, listen to you. That is actual practice we must have. There is no absolute way for anyone.

So wherever you go, if you come to [laughs] Tassajara, you should observe our way. If you go home, you-if I go to visit your home, I must observe your way of life, you know. That is what we should do. How is it possible to do so is to have calm-to have calmness of mind, and emotionally we should be always calm. That is the main point of practice. So even though-because we are busy, you have to sit [laughs]. That-it is very helpful. Some more question? Hai.

Student C: How is our life to be lived in the face of nothing? Do you seek guideposts or absolute authorities-authorities such as a Christian would think of their [?] Bible, and when you realize nothing is the ultimate reality, and you wished you were living [?] within that nothingness, how do you do it? How do you live with no guideposts?

Suzuki-roshi: That is very good question. And that is a problem. It is difficult, you know, to explain, and it is difficult to understand. But anyway, I think it is good question [laughter] and I want to spend maybe rest of time for that.

Until what time?

Student: Quarter to ten?

Suzuki-roshi: Quarter to ten? Okay. There is, you know, as I told-as we discussed, there is no good or bad in things itself. Good or bad is something which we create. That is already understood. Then, you know, why is it necessary [laughs], you know, why is it possible-that

your question is-why is it possible to know which way we should take when there is two ways or more than two ways. Is that something like that-your question?

Student C: Something like that, although it is not a choice-an alternative. I think the alternatives are infinite-as alternatives [?] as nothingness is endless. Yet somehow we all must live day to day, and we all have to find a life style. But unless we make an appeal to discover it [?]-to say that, "Well, I choose my way of life because this is what this other man in this book says." But there comes a time, I think, in some lives that you realize that there is no real authority except yourself, and that there exists nothing at the core of your own being, and when you look within yourself for an answer and you find that there is just nothing.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. The-yourself-you know that you cannot depend on authority. Is it clear to you?

Student C: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. I think that is very true. So what's-and you really think, you know, you shouldn't depend on authority. That is very important point for us, especially for the people who are sitting this side [laughs]. This is very important. Why you should sit [on] this side is, you know, because you depend on authority. When you do not depend on any authority and even care for something good, you know, or even care for enlightenment, then you have-you yourself has authority. Your life will be more stable, and your eyes will be open, and our mind will be clear. Because of this kind of authority, because of your lazy practice to depend on authority ... [Sentence probably not finished. Tape turned.]

... to be thinking the other way because of the authority you have in your mind. And if-when you think you want to go this way, you-if you don't-if you go this way, you feel as if you are doing something wrong. So you [are] always are afraid of authority. That is very big problem for us. First of all, we should try to be free from authority or free from preconceived idea. Then you must be very calm and sincere, or else you feel you cannot survive. Then, more and more, you will have power to go your own way without any trouble. That is actual practice, which will go [on] forever. That is the kind of practice we are actually doing.

So when you feel there is no authority-there is nothing to depend on-there is noth- [partial word: "nothing"?]-no teaching especially for you, then that is the practice-the practice the people who are sitting this side [are] taking. We say "power of-power of not doing bad"-not doing bad-power of maku sa maku rikiryō in Japanese.[6] Not doing: maku sa maku. Rikiryō: power.

Whatever you do, when you have this kind of power, you have power of doing something right without depending on something else. The power

you have is the power of not doing anything wrong. I said [laughs] "wrong"; I used the word "wrong," but his own intuition, or his own power, or his own wisdom to know which-what kind of life we should have.

So even though we have buddha-nature, even though we are supposed to know intuitively which way to go or what is, you know, what kind of life we should have, but unless we have actual power of doing something right, it doesn't make any sense. Why it doesn't make any sense is because we have always tried to depend on something. We are always making some excuse to do something selfish. That is the trouble.

It looks like we have no, you know, nothing to depend on, but actually we can depend on ourselves if we stop trying to depend on something else. And that is something, you know, which you will realize by actual practice, you know. It is [laughs] not-not possible to, you know, solve that kind of question by thinking or by reading or by even by discussing. It is everyday problem which we will have. And you-if you see the problem as it is then, and if you are able to see the problem as it is, there is a way to solve the problem.

Maybe my answer does not cover-may not cover the question you gave me, but what I am talking about is what is our practice and what is wrong with-us usually. The important point is to forget all about preconceived idea-all track of all the way of life. It does not mean I am ignoring or I am trying to forget all about our condition. It does not mean so, but personally each one of us has very clear, calm mind. That is what I am talking about. If my answer does not cover all the area, please give me more question.

Student D: How can one be certain that he is right even though he listens to himself?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: How can one be certain, even though he listens to himself for an answer, how does he know that what he is doing is right?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is the question of self. My answer will be concentrated on what is "you" or what is "I." When you have problem, the underlying problem from our viewpoint is the problem of self, which is-which does not exist really. We say "I" or "mine" [laughs], "my body, my mind, my way of life" [laughs]. But what is my mind? It looks like, you know, I have-I have my mind, and that mind sometime looks like real life. But you say, you know, "my mind, my body," but it looks like it is more true to say "This is me." It is, I think, more understandable than to say "my body." What is "me" then? Not this body or not my mind.

We say "my mind," so maybe, you know, "I" owns my mind; "I" own my body. What is "I" [laughs]? Actually, maybe more accurate to say "This

is me," "my mind is me." Then it looks like more accurate. And what is this physical body? This is, you know, the result of taking meal each time, a result of exhaling and inhaling. That is my-me-my body. "My mind," we say, "My mind is always changing." "My mind" is always related to something else. Then there is no mind or no physical being which has some self-nature. No self-nature in our body or in our mind.

"My" is delusion, you know. It is no such thing like "my." But it looks like [laughs]-I-we feel like we have "my something" or "me". It is, you know, because of this "me" or "mine" we have-we cannot-we have to know something. The most important thing is to think by clear mind and to keep our physical body strong-strong enough to help others and to be helped [by] others. So then what you should do is very clear. You will find out what you should do. If you eat too much it will hurt you. If you think same thing over and over, you-eventually you hurt yourself mentally. So you will know how to take care of yourself and how to help others and how to have good relationship with someone else. Then there is true "me" or "mine." It is not just delusion but more actual reality which is happening around yourself. That is how you figure out what you should do moment after moment, and that is our practice.

So, the important point of Buddhism is to forget all about "me" or 'mine," and to see our surrounding more clearly. So, if you realize this point your problem will be solved naturally. Okay? [Laughs.] Does it made some sense?

Student D: Not yet.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Who say "Not yet?" [Said in a mock serious tone.] [Laughs.] That is big problem. That problem-only way to solve that problem is practice. If you practice zazen and to some extent you are able to forget self-centered, thinking mind, then your mind is very clear. And what you will say is more adequate [?]. Instead of universality, you-your words have validity. Actually valid. Something universal doesn't help. Something universal like moral code or teaching of Buddha or Christ-very universal, and his-their generation makes-made his words to help people individually-made it universal and forced that universality to all of us who is different from each other. That is the problem we have.

Knowing this point, we are rather interested in validity of the teaching. So each one of-unless each one of us after trying [to] forget self-centered thinking mind, our thinking mind does not work. The direction our thinking mind will go is to have universality-to have authority. That-that is not our way.

I think you-you will-that is what I-that is the unique authority of Buddhism. I am not arguing with you, but I wanted-I rather introduce-I want to introduce our way to you. That's all.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joe Galewsky and Bill Redican (3/5/01). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] SR-71-07-20.

[2] Bodhidharma: c. 470-543. First Chinese Zen Patriarch.

[3] Daijan Huineng (Daikan Eno): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Zen Patriarch.

[4] The disciple fanning himself was Magu Baoche (Mayoku Hotetsu)-n.d.-dharma successor of Mazu Daoyi. This exchange between an unnamed monk and Magu is recounted at the end of the Genjo Koan.

[5] Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu): 709-788. Chan master of the Tang period.

[6] maku: stop; sa: make; maku (sa + aku): evil.

## **6 - San-Pachi-Nenju**

Thursday, July 22, 1971

San-Pachi-Nenju  
Tassajara

This evening I want to explain about san-pachi-nenju[1] which we practice. Can you hear me?

Student: No.

Suzuki-roshi: No. Okay. [Laughs, laughter.] San-pachi. San-pachi-nenju which we practiced this evening. Some of you must have joined the ceremony, and some of you must have seen it. But before I explain about san-pachi-nenju, I want to explain our-what is our practice and what will be each one of yours practice-practice of each one of you should be or will be.

Before everyone-before we become Buddhist, you are lay Buddhist. And before you become lay Buddhist, you are laymen which does not belong to-member of Buddhists. Now can you hear me? Member of Buddhist. So [there are] non-Buddhist people and Buddhists. And Buddhist can be classified in four: lay Buddhist-lay Buddhist man and lay Buddhist woman and maybe layman and laywoman, and nun, and priest. Those

are five class-classes of Buddhist group. Four-we have four groups.

And each layman accept Buddhists precepts. If usual person accepts precepts, we become Buddhist. And I have been explaining what is precepts. So tonight I will not speak-talk about it; but if you become Buddhist, what kind of practice you will have is next thing-is the thing I want to talk [about]-to study.

For layman to receive the precepts-precepts it is necessary for you to keep precepts. The most important one is-precepts is the three refuges. I take refuge in the buddha; I take refuge in the dharma; and I take refuge in the sangha. And you repeat this practice in your everyday life. But it is too much [laughs] to explain tonight about it-three refuges.

To, you know, to, in short, to receive the three refuges is to have right understanding of our life. It is same thing, you know, to have right understanding of our life and to receive three refuges is same thing. So if-when you have right understanding of human life as it is, then you are said to be accepted, to have accepted Buddha's precepts. Nothing special-nothing special practice, but usual practice. And you will have right understanding about, you know, our life.

But as you-as long as you remain layman or laywoman, you have, you have to live in more dualistic world: good or bad, right or wrong, or fast or slow, successful or unsuccessful. And sometime, or, I am sorry to say, but most of the time, dualistic life goes first, maybe, and you don't have not much time to have calm, peaceful mind. But the difference between non-Buddhist and Buddhist is you know how our life should be. You know that we have no self-nature, and we don't exist as a person who has self-nature. We cannot be egoistic. We feel as if we could be very egoistic, but actually you know that is not possible. But even though you know, as you are laymen, most of the time you have no time to forget about your dualistic life, so dualistic practice goes first.

So for layman some practice like Rinzai Zen is maybe better for someone. Rinzai practice is very dualistic; so that will give you some strength to encourage non-dualistic side more and to fight with dualistic idea-to forget all about-until you-you can forget all about, you know, dualistic way of life even for a moment. That is so-called-it kensho. But that is, you know, just, even though you have kensho, you-you do not have a Buddhist life completely. You just get a glance of your buddha nature, which is not egoistic. You just experience literally [laughs] about non-egoistic life. But it doesn't last, because you are so busy and you are deeply involved in usual life-usual way of life. That is more-that is layman or laywoman practice.

Soto way-how, then, Soto way help a layman is let you follow non-dualistic way of life like Tassajara. Many laymen participate [in] our practice, which is not dualistic and which put more emphasis on non-dualistic practice. So if you follow Soto way, even though you do not feel

you have entered [?] the non-dualistic experience, more and more your life will be non-dualistic because our way of practice-our way we set up-our practice is according to non-dualistic way of Buddha. That is why we Soto school put more emphasis on how to eat, how to drink, how to walk, work, or how to work, how to recite sutras. So those rituals set up by Soto teachers [are] based on non-dualistic idea.

So following non-dualistic way of life in Buddhist school, more and more, you will be familiar with non-dualistic life. The Soto way, as you may have noticed, do not-is not so dualistic, and we do not encourage students so strictly by working or shouting [laughs]. We don't use, you know, stick so much. I have one, but I don't use so much as Rinzai master, maybe, use it. Because we have not much-our practice is based on non-dualistic way.

So teacher thinks-if teacher is very sincere, naturally, you know, students will be sincere. That student is sleeping means teacher is sleeping. Non-dualism, you know, teacher and student one. So when student sleeps, teacher sleeps; when teacher sleeps, student sleeps.

Student [David Chadwick?]: Wake up!

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] When student says "wake up," teacher will wake up. [Laughter.] That is something like Soto way. And that is why we put more emphasis on how to offer incense or how to work or how to eat. How it is so is very difficult to maybe, very difficult to understand for beginners; but when you have some experience you will understand difference between Soto and Rinzai. And both Soto and Rinzai have its own advantage, but both Rinzai and Soto-anyway, main point of practice is not to attain enlightenment but right after you attain enlightenment. You know, like Buddha practiced six years, and like Bodhidharma practiced zazen nine years, even though they have enlightenment. That is good example of Buddhist practice. Not only Soto and Rinzai, but also all the schools of Buddhism put emphasis on everyday life of-or life of Buddhist. As long as Buddhism is for people it should be like that. So difference between Rinzai or Soto or Shin school or Tendai or Shingon-is, you know, the entrance is different; but if you enter the gate of Buddhism, what you-the way of life you have are not different.

Difficult, you know, set of circumstances [?]-I think san-pachi-nenju, that is very-if you see san-pachi-nenju, you will understand what is our practice, especially when Ino says- I have- Do you have the translation of the san-pachi-nenju? Do you have it there?

So after- Oh. Do you have it? [Inaudible response from student.]

Okay. After we clean up zendo and our rooms and everywhere, we observe san-pachi-nenju. San means three; pachi means eight. And every three days-three and eight days: the third, the eighth, thirteenth,

eighteenth, twenty-third, twenty eighth before [1-2 words] ... four and nine day. Four and nine day is the day we have no dokusan-my holiday [laughs, laughter].

But if you understand that that four and nine day is-are the day when we have no schedule. But strictly speaking, hosan means no dokusan. San is dokusan-san. No dokusan on four and nine day. Nowadays we do not have not much zazen practice, but we can practice zazen if you like [laughs]. But most people understand four and nine days is the day when we have no schedule; but it is not right understanding. Dokusan means to see-to see a student personal. Doku means personal, or alone, or independent. Doku. San is to visit teacher. Dokusan.

So before- Dogen-zenji, first of all, when he was studying at Rinzai monastery, under Eisai[2] he studied koan practice first and he went to China with Myozen[3], a disciple of Eisai, he went to China. And he attained enlightenment under Eisai-zenji, and after that to have more mature practice he continued his training-his practice until Eisai-zenji passed away. And since he thought there is good-no more good teacher in Japan, so he went to China and continued his practice.

And he was-he-when he met Myozen-zenji, he had great confidence in his practice. And he had great confidence in his non-selfish practice. And he set up how to have non-selfish practice-how to set up non-selfish practice for himself and for his disciples.

Of course, those rules is not set up only by Dogen-zenji. Those rules actually set up [in] maybe eighth century, in China, by Hyakujo-Hyakujo Shingi.[4] Because of the severe persecution we had, unfortunately, his rules were-doesn't exist anymore. But there-there are many rules after, you know, Hyakujo Shingi-Hyakujo-zenji. We can see the quotations from Hyakujo Shingi, so we can know what kind of setup Hyakujo made.

So he [Dogen] gathered-or he followed Hyakujo Shingi carefully. Not only observing the rules [?], you know, studying Buddhist precepts. We have school of precepts, you know-precepts and doctrine [?] of zazen school. They are only studying precepts, so Dogen-zenji studied precepts-various precepts, precepts texts-texts of precepts, and he carefully set up non-dualistic way of life for monks and laymen.

He said as long as you are Buddhist, whether you are layman or monk, it is necessary to observe the first principle first, the next principle-the second principle-next [laughs]. Do you understand? The first principle goes first; and second principle follows. Value [?] of first principle. First principle means non-dualistic way. The second precept-the second principle is-is good means to lead people to the first principle. So it is a little bit more dualistic.

When you don't know which way you should take, which way should be more important, then you should put more emphasis on the first



principle, not the second principle-principle of the duality.

[Unfolds paper.] Here is [the text of San-pachi-nenju ]. Oh. [Laughs.]  
"Listen carefully everyone... ." Will you read it? [Spoken to a student.]

Student:

"Listen carefully everyone.

Twenty-four centuries, fifty-seven years ago,  
the great Tathagata entered nirvana.

When this day is gone, also life thereby decreases.[5]

Like a fish in a puddle, what pleasure is there here?

A man needs to practice constantly, as if to save his head from fire.

Mindful of transiency, pursue the path with diligence and care.

Throughout the temple, the dharma safely resides,  
bringing everyone peace.

All those in ten directions know an increase in joy,  
a growth of wisdom.

Thus mindful of [1 word unclear],[6] we chant the names of  
Buddha."

Suzuki-roshi: Do you understand? It says: "Listen carefully, everyone. Twenty-four centuries, fifty-seven years ago, the great Tathagata entered nirvana. When this day is gone, also life thereby decrease." Our life, therefore, you know, thereby decrease. "Like a fish in a puddle, what pleasure is there here? A man needs to practice constantly as if to save his head from fire. Mindful of transiency, pursue the path with diligence and care."

You know, our-here it says: "When this day is gone, our life thereby decrease. Like a fish in a puddle, what pleasure is there here?" You know, our dualistic life of pleasure, dualistic pleasure, and these students or people who live in the dualistic life is like a fish who lives in a puddle. From Buddhist viewpoint, our ordinary life is so small, like a puddle. In the puddle, you know, we are trying to be successful and seeking for pleasure in puddle. Is there any pleasure in muddy puddle? [Laughs.] [3 words unclear.] And when you, you know, hear it in monastery with your friend who is practicing non-dualistic practice, you

will feel that way; but in the city, you know, you may not feel in that way. "What- What- What is he saying? What does it mean? He is living in the puddle, not me." [Laughter.]

But we put emphasis more on first principle, the way of life to follow the first principle, which is forever, which exist everywhere-not only human life but also for all sentient beings. That is the life of the first principle. So day and night-so if our life, if in our life, always first principle goes first, and if we take care of our practice like a man whose head is on fire [laughs]-or, you know, a man whose head on fire should jump into pond [laughs] or stream, you know, and save your head. We should practice so hard as-as a man on his head trying to extinguish the fire.

When we practice the first principle in the monastery, everyone will have complete joy to participate in and to join and-or to see-to see people practicing the first principle which exist forever. That is, you know, good example of Soto practice. But if you do not practice our way like a man whose head is on fire, it does not mean so much. So we must be completely involved in our practice, and we should always put the first principle first. That is, you know, the practice after you have attained enlightenment. And even though you have-you haven't attained enlightenment, if you join the practice of the first principle, more and more you don't know when you attain enlightenment. Eventually you will attain enlightenment.

What is it? For a Soto priest it is okay, not okay, but it is permissible to enter the monastery without attaining enlightenment. Eventually will attain enlightenment. The difference between the people who has attained enlightenment and who haven't is whether you realize your hat [is] on your head or not [laughs]. Sometimes, you know, having his own hat on his head, he will seek for his own hat: "Where is my hat?" [Laughs.] But actually, his-the hat is on his head.[7] Anyway we have buddha nature. But most people do not feel in that way and [are] seeking for buddha nature somewhere else.

Maybe it is like to seek for treasure when you have a lot of jewels and diamonds in each pocket [laughs]. "I must have some valuable jewels inside, in the pocket." But until he knows-he found out-he find out the jewel in his pocket, he may seek for it. That is famous, you know, parable.

So anyway, we will find out our own treasure, and that is our precepts too. With it is nothing but treasures you have. But when you receive it, you receive it as if you receive something special [laughs] from Buddha. But actually, more and more-"Oh! This is a treasure we have had." That is how you feel when you have attained enlightenment.

Before maybe when I was young, maybe thirty or forty years ago, Buddhist didn't-people didn't think Buddhist teaching is so helpful teaching or Zen, because they were involved in the second principle,

teaching small dualistic way of life. And they were so interested in materialistic invention [?], so they have no time to study Buddhism. But recently the situation is like this [?]-more and more-many people started to [be] interested in what is ultimate reality. That would be-that should be our life actually. More and more, people put the first principle, put more emphasis on the first principle. If you know what is the first principle, the second principle could be the first principle too. In that way, you know, you can help people without giving any arrogant with him [?] or without giving any fancy talk. If you talk about why things exist, what kind of nature we have, and what is the difficult point in your practice, what kind of effort you should make, then that is the only way to help people in its true sense. [Sentence finished. Tape changed.]

Student A: [Unclear first time. Student repeated.] Well, you said today we should practice as though your head was on fire, and I wonder how can you practice zazen and still maintain a calm attitude in your practice?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing] That is just parable, you know. You don't have to feel in that way. If your head is on fire, it is terrible [laughs, laughter] but usually we are so lazy so Buddha [laughs] told you in that way. That's all. That is just parable. You don't have to take literally. You have to make effort to obtain calmness of your mind. Okay? Hai.

Student B: What is reality to an enlightened being?

Suzuki-roshi: Reality. Reality is, you know-this is, again, just my explanation, you know, or traditional explanation of the reality-but actually, you have to feel by yourself. But reality, we say, reality has two side, always two side. So, when you think about it, it is contradictory. One side of it is very calm, and the other side is very restless and nervous and dualistic. But strictly speaking, if you have eyes to see something which looks like dualistic, [it] is not actually dualistic. So when you see things in that way, you-it means that you have calmness of your mind, and your mind is not stick to one-sided view, or you are not interested in just one-sided view.

You may listen to someone: "This world is so noisy!" "Oh, yes. It is very noisy [laughs], isn't it?" "It is very hot." "Yes, it is hot [laughs]." Someone may say, "Although it is hot, isn't it nice to have hot weather?" "Oh, yes, it is [laugh]!" You know, it looks like dualistic, but actually for him hot weather is also good. But for someone who like only cool-nice and cool weather, hot weather is, you know, dreadful [laughs]-horrible. The same thing could be, you know, something agreeable and something disagreeable. So when-whether it is dualistic or non-dualistic is up to the person who observe things. So actually, duality means to have calmness of your mind. Some other question? Okay. Some other questions? Hai.

Student C: How can you say some things are dualistic and others are

not?

Suzuki-roshi: Well- Again, it is, you know-even though it looks like dualistic, for someone who knows non-dualistic, who are practicing non-dualistic practice, something dualistic is not dualistic. But when you do not know anything about non-duality, it is really dualistic.

Student C: Isn't everything both dualistic and non-dualistic at the same time?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, same time. Or you can say there is nothing can be just dualistic or just non-dualistic. But you make, you know, you think dualistic; your way of observation is dualistic most of the time. So things is not, itself is not dualistic. So to see-when you are able to see things-as-it-is, it is not dualistic. That is why I said it is like a hat which is on your head, you know. Sometime you feel you have a hat; sometime you don't feel so. That is why we must have practice; and even though you have kensho, you-your life still could be dualistic. You cannot, you know [laughs], you cannot be a buddha in one night, in one minute. It is not possible. Your karma doesn't allow you to be so.

Student D: If all life is equal and equally valuable, why do we not eat meat? Why are we vegetarian?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] It is strange. I don't know exactly. [Laughs, laughter.] I think we have to study more. But we are very greedy anyway [laughs]. It may be more important to live, maybe, not to be so greedy. Then, whatever you eat, it will give you strength. But even though you eat something very good, if you become greedy it can hurt you. That is very true. And we-we are very much-we are very much materialistic, you know, so spiritual side is forgotten. Even though you eat something good always, it doesn't help so much. Unless your mind is very calm, and unless your tummy is very strong, calm and strong, it doesn't help so much. Why I say so is, you know-usually, if you eat meat and fish a lot [laughs] they will give you a lot of nourishment; but it is not always so.

When I went to Eihei-ji monastery, food at that time-recently Eihei-ji food is-I had pretty good, you know-but before, it was very poor food. Morning time goma-shio[8] and gruel-rice, white rice, gruel, and pickle. That's all. And at lunch we had rice mixed with meat, you know. That is pretty good food. But no-not much vegetables, but seaweed-seaweed, miso soup, and pickle. And dinner, you know [laughs laughter], what we had was rice soup again and soybeans. That's all. And pickles, sometimes. So most of the time soybean and rice soup. That's all. So we thought-[laughter]-how is it possible to survive with such a poor food? So, what we did is to have a lot of it-it was always, you know, "more, more, more"! And supper generally is a lot of, you know, rice. But meat? Rice soup can be like this [laughs], but as much as possible [1-2 words unclear], you know, to feel more. In my monastery almost

all the student went to hospital [laughter]. Almost no exception; it was normal [laughs]. And after that, we gain food-we gain weigh. Much more-we weigh much more than when we were in the city. One more size [?]. So food is not complete.

If your mind is very calm, then food helps you better, I think. So it is a kind of superstition, you know, or kind of delusion [?] to think you can fish-[1-2 words unclear] fish steak, good, will help you. It is a kind of superstition, I think. When I was young, I already-I could go beyond this kind of superstition. I can eat anything, you know, as [that] someone, you know, eat. If someone eat, I can eat anything. It is true [?]. And if you taste it, you know, everything is pretty good, you know. Every food has its own taste. Because you add too much salt or too much seasoning or sugar, it ruins its own flavor and taste. If you just eat it, you know, like a medicine, or more [?], or when you take medicine you-[laughs]-that is the way. [3-4 words unclear]. If you taste it carefully, it is pretty good. And when-I think when you feel it, it is good. It will help you. Maybe that is superstition too [laughs, laughter].

Almost time?

Okay?

Okay.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Peggy Cramer. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Jeffrey Schneider and Bill Redican (2/9/00).

[1] Chanting/cleaning ceremony in a Zen monastery six times per month: on the 3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th, 23rd, and 28th. San (three) + pachi (eight) + nenju (invoking the name of a deity, meditating on the mantra of a deity, reading scriptures dedicated to a deity, etc.).

[2] Also Myoan Eisei (Yosai) or Senko (Zenko) Kokushi (1141-1215): Japanese Zen master of the Oryo lineage of Rinzai Zen.

[3] Myozen Ryonen (1184-1225): Japanese Zen master of the Oryo lineage of Rinzai Zen; student and dharma successor of Eisei-zenji.

[4] Pai-chang Huai-hai (Hyakujo Ekai): 720-814. Chinese master of Ch'an in the T'ang period. Dharma successor of Mazu Daoyi (Baso Doitsu). The Pai-chang-ching-kuei (Hyakujo Shingi) is a written set of rules for monastic life attributed to Hyakujo Ekai.

[5] The version of this line chanted at Tassajara in 1999 is: "When this day is gone, your life also decreases."

[6] The version of this line chanted at Tassajara in 1999 is: "Thankfully we recite the ten names of Buddha."

[7] Suzuki-roshi is probably referring to a story he told on June 12, 1971, about Oka Sotan as a young monk. He was sent into town to buy bean curd for the monks' meal. On the way, he was distracted by a poster for a traveling circus. His daydreaming was interrupted by the sound of the temple's meal bell, which meant he was very late. He dashed into the shop, grabbed the tofu, and headed back toward the temple. But he couldn't find his hat, so he ran back to the store and shouted: "Give me! Give me! Give me!" to the clerk. Eventually he made it understood that he was talking about his hat, at which time the clerk said, "Oh, your hat is on your head! What is the matter with you?" (See SR-71-06-12.)

[8] A table seasoning of ground roasted sesame seeds (goma) and salt (shio).

## **7 - Mountains and Rivers**

Saturday, July 24, 1971

Mountains and Rivers  
Tassajara

This evening I want to talk about Buddhist practice. In one of the fascicle of Shobogenzo there is fascicle about virtue of mountain and river.[1] Virtue of mountain and river. This is very interesting and give us a great benefit to understand what is our practice. Virtue of mountain and river.

He [Dogen] says usual people think mountain is solid, mountain does not move and permanent; but river flows. That is usual understanding of mountain and river. Mountain and river. It is exactly the same as- people say Rinzai practice or Soto practice [laughs]. And the Soto practice is such-and-such; and Rinzai practice is such-and-such. And it looks like Soto way is more rigid and Rinzai way is more free. But Soto way is not so strict, but Rinzai way is very strict. They may say many things about Soto or Rinzai because it looks like so. And there must be various arguments about what is Soto and what is Rinzai. But there are- there are not so many arguments [laughs] when we say: "Mountain does not move, but water flows, river flows." And there's not much [laughs] arguing about that.

But Dogen-zenji or-no-no-but Daokai-zenji Master[2] said: "Mountains flow [laughs]; mountains-mountains goes but river doesn't. Mountains flow. Or East Mountain flows over-over the-over the river. Mountain goes and river stays." And about this statement, because it is difficult for us to understand, so people say-people say: "True Zen is beyond words [laughs]. It is not possible for us to say what is Zen practice

actually. Zen practice is beyond words." That is why Daokai-zenji said, "Mountain-East Mountain goes over the water."

But I want to explain really what our practice is. And then, maybe, then you may understand what real-what Daokai-zenji, you know, said.

Another-another statement which Dogen-zenji said in Genjo Koan, the first fascicle of Shobogenzo. Maybe that is the first chapter. He started with Genjo Koan to finish one hundred fascicles of Shobogenzo. But he couldn't complete one hundred. But anyway, he started with Genjo Koan when he was thirty-two years old. And in-in Genjo Koan he says, "Over-under enlightenment-let enlightenment-let everything in surrender to it [?] or over-under enlightenment-let everything exist under practice, enlightenment." And-very difficult translate. Maybe I should try to translate it different. What he might means is when we practice zazen, our practice covers everything. And even though you do not have everything in your mind, in your practice, you do not realize, or you do not feel your practice cover everything. But actually, in your practice, when you just sit, there is actually everything.

But you shouldn't stay in the darkness of the enlightenment. Why we say "darkness" [is] because you cannot see things actually. You know, when you sit like this, you know-even though you hear, even though you see something, actually you are not seeing anything [laughs]. But you are seeing. But you hear it-but the way you hear is not to hear something, you know: "What is it? Oh. It's very good music." You do not hear in that way, you know. You do not see-you are not curious to know what it is, you know. "Is it spider or [laughs] cobweb or [2-3 words unclear] legs. Looks like cobweb. But it looks like legs because it moves. "What is it?" [Laughs.] You do not see in that way, you know. Anyway, something that you are frightened with [?]. You are not seeing; you do not attach to anything. You are not curious about anything. But you are just seeing.

Then it looks like- Things exist in dark room. Things actually exist in the room, but it is dark, so you do not see, you know, what-exactly what it is. You do not try to see, or even though you try to see, you cannot see, anyway, in the utter darkness of the room. So you don't see. So what is there is just your practice-your practice; you know, and you are completely free from everything, and yet your-your practice include everything, you know, include everything. In your practice many things exist. And, like a-like a blue sky or blue space, millions of stars, you know, exist and possible to exist. There is big possibility in-in the blue space. You can fly through it. You can sing in it. You can dance in it [laughs]. A lot of possibilities in the sky, but what actually exist is the blue sky.

Whatever you do, you know, it doesn't make-we cannot disturb the stars. Whatever you do, it doesn't make much sense [laughs]. That is, you know, our practice actually. But if you think: "I have a good

practice; and I have a great freedom from mundane life. That is-this is enlightenment; this is the standard [laughs]." And if you stick to your practice, you know, it doesn't-it is not utter darkness; it is something already. Your practice is under limitation of good or bad, perfect or imperfect. So it is not already our enlightenment. So-so even if, you know, in zazen-zazen, you know, even, even something happen, you know, if is something wrong with your practice, the practice is not true practice anymore.

If so, should you [laughs]-should you always [be] practicing zazen? Bodhidharma sit nine years. But we shouldn't take it literally, you know. Bodhidharma always-was not always sitting [laughs]. He must have ate something [laughs, laughter]; he must have go to rest room, especially when he is very old like me [laughs]. He was not always sitting. So true practice is not matter whether you are sitting or whether you are not sitting. Whatever you do, you know, that-the activity you have should be practice. But when I say so again you will stick to my words, or you will take my words literally.

So-so Dogen-zenji said that you should not stick to our practice shikantaza. It is utter darkness of the room of the temple [?]. If you stick to-if you think-if you stick, you know, in zazen is only way to obtain perfect enlightenment, then that is again wrong practice; that is not real practice. So you should also forget all about your practice. Or you should practice zazen until zazen practice become your own practice like your own, your eyes, or your eyes, or your nose.

Even though you have it, you don't realize it. You don't feel you have it. But you have it, you know. How you can have this kind of matured practice instead of lazy practice, you know, always sitting on black cushion or always sitting in-with mosquitoes, or false pride [laughs]. You should be, you know-that is not actually real practice. But why we practice so rigidly is to acquire that kind of practice, little by little. While you are doing rigid practice, sometime is fighting with the dragon, you know, and sometimes bothered by many ideas to come.

Anyway, you have-you try to sit. While you are sitting in that way, little by little, without knowing when you acquired the power, you will have, you know, more and more, you will own zazen, or zazen will become your own. And you do not feel you are practicing zazen. Even though you are sitting, you don't feel you are practicing zazen. Even though you are doing something else, you do not feel: "Oh! It is good to do something after zazen." [Laughs.] You do not feel-feel so much difference between zazen practice and everyday activity. The feeling doesn't-different so much, because you are, you know, you are very much familiar with your practice. And zazen become your own power, or not even power, even-because you do not feel you have power. Many people say-old students say: "I have been sitting eight years with you but nothing happen." [Laughs, laughter.] Nothing happens is very good. [Laughs, laughter.]



In Zen, various poems about it, you know. It is translate-translated in English. But, for an instance, there are beautiful, you know, sight-seeing place in China. [1 word unclear.] And in literature, you know, there is many lakes like-like maybe many beautiful, you know, lakes. And when it is-sometime lakes-water, you know-lake have plenty of water-a lot of water. Sometime it-they are not filled, but anyway, it is beautiful. So people want to see, you know-people in-all over the China wants-want to see the lake and worship the beautiful mountain. And that mountain is very beautiful, and mist comes and goes, and mountain appears and disappears. And it is very beautiful. I-I didn't go there, but people say it is very beautiful. But the poem says-I think it was Sakoda's [?] poem: "I at last come to the place; but not much interesting sight I have. The [word?] when-when water come [1 word] is beautiful, and when rainy days, [1 word] is beautiful. That's all. Nothing," you know, "special." That was what he said.

Even though you, you know, are tired, you have str- [partial word: "strength"?]-actual you have strength. Your practice mature. But actually, you gained anything [nothing]. That is real practice. If you think I gain something, it's not, you know, it is not real, you know, practice. Too much, you know, [1-2 words], because, it is-it is not-not enough your feeling that way, or it is too much you feeling that way. So only when you-you think you have enough practice every day, and you-[have] enough problems to exist every day [laughs], then that is real practice.

[In] the first-first two-three pages of Genjo Koan, Dogen-zenji talked about this point, especially-and very famous. They are very famous statement. It is very difficult to understand. Why it is difficult to understand is because you try to understand what he said. But if you have actual experience of zazen practice, he is not saying anything special. But the way he says is too, maybe [1 word] or too-the, you know, extraordinary high [1 word] in expression. So we think because the expression is so beautiful, so we think what he is talking about must be something special. But he is talking about very usual things, meaning very subtle word. At the same time logical thing [?].

So he says people say Zen word is not possible to understand by-by mind-by our minds, but-by our thinking mind-but it is possible, he says. But why you-it is difficult to understand is because of your, you know, one-sided view, like: "Mountain does not flow; but river flow." That is already not true.

Why it is not true is because it looks like so. And you say mountain does not move. But mountain actually moving. The river goes; but actually, if river goes, mountain is also going. And if river stays, actually mountain will stay. It is our thinking mind who thinks mountain is moving and river is-mountain does not move and river is moving. That is our thinking mind. And when we talk about things, we forget our subject

and talk about things-objective world only. But objective world is projected objects or projected ideas which we have in our mind.

So when we say mountain moves, moving-we know that, you know, ourselves also moving, you know, [1-2 words]. When we say, "river does not move," it means that our practice, in our practice, we do not move. Move or not move is the virtue of our practice. We have-our practice have various [word?]. Our practice can move everything. And our practice can stop everything from moving, because our practice include everything.

We can, you know- The way I exist here is the way everything exist with me. So actually how you feel, if you feel quite naturally, free from idea of self-for an instance, if you feel your breathing, if you feel your beating of your heart, then it means that you will feel whole world. It is a part of, you know, not even part of- Your breathing is the breathing of the whole universe, which include you yourself. When you do not feel you are counting breathing, you-or following breathing-just follow breathing. That is the breathing of whole universe. So your, you know, breathing include everything. There is nothing but whole activity of your-of the world is-of the universe is nothing but-nothing but your inhaling and exhaling. This is again explained [laughs] what, but actually when you practice zazen, you have it in that way. When you have this kind of zazen there is n- [partial word]-anymore, you are outside world. Or there's no buddha or you. No teacher or disciple. That is complete freedom. That is the proper sort for zazen practice. So our zazen practice should include those points.

Your zazen-when you practice zazen, you are actually utter darkness of the room. You don't see anything; you looks like see anything but, you know, you are thinking include everything. That is another side of the reality. So, there is no need to say "zazen practice" or "everyday activity." Zazen practice could be everyday activity, and everyday activity could be zazen practice. And you will feel same way, but only [laughs]-only when you-your practice matures. Knowing this [1 word] point, you will-when you practice, when you continuously practice zazen, then you will have more and more perfect, well-matured practice. This is our task-whole-life task as a Buddhist. After [at the?] [1 word] it is one source [of] your true nature.

There are many translations- maybe, I don't know how many translations, translation of Genjo Koan, various translation of Genjo Koan you have. But if you read it with this idea, I think you will understand what it means.

This is, you know, just outline of important backbone of our practice, but-but what [?] I gived you-give you not much marrow or meat or blood. So you may-you may-you don't understand why I am talking about this kind of thing. I can give you some questions-some questions and answer probably. That will be more interesting for you and help

your understanding. Do you have some question?

By the way, did you- could you hear me? [Laughter.] I am basically, looks like, basically same thing over and over again. Anyway, you will understand [laughs] what I'm saying.

Student A: Roshi, when you see something when it's in a dark room, how come you smile and are unhappy with that?

Suzuki-roshi: Unhappy-?

Student A: -and sad and laughing and different feelings. What-what-what's that? What part [?] is that?

Suzuki-roshi: No. I am talking about, you know, darkness, or enlightenment or the first principle, or emptiness, you know, emptiness. Same thing, you know. First principle or utter darkness of the room or, you know, the [1 word unclear]-there are various expressions for dark. But utter darkness means-why I say so is in utter darkness, when we say "emptiness," we may feel nothingness; or when I say "nothingness" we may feel that is, you know, void: nothing in it-that is nothing. Usually it is so; but what we really mean is there is and there is not. That is nothingness. In-in dark room, there is many things actually; but at the same time, because it is dark, we cannot see. That is darkness. "Nothingness," we say, but actually there is something. There is something but it's-actually, there is nothing. This is very true, isn't it?

I exist here like this, but actually I don't exist like that-like this. Buddhist scripture-scripture says, in one day we will change into various beings-sixty billion, forty-four hundred million, and ninety-nine thousand, and eight hundred, and nine hundred and eighty-four times [laughs, laughter]. How much is that? Maybe the population of America and China, you know, the amount may be something, six million or-in China there is-they-there is supposed to be, you know, four billion. Hmm? No. Four billion?

Student B: Seven hundred million.

Suzuki-roshi: Seven hundred million? Is that all? [Laughs, laughter.] It is still pretty big [laughs] number so I cannot figure out. But-so many times do we changed in one day. So-if so, and if it is actually so, so I don't exist in this way, even for a moment. We say "moment after moment," but more than that it changes like the strips [?] on the characters on the train [?]. Looks like, you know, always in the same way, but it is not. Always changing. It is turning. It is result of countless combustion.

So, you know, we-I exist and I don't exist. That is so true [?]. So from-because we are changing moment after moment, I don't exist. But, at the same time, it looks like, and people understand that I am existing

here and you are listening. This is a game and explanation so that you- so that I won't convince you [laughs]. This is just explanation, but it is so. So we say we do not exist. When we say so, we are in utter darkness, all over, in utter darkness. When I say, "I exist here and you exist there," it is light of being. And when we say, "Nothing exists," that is light of non-being. Again, this is just thinking mind. The actual feeling-feeling of reality is beyond our thinking mind. Only ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... or, there is no idea of existence or no existence. It is not necessary to say or not necessary to be bothered by this kind of talking. But only to encourage your practice-my practice-I am explaining it so that you-you give up your superficial understanding of, "My [1 word] doesn't exist, but [1 word] exist." That is very superficial understanding.

Okay. Some more questions? Do you have some question over there? I may feel good if me-if you ask me question; it means you are [laughs] listening to me [laughs]. My voice reach to you. Do you feel strange to be at this kind of lecture? I want to-I want to disturb you [laughs, laughter], disturb your busy thinking mind-destroy your, you know, rigid-rigid-rigidness of your thinking-way of thinking. Do you have some question? Hai.

Student C: I don't know what did you mean by "all activity is zazen."

Suzuki-roshi: "All activity is zazen"?

Student C: Yeah. Could you explain this to us?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. All- It is not something to be explained, but, you know, because-it is the real meaning of, you know, why-it is reason why we practice zazen and reason why we do many things. When we put more emphasis on zazen practice, we say everyday activity is zazen. You see? Every-whatever you do, it is zazen. When we say, so we put more emphasis on zazen. You see? You understand? Everyday activity is zazen. That is why, you know, we-you have some reason in-when you practice zazen.

But actually, everyday practice and zazen practice is not two separate practice. If-if everyday activity is quite different from zazen practice, zazen practice will be dead and everyday practice will just become someone's, you know, blind activity without any reason why you have everyday activity. It is just, you know, agony or struggling, not activity even. When you have some reason-even though you have no reason why you do something, but if you enjoy your activity, or if you have composure in your everyday activity, then you can enjoy your everyday activity. That composure cannot be-cannot be gained by some, for an instance, drugs or wine or [laughs]-or some intoxicant, including various teaching [laughter]. "Buddha said so, so I must do this." That is a kind of intoxicant. But, you know, even though Buddha didn't say anything

about it-about what you are doing, when you feel very good and when you have no regret in what you have done, and when you become you yourself, then that is your everyday, you know, life. And it makes sense. And you will grow in that kind of activity or practice.

So zazen practice is, you know- To acquire that kind of composure in everyday activity, we practice zazen. If you-if I say in that way, everyday life is first and zazen is next, to enjoy your life you practice zazen. But if you think, you know, if you think for an instance to enjoy our life we practice zazen, so zazen is a little bit, you know, awkward and hard. So maybe I rather take wine or LSD [laughs] so that you may be better. Then that is not our practice, because you only-without understanding the other side of your life, you stick to the pleasure of life, to enjoy your life. And your main purpose of life is to enjoy your life. So it is very one-sided understanding. So that is wrong.

But to-if Zen-if, for an instance, I think:

I am practicing zazen every day [laughs], so there is no need for me to experience or to be sympathetic with so much difficulty in everyday life. I am practicing zazen. I am priest. I am Buddhist.

So if I practice zazen, that is okay. I have good reason why I do not work.

This is, you know, another mistake.

So, this is zazen only-zazen only. I don't know what we should [?]. We are addicted by the idea of zazen. That is also wrong. So our practice must have both sides, and your everyday life should have both sides. Then our practice perfect [?] and very realistic. And our practice will help people. Our practice which has both-both sides. Okay? It is-it is important to have both sides or else you will-you cannot survive in its true sense. You will be easily be lo- [partial word: "lost"?]-you will be easily lost. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, you [4-6 words unclear] ... difficulties. And what are difficulties? Do they exist outside of what we think are difficulties?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, difficulty is one [?]-must be many difficulties. You know, I-I am confronting with various difficulties every day, and I am confronting with my students' difficulties too [laughs]-actual difficulty, and I'm not saying something special. You understand what-what I mean? Difficulty. Actual difficulty. But actual difficulties-how-why we have actual difficulties, is, you know, lack of understanding of the problem. And that is why we feel confused. But when we-when we are not in confusion, difficulty is not difficulty because we have-we have

some hope. But when we do not have any hope, when we are very confused, that is real difficulty.

But when we know why we have difficulty, then it is comparatively good-not so bad. The difficulty-why we have difficulty is because we are involved in just one-sided view. We do not understand things thoroughly or [1 word], you know. One-sided understanding of things makes us difficulty. Or because-because of one-sided view, I do things, we do things. So, naturally [laughs], will-our effort will, end in [?] zazen. We have no freedom. Hai.

Student E: If you're sitting in a dark-dark room, how do you keep from [2 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] I don't-I don't say, you know, utter, you know, without wanting you should sit. I mean, without trying to figure out what it is, you know. Whatever you have in your mind, you shouldn't be curious about it. "What does it mean? I had a wonderful experience in my zazen." Or: "I-I had many images of Buddha in my zazen. What does it mean? Oh! [Laughs, laughter.] Where-where do they come from?" That is not zazen, you know, even though various snakes or, you know, spider-black spider come: "Oh, that is black spider-spider. And that is snake." In that way, if you sit, it means you are sitting in dark room. You see but you don't see. You are not bothered by it. That is to sit in dark room. Even though you see, you don't see. Okay? That is true. Actually such a dragon or snake doesn't exist, you know, doesn't come; but you think it come. It is okay to think, to see various image in your zazen. It's okay. It means that something wrong with your breathing or something. That is why you see some fantasy in your practice. But you shouldn't be curious about it. That is to sit in darkness. It is emptiness, emptiness of your mind. We-we talked about this kind of thing from various way, for an instance Prajñāparamita Sutra: "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." Emptiness is dark room. And dark room there is form-various form. But at the same time it should be empty. It is tentative color or form of big being.

It looks like I am always talking about some philosophy. But philosophy-it is not philosophy; it is actual practice of each one of us. I am talking about your practice not-not just the philosophy. It may be philosophy, but-it should be-but why we think-observe things in that way is because we have experience of-actual experience of this kind of philosophy. It is not just, you know, talk but actual experience of our practice. So it means that you must practice zazen [laughs], in short, with right understanding. Or else you be lost!

Thank you very much.

1999).

[1] Shobogenzo (Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma), "Mountains and Rivers Sutra" (Sansui-kyo), 1240.

[2] Daokai of Mt. Furong (Fuyo Dokai): 1043-1118. Buddhist patriarch in Dogen's lineage; 45th patriarch from Shakyamuni Buddha.

## **8 - Self-Centered Practice**

Sunday, July 25, 1971

Self-Centered Practice

Tassajara

Tonight I want to explain the outline of our practice. As a monk and as a layman, without understanding of what is practice, it is rather difficult to make actual progress in your practice. And what I will talk about tonight is a kind of universal practice for laymen and monks both, you know-which could be true for both laymen and priests.

We say, or you say [laughs] whatever you do, that is practice, our practice: to drink tea or to eat or to sleep, to walk, or to sit down. Whatever you do, that is practice, you know, we say. But how you, you know-with-with what kind of understanding you do things is very important point. Actually, whatever you do, if you do not do the point-that is true. But if you miss the point, even though you look like [you are] doing a proper practice, actually it doesn't work. The point is, whether you do it for yourself or for the sake of the truth, or for sake of Buddha, or for sake of people-this point is a very important point.

I-I didn't discuss or argue with you, but my way, you know, if there is many things in the basket, my way is to finish the fruit is-you know, start with-I st- [partial word: "start with"?], eat the worst [laughs] one first. I will make-eat best one first. And why you eat best one first is-according to the people who eat best one first-if you eat best one first always, you will always eat best one [laughs]. The last one, you know, will be also best one [laughs]. If-if-we eat worst one first, you will always eat worst-worst one. Last one is also worst one.

Maybe this is very interesting discussion: which will be the best way. I don't-I-let's not discuss-let's discuss-before we discuss it, we must limit our discussion. I-I want to discuss-just I want to discuss which is more appropriate or which is not, which is waste-wasteful, or which is appropriate. Or to best use of fruits. But that is very difficult to-to know-to discuss, because if we want a discussion [of] this point, we should discuss-we must have discussion each time we have fruits [laughs]. So let's not discuss in that way.

But what I want to say-the point I want to make is to-when you eat best

thing first, it means that you discriminate best one from-from not-so-good ones. You choose best one. That is a kind of discrimination. And it means that in your attitude, the idea of self goes first. And eventual-naturally, discrimination will follow. If-if only one person is eating fruits, there will not be any problem. But if many people are eating-suppose many people are eating from the same basket-that kind, that attitude-if you eat in that way, you will be involved in trouble. On the contrary, if you eat worst one first there is [laughs] no-no trouble, even though [you] eat with many people. And if you feel you are doing something foolish, you know, unless you feel you are doing something, you know, foolish for yourself. And this attitude of eating worst thing means non-discrimination. You may say it is a kind of discrimination [laughs], but at least self-centered attitude is not involved in it. So that is not discrimination we usually say [call] discrimination.

In short, the point is in our practice whether you develop your idea of self, you know, or you develop buddha-mind in your practice, in your everyday practice, is the difference and point of whether-which is Buddha's practice. We should always put the self, you know, next [laughs] and buddha-mind first. We should always follow buddha-mind. To follow buddha-mind, it is necessary to realize what is buddha-mind. How to realize buddha-mind is our zazen practice.

Zazen practice has two sides or two virtues. One is: through practice you will, you will know, you will eventually, or you will intuitively know what is buddha-mind because your selfish idea or your small self more and more become small. And another side of, another virtue of our practice is you, you know, you will get accustomed to what you have realized. Even though you realize some truth, if you do not accustom to it and if the realization become your own, even though you realize "this is right" and "this is wrong," but intuitively.

But it is difficult to actualize your intuition in everyday life. So how to actualize your small enlightenment or deep enlightenment to your everyday life is by practice. And more and more you continue our practice, your small self becomes smaller and smaller. And big self will become more and more. Big self take over your small self more and more. Just as you eat a fruits from the basket. If you eat all of the basket, you know, that is buddha. Whether you eat-you start with bad ones or good ones, if you finish everything, there is no problem [laughs]. Anyway, you have eaten. So in its wide sense, you know, it doesn't-if you continue your practice through and through, it is okay. But if you choose bad practice, you will have more difficulties, that's all.

It looks like easier to choose-always choose best ones. It looks like easier-easy practice; but actually, if you have to continue that practice forever or until you finish the fruit, you must think "which is better?" When you eat two or three, it looks like very easy. But when you have to continue to eat through and through until you finished everything, it is not so easy.



Anyway, you will attain enlightenment, like if you-you-if you eat fruits, you know, continue to eat fruits, you will finish, you know, all the fruits. Then after you finish it, there is no problem. When you finish it-before you finish it, you think, you know-you compare which way will be better and you will wonder sometime which way will be better. But if you finish it, you know, what you should do is-what you will know what you have been doing. And if it was not good way and difficult way or it was very difficult way, we should-I shouldn't do in this way. Better to do the worst one first for sake of everyone. That is much easier way.

So, enlightenment you will have after you finish fruits. You will en-[partial word: "enlightened"?]-you will be enlightened about what is bad [laughs]. And, on the contrary, the people who eat the worst one first, after you finish it, what you will realize is-you realize your enlightenment is over something good-what is good. But when the-the enlightenment itself does not different-is not different: same-same enlightenment. When you realize what is bad, and you will realize at the same time what is good-you will-you-when you know what is bad. Naturally you will know what is good. And if you know what is good, then you will know what is bad and what will be the way to follow the truth. To follow the truth is something good. And if you do not follow the truth, that is bad. Anyway, what you will realize is about the truth, and you will realize that it's the truth.

Same thing-could be same thing, but actually, self-centered practice does not last long. You will have time to give up self-centered practice. If-if you could continue that kind of bad practice through and through, that is-it means that you are bodhisattva [laughs]. You are bodhisattva. Unless you are bodhisattva, you cannot continue. So unless you are bodhisattva, or you do not follow Buddhist practice, it is not possible to realize what is true [truth?]. So whatever the practice may be, the practice which is self-centered is not Buddhist practice. Buddhist practice is how to reduce our self-centered practice. How much you can, you know, develop your buddha-mind is the point.

In short, we should op- [partial word]-we should be aware of is-the point we should be aware of is to put first principle first and second principle next. And put the big self first and small self next. So-and try to extend the big self always. That is the point of practice.

So Buddhist practice is called practice of selflessness-selflessness. Whether you are layman or monk, our practice should not be self-centered practice. And usually I think-I think layman is suppo- [partial word: "supposed"?]-layman who is supposed to be very self-centered. Actually, he is not so selfish. But priests are very selfish [laughs]. I-I understand in that way. Generally speaking, it is so. Material-materially, you know, [from a] material viewpoint-materialistic viewpoint, a priest usually are very poor; and their-their life looks like [it is] very unselfish. But from spiritual viewpoint, priests are very selfish. You know, priests

may dream always [3-4 words unclear due to microphone noise]. This is Dogen-zenji, Shogaku [?]. Listen carefully [laughs] and often and literally speak about him. Explain it [?]. And if you don't, you know, in that way, even though I do not understand him [it?] fully, if I have a book, then you trust me-you trust us. We cling to something, some teaching, and because Buddha said-because Dogen-zenji said "this is right," that is, you know, big selfish way.

But laymen do not do that. Laymen may say "I don't know [laughs]. I don't know which is true. I don't know what to do." They are very honest. But priests are not so honest. And they think as if they know many things, but actually they do not know so much. They look character [?]. They can be priest role [?]. But actually, they do not understand so much.

And they feel as if they have a lot of treasure. And they usually-they study treasure. They want to accumulate treasures in their own-in their mind. And they-they are happy to count the treasure they have: "How much book I do? How much understanding, you know, I have?" But actually, why do they study so much is to talk about it, to be proud of the knowledge we have-priest have. So, spiritually, usually, priests are more selfish-more self-centered practice-involved in more self-centered practice.

But both-both-both priests and laymen--the most important point is to develop our buddha-mind instead of small self. Know-you know-it is not so difficult to know what is small self and what is big self. If you know that, you should try hard to develop the big self. That is our practice. Until you can intuitively choose the right path, we should continue our practice.

I'm right now-I'm talking about our actual-actual practice as a Buddhist. But we have at the same time many buddhas and patriarchs who attained enlightenment, who finished-who has finished eating everything in the basket-from the basket. They tried very hard, and they finished eating. Those are the patriarchs. Some patriarchs, you know, like the Sixth Patriarch, tried to eat something good as a layman for a long, long time and realized that this was not right path and switched over his path to Buddhist way. Maybe he attained enlightenment when he was a layman. Looks like so-I'm not so sure-it looks like so. But what he realized was this is not right path. That is enlightenment. And he followed Buddha's way.

And after he started to follow Buddha's, way it took many years before he started to preach-to share his enlightenment with people. After he received transmission from the Fifth Patriarch, he escaped from the monastery and [laughs]-and lived with fisherman. And for a long time, no one knows where he had gone. What he was doing at that time was-he was trying to digest his enlightenment or trying to extend his enlightenment to our everyday life-to his everyday life. And he was

trying to, you know, express his enlightenment in his everyday activity: way he speaks, way he treat things, or way he treat people. It-it took pretty long time before he could do so.

You may wonder why, you know, you are staying at Tassajara and practicing zazen. It is, you know, that it is to digest the knowledge or experience-zazen experience? To completely and to extend your realization to your everyday life. The rules we follow is set up so that you can extend the Buddhist way of life in usual, everyday life: the way you eat here, the way you recite sutra, is how to extend your realization to your everyday activity. Even though you feel [it is] difficult, actually more and more you will digest [?]. And eventually what you will do will help people even though you do not try to help people. This is very important point in our practice.

When you come to this point, there is no buddha, or there is no layman, there is no priest, there is no teaching. Because you have it, nothing special exist. And you are actually always one with people, one with your friend, one with your buddha. When you, you know, when you could extend your practice fully in your everyday life. So when we say "No Buddha"-sometime Zen master may say "No Buddha [laughs]. Kill Buddha." What does it mean? What it means is to be completely one with Buddha. Doesn't need Buddha any more. He himself is Buddha. How you, you know, attain this kind of attainment is through your practice.

At first, you know, when you fear Buddhism, it looks like there are many precepts to observe; there is many rules to follow; there are many buddhas to worship. It looks like so. But if you worship Buddha, according to Buddhist way, more and more, you yourself will become Buddha and you don't need Buddha. You don't feel you need Buddha. Whenever you come to Buddha, naturally you will bow to Buddha without trying to anything. That is not-that is more than worship. Just bow to Buddha.

When I was young, I didn't like bow, you know. Teachers or monks just bow to Buddha. It look like without any speech [feet?] [laughs] they are doing. It looks like very superficial practice. If you do very visibly, you know, it looks like you-he is doing it if he is fall asleep [?]. But if you-if your back [?] like this, you know, as if he-your front [?] is doing something [laughs, laughter]. You will not feel so good. You will not- And you think that is very superficial practice, that is just habit. And some people may think, you know, especially young [one word unclear] may think that is, you know, a kind of profligate-profligacy. But there is, you know-it looks like so, but after long, long time-difficult practice, you will attain that kind of practice. You will have that kind of practice, but natural, usual practice for you.

So we have to have eyes to see whether-which practice is progressive [?] or sincere, good practice-mature, good practice. It is not so-actually,

if you do not have self-selfish criticism or positive [?], it is not difficult to tell which is which. But when you are young, you know, most-we-we hate that kind of authority [?]. And we hate too much and we-we have no chance to see which is real practice. We do not see things actually as it is, as a small children may do. That is why sometime you do not like some formal practice. But formal practice, so-called-it formal practice, and mature, good practice-between them there is big difference. You can tell quite easily because you like, you know, even though you don't like someone who looks like chocolate, but you cannot hate him [laughs]. You will like him anyway because his practice is pure and natural practice.

Even though I understand why you do not like traditional religion from inside Christianity. I understand how you feel; but the feeling you have-if the feeling you have comes from your self-centered-strong self-centered criticism, then you must think more about what you say and how you understand and how you see. So before you say something, before, even before you feel something, you should think, you know, you reflect on yourself. That is zazen practice. Your mind should be very clear so that you can see things as they are. Without practice, if you say something it may be one-sided view. It may be very self-centered statement-feeling. Always what we should do is to extend our buddha-mind.

When you find right teacher, so you are-it is-anyway, important point is to make your mind clear. [Sentence finished. Tape turned.]

I think you must have understood outline of our practice. If you have some questions, please ask-ask me them. Hai.

Student A: When you do the [middle of question unclear] unconscious?

Suzuki-roshi: Unconscious-or what? Excuse me.

Student A: [Repeats question. Many words unclear.] Well say-say, for example, say for example you have a basket of fruit ... very last piece, and I think, well instead of ... I'll take ... fruit next week. And I think, "Oh, how good I am! You know, "I'm so unselfish! You left the last fruit." And then I think because I'm being like a-well, because I'm thinking I won't take this fruit, then ... you know, something special like that.

Suzuki-roshi: That is selfish thought. That is not the practice I mean. When- When- When I was young, my teacher [Gyokujun So-on?] would say, "If you," you know, "do not waste-if you are not wasteful-if you are wasteful, so wasteful, eventually you are," you know, "you will exhaust your practice [purpose?]" you know, "special practice." So you shouldn't be wasteful. Or-if you-you must accumulate virtue, you know, accumulate virtue by doing good things. Then you will have-eventually you will have-you will be a good person or a good priest or something.

That is a kind of selfish practice, you know, to accumulate virtue. Like you save money [laughs]-that is selfish practice. And knowing this practice is good, to do something good, you know, something which is different from usual practice and feel good is actually very selfish practice. We should go beyond that kind of idea of practice. And you should do something good. It takes- Unless you continue that kind of practice, you will not realize, you will not have real unselfish practice. It took you almost maybe six months to go beyond selfish practice.

I have spend- When I was in dormitory, I would get up forty minutes before my friends get up and clean the restroom-our restroom-to make them happy, that's all. But why I do it-why I'm doing some selfish, you know [laughs]-I am involved in selfish practice, and I feel very bad, and I almost stopped my practice because I felt very bad because sometime head of the school-head of the school get up because he was old man-an old man, so he closed the restroom [laughs] before we get up. So when he get up-when I hear him coming to the restroom, I hide myself [laughs]. It is a ridiculous practice, you know (laughs, laughter). I didn't know what I had-what I was doing, you know. Very complicated feeling. When I'm doing something right, you know, there is no need to hide myself. If I do not hide myself, I feel as if, you know, he may like me or something like that. That is also selfish practice.

It is very difficult to escape from selfish practice. Even though you are doing something for the people [laughs], still it is not possible to escape from selfish practice until you give up, you know, your practice and switch over [to] Buddha's practice. Because you do it, you feel selfish practice. But if Buddha did it, then that is not selfish practice. Whether head of the schools see me or not doesn't matter-only Buddha [laughs]-Buddha's practice. Until you have that kind of clear mind, it takes time [?].

Anyway, you know, you cannot have good practice from the beginning. You may ask me how to practice unselfish practice, but I cannot tell you exactly. I cannot help you so much unless you confront with your problem of small self. You see? So anyway, you know, if you try to do something, if you feel good, [you have] some bad feeling first always, because you are involved in selfish practice, and that is your fault [laughs]. So you must have big, you know, confidence. You must have big determination to do-to start Buddha's practice. And you shouldn't stop it, you know-anyway you should go-go on and on and on until you finish your trip. You will have time to reflect on what you have been doing heart and soul [?]. It was good or it was bad. You may say from bottom of your heart. So-so you should [?] depend on another, you know, fix-it [?]. You should go your own way. Okay? Some other question? Hai.

Student B: Is it possible to know when you've finished the fruit or do you just pretend [?]?

Suzuki-roshi: Possible to-

Student B: Is it possible for [3-4 words unclear] ... finished eating the fruit, or do you just pretend that there ... [4-8 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: We say so, you know, one with something-become one with practice. We usually say so. But actually it is-you can say so, but you-you should not say, "I can do it," you know. "I become one with the practice." That is very [laughs]- Mostly [?], you know, we-we cannot do that. We will be involved in dualistic feeling, anyway. So when we-when we say, "One with everything," it is-it is so-from Buddha's viewpoint it is so. When you have complete enlightenment it is so. [Laughs.] But for us it is not so, actually.

That is why we should follow some path. It is necessary, you know, for us to have to have some guideline, you know, some rules or something. Or else you-it is almost impossible to have clear practice. It is much better to follow some rule rather than to, you know, to go your-by your own feeling. If you go by your fee- [partial word: "feeling"?]-by your own way or by your own choice, you will be involved in very selfish practice. It doesn't work. But if you are very, you know, special person, before you go very far, you will realize [laughs], "Oh, no, this is not good!" [Laughs.]

But here in America, you know, the people who goes in his own way will be admired. [Laughs.] That is another difficulty you have. But it is very silly of you, you know, to do something because people may admire you. It is your practice, not their practice; so you should be very independent. [Laughs.] But there are, they may say, you know, you should go your own way. Your own way is, you know, when you-the way you feel good. That is very clear.

-----

Source: Transcribed from original tape by Jeffrey Schneider (8/6/99) and checked against tape by Bill Redican (8/23/99).

## **9 - Blue Cliff Record #61**

Monday, July 26, 1971

Fuketsu's "One Particle Of Dust" (Blue Cliff Record #61)  
Tassajara

### [ENGO'S INTRODUCTION

Setting up the Dharma banner and establishing the Dharma teaching-such is the task of the teacher of profound attainment. Distinguishing a dragon from a snake, black from white-that is what the mature master must do. Now let us put aside for a moment how to wield the life-giving

sword and the death-dealing blade, and how to administer blows with the stick: tell me, what does the one who lords it over the universe say? See the following.

#### MAIN SUBJECT

Fuketsu said to the assembled monks, "If one particle of dust is raised, the state will come into being; if no particle of dust is raised, the state will perish."

Setcho [at a later time], holding up his staff, said to his disciples, "Is there anyone among you who will live with him and die with him?"

#### SETCHO'S VERSE

Let the elders knit their brows as they will;

For the moment, let the state be established.

Where are the wise statesmen, the veteran generals?

The cool breeze blows; I nod to myself.][1]

Last night[2] I talked about our practice as a Zen Buddhist. Whether you are layman or monk, there is some important point which we should make clear. The point was to put more emphasis on big mind rather than small mind. That is the point we should make clear in our practice. In this way, more and more, you will develop your buddha-mind, which is buddha-mi- [partial word]-big mind.

And when you have big mind, when you are involved in some practice, experiencing big mind or expressing the big mind, at first you will feel you are developing big mind. And you feel you have big mind, and you developed your big mind to everything: to your friend, to your food, to your household, or to your monastery. But actually, if you continue to practice, developing the big mind, you eventually do not feel as if you have big mind or you are developing big mind. That is so-called-it "no-mind."

Big mind is, you know, something big, in contrast to the small mind. So it is not real big mind. No-mind is actually the great mind. Same thing will be true for our Tassajara institute or Zen Center. Why we have Zen Center is to develop our big mind, so that we can develop our big mind we have Zen Center. So that we can continue to practice our way and develop our way, we have Zen Center. But if you have the idea of Zen Center too much as an organization-institute, that is still [laughs], you know, something wrong with it. This point should be, at the same time, carefully examined. We should know what we are doing here or in the city zendo.

Here is a koan or Zen story which was told by Fuketsu Ensho[3] who-three or four-fourth generation of Rinzai.[4] And on some occasion, maybe, he mounted-he mounted on the altar and told the students-here is my translation for it: "If you pick up one dust, nation will become prosperous. If you pick up one dust, nation will become prosperous. If you don't, nothing will happen." That is first part [of Case 61]. That is what Fuketsu Ensho said when he mounted on the altar.

And to this, Setcho said-says, taking up one staff. You know, staff is long stick. And Setcho said: "Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you? Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you?" And that is the whole story.

Fuketsu said, "If you pick up a speck of dust, nation will become prosperous. If you do not, nothing will happen." That is what Fuketsu Ensho said. Later after Fuketsu died, Setcho-zenji said, taking up his staff: "Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you? Is there anyone who would go [through] birth and death with you?" That is Setcho, you know, what Setcho said. And there is appreciatory word by same Zen Master Setcho. But I want to explain the first part first.

"If you pick up a dust": What it means-"pick up a dust," means, you know, to do-to do something like to start some monastery or to start some Zen group in everywhere-in somewhere. That is to pick up, actually-what he meant is to have some group or to start some zendo. That is to-but actually, he didn't say so. Just to pick up a dust.

In the great universe, you know, or in great buddha-land, to start zendo is just [laughing] like to pick up a dust, you know. Not so big thing. Even though it is very small thing, you know, but if you don't [do it], nothing will happen. But he says nation will be prosperous. "Nation," he says; but it means "Buddha," or "Zen members," or "Zen students will become prosperous" [laughs]. Many Zen Center students come to Zen Center, for an instance, or come to-go to some other center.

But is this, you know, something very meaningful thing or not? We-we should think about nation become prosperous, or Zen students become prosperous. Is this good thing or bad thing? If something good happens, something bad will happen at the same time. Most likely of one good thing happens, and five or ten or more than [laughs] twenty bad things will happen. So we should think, whether to pick up one dust, to establish something is good thing or bad thing. But if you don't, nothing will happen [laughs]. This is also true. What will you do? Will you pick up one dust or you don't pick up any dust? Leave everything as it is without saying anything?

How many people are suffering? "What is the matter? Let them suffer. Let them go [in the] wrong direction. That is not our problem. Let it go as they go. You-I will not, you know, do anything with you." That is,



"We will not pick up, do, or pick up any dust." But if you want to do something with them, or if you want to help them, at the same time many bad things will follow [laughs]. This is very interesting but very real.

As Dogen-zenji said, "If you-if, because, you-everything is buddha. So, there is enlightenment and defilement, birth and death, Buddha and sentient beings." If you pick up one thing there is birth and death, enlightenment and delusion, and Buddha and sentient beings. And good-something good and something bad. Even though your speech is good, many things will happen just because you picked up one thing. If you say do anything, don't do anything, nothing will happen. But because we do something many things will follow. That is actual fact. So we call it Genjo Koan.[5] That is our koan to solve-actual koan we have.

If you don't pick up anything, it means that if you think-if you understand what is the real teaching of Buddhism, it means what is the purpose of Buddhism. Purpose of Buddhism is not to establish Buddha's teaching, Buddha's groups, but to help people. And to help people going their own way. But because-just because they are not follow their own way. So Buddha gives them some warning: "If you do-if you do not follow the right path, you will be lost." That is only reason why Buddha left his teaching for human being. So he doesn't want to pick up anything. Or there is no need to pick up anything if all sentient beings follow right path. But, you know, most people or some Buddhist will make big mistake. They try to establish something for sake of Buddhism in its wide sense-small, narrow sense. Then that is big mistake

The real purpose of Buddhism is to bring about the time when we do not need Buddha's teaching, when we do not need Zen Center or anything. Without teacher, without Buddhist teacher, we can follow our own way. That is best. That is the goal of Buddhism. The goal of Buddhism is to bring about the life-human life where there is no Buddhism. So not to pick up anything or to bring about a human life where there is no need to pick up anything is why we make our effort.

And personally, because we always try to pick up something and to establish something in its small sense is small mind. That is why, you know-that is why the more we make effort, the more we have trouble [laughs]. That's very silly, you know-about-if we establish something just to have more trouble [laughs], it doesn't make sense.

So, as I said last night, the most important point of our practice is always trying to do something with big mind, not by small mind. If you-when you do something with big mind, if there is no need to do it, you will not do it. Only when you have to do it you will do it. That is big mind.

And Setcho's appreciative word for that is: "Old men may not release [relax] his eyebrows as they might have otherwise." [Laughs.] Old men

may not release his eyebrows as they might have otherwise." "Release eyebrows" means, you know, to make faces. Old men [laughs]. "Old men" means-wears [words?], you know, blank [blame?] Zen masters-good Zen masters. They would, you know, they will make face: "Ah! Silly boys [laughs] to start Zen Center at Tassajara. Oh, silly boys! [Laughs. laughter.] They shouldn't do that." The old-old [2 words unclear], Zen masters may say so, you know. Isn't that interesting [?]. [Laughter.] As they might have otherwise [laughs]. If we do not start Zen Center, they will not make face. They-they will release their eyebrow. They will-they may feel good.

That is Setcho's appreciative word. And-and he says: "Tentatively, I will establish the foundation for the nation, but-even though old men may make face, you know. But tentatively, I must say 'Excuse me,' you know, 'My fault. Excuse me. Right now, under this situation, we must do something for-for people. So excuse me,'" you know. "So tentatively I will establish the foundation for the nation. But tactful generals and great shogunate, where are they now? But someday, the day [will] come when we do not need any tactful generals or great shogunate-powerful people. Someday, we will have the time when we don't need any Zen master, or tactful, you know, priest-or priest of great power-someday. But at that time, to have that kind of-to bring about that kind of peacefulness for people, tentatively, you know, we make some foundation. We will pick up a dust."

[Opens a page.]

Think about this Genjo Koan. It is actual fact, you know-[laughing] more than real, you know, koan for us. We are exactly the same thing at Tassajara. We already picked up something. But when Zen master would make face [laughs]-knowing that, we dare-we have to pick up something here.

So again, it is good to fulfill your responsibility in Zen Center and to help Zen Center establish-to help establishing Zen Center, it is good, of course. But if you have slight idea of self in it, if you are involved in small selfish idea, then you cannot see Buddha-Buddha's face again. It is not vision [visible?] any more.

If you want to stay at Zen Center, you will sit-extend your practice with big mind, not small mind. You shouldn't have funny [any?] kind of self-centered idea because whatever you do, whether it is good or bad, what you will do with big mind is Buddha's activity, whether it is good or bad. But if you do it with small mind, that is delusion. That is not Buddha's activity any more. It is demon's activity [laughs], not Buddha's activity. It is [1-3 words unclear].

If you are trying to extend or trying to express your big mind in its true sense in your practice and help Zen Center, even [though] that is not the first principle, Buddha allow us to do it. And if the purpose of

establishing something is [to be] ready to go forget all about Zen Center, then we do not need Zen Center-then people will not need Zen Center,

If you like Zen Center too much, you will usually involved in some-a kind of self-centered idea. To think about only to yourself is self-centered idea, of course; but to think about only Zen Center is a kind of small mind-even it is-even Zen Center is a dust-can be a dust-a small dust in comparison to big buddha-land. It is just a speck of dust. But if something [is] a speck of dust, like something like something as small as a speck of dust appears, we will be already dust [?].

As Dogen-zenji says in his "Fukan-zazengi": [6] "If your," you know, "if your purpose of zazen miss the point going [gesturing?], you know, a little bit, you know, then the difference will be heaven and earth." Our zazen doesn't make any sense. Or in our mind, even the slightest taint [?] appears when you lose our way. It is- You will- They will be back. The point is what kind of interest you have in our Zen Center activity is the point. You should not seek [see?] intensively [?] something personal. But you should be ready to give up Zen Center when it is not necessary.

I don't think we can dream about such a peaceful time where is no need to have Buddha's teaching. I don't know when. But we should be ready to resign from Zen Center when, you know, you are not necessary. But, you know, I don't know [laughing] when I can say, you may resign from Zen Center. I cannot say [laughs] so easily. But each one of us should be ready for that.

That is-and we should not be proud of our faculties, or tactfulness, or, you know, bright smart mind, or your good practice. That is also enemy of Buddhism. You should not pursue Buddhist way for sake of fame or personal interest. We should not seek for some advantage in our everyday life. Usually, Buddha's teaching-actually, why we study Buddhism is to have enough courage to do something with it, to do something people will thank you for [preceding 5 words unclear]. Whether people like you [to] do something or not, if it is necessary to do, you should do it.

So it means you pick up some dust [laughs]. People may-even smallest piece of dust- Dust is dust; people may not like it. But if it is-if you think it is necessary, you should do it. That is, you know, our spirit. And we do not do it because people admire you, because you will live good successful life in future. Knowing that what we are doing is not always necessary or not necessary forever. It-it is just tentative good means to help people. Knowing this, to make the best effort in our everyday life is actually Buddhist practice.

So the big mind is-you should extend-the way to extend our big mind is limitlessly big. Actually there is no limit. So we say we establish

Buddha's way with defilement-in defilement. Whatever we do, it is delusion-delusion [tapping on lectern or table]. Knowing that this is delusion, to do something, to pick up a dust is bodhisattva's way and at the same time Buddhist way. So we do not expect anything in doing something, because we know what we are doing is not always necessary. Right now it is necessary, but tomorrow we don't know.

We will be very happy if people do not want us [?] [laughs]. We will be very happy. That is real big mind. We wear robes. Why we wear robes, maybe, in short, to take off robes we wear robes. Unless you put on your robe, you have no time to take off [laughs]. If you do not wear robe from the beginning, that also does not make sense. You are not, you know-nothing to do with human life if you do not wear priest robe, Buddhist robe. We must have wear it as we must have pick up [taps], you know, a dust. Even it is dust you must pick up [taps]. So if it is Buddha's robe, you know, there is no reason why we do not wear it.

But Buddha's robe is formless robe. So any time you can take [it] off. When time come and all the sentient beings become buddha, then you can take off the robe. Then your robe makes sense. If you wear it in some idea to keep, you know, wearing it forever as it is, you know, Buddha's robe, that kind of idea doesn't make any sense.

Our practice look-looks like very rigid, very formal. But why we observe such a rigid, formal practice is to acquire the absolute freedom. Until we have great freedom for human beings and should continue our rigid practice. You may say it might be better not to [be] involved in [laughs] such a rigid practice, you know. "It is out of question," if you say so. "I have no time to discuss about Buddhism with such a people." They do not know the Genjo Koan, the koan of our everyday life. They do not-do not know what is our life.

Day after day, moment after moment, we are creating bad karma. I have to accept it. Even [at] Tassajara we ate eggs-eggs, you know. It is living being. Eggs are not dead. Even though you eat grain, that is living being. You are killing them. But you have to eat it, knowing that it is not dead. Because of the big mind we have to do it. Because we do not-we choose big mind rather than small mind to discriminate: "This is good or bad." Whether we are following Buddha's precepts or not, that is, you know-small mind say-say so-but big mind will accept things as it is. If we have to, we will do anything. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.] ... koan.

So whatever it is, according to Dogen-zenji, it is koan-big koan. And he carefully set up great koan of reality, a great koan of our life. He set up a great, you know, stage for human being. Whatever you do on the stage, that is a big story [?]-Buddha's act which will continue forever. And whatever it is, from Dogen's viewpoint it makes sense. If you have good understanding of the great koan, whatever you do it makes sense. But only when you are involved in small mind, it doesn't make sense.

You cannot stay on the stage of the great koan. You are not alive anymore. Just corpse is [laughs] moving; but real human being is not there. That is actually Dogen-zenji's great koan. [Folds up paper.]

So starting from the practice of big mind, the practice, you know, will be developed in our group activity, like Zen Center or like Buddha's sangha. And we will show the good example to the other group when we really follow Buddha's path and when we really-the meaning of life, meaning of what we are doing every day.

In short, we shouldn't be bothered by-we shouldn't be bothered by so much about: "This is good or bad"-the idea of this is good or bad. But we should-we should be concerned about your real practice, whether your practice is sincere practice or not, whether your practice is supported by big mind or not. This is the most important point.

And actually, if you have this kind of practice, your mind will have constant and peaceful. Because you are involved in small mind, sometime you will be discouraged; sometime you will be in ecstasy. After this ecstasy, discouragement will come. No calmness in it; no constancy in your practice. When you continue your practice with calmness of your mind, and with constant effort, appreciating, you know, the feeling of constancy, like, you know, like tai chi or big wave in the ocean goes up and down constantly, sometime high, sometime low. But it has good feeling. It is not like this [gestures?]. But sometime we like some-something [laughs] to go this way, and [laughs] we don't like to go immediately down, but to go this way is pretty good [laughs, laughter].

But we know that after some excitement, some discouragement will follow. So if you know how important it is to have big constant mind, and if you enjoy the constant effort you make, like a cow [laughs]. Even though I al- [partial word] am going to-to be killed, cow may go like this [gestures?] [laughs]. He doesn't afraid of anything. To the last moment he will continue [laughs] that kind of practice because he has big mind. That kind of mind will keep you always young and happy. If you are interested in something, you know, j- [partial word] some junky [?] life [laughs]-up and down, then you will be tired out and you will lose your spirit quite easily and you will become old.

So you shouldn't mind what will happen in the future so much. But we should worry about this moment-what you are doing. Whether you are happy or not happy is the most important point. If you are doing-if you are following right path, then the quality of your life doesn't different from the quality of Buddha's life. Of course, there is some difference in its bigness or in its loftiness [?] or in its maturity-there is difference; but the quality of the practice is the same. Like whether it is big or light, big or small-the flame is flame, you know, even though you may be small, you know; even though I feel cooler [?] in this way [laughter], flame is flame. Same quality. So our practice may not be so good, but

the quality of the practice is the same.

And we find we are supported by big mind only when we do not lose our way in small mind, small practice. That is actually Dogen-zenji's Genjo koan-big scale-koan of big scale where anything can be koan and where everyone has great freedom from-usual small activity.

That is again, you know, if I- So the goal of practice again is-again: Mountain is high and river is flowing-that is goal of practice. Where there is no teaching or teacher or sentient beings-that is the goal of practice. Where there is nothing to stick to [laughs, laughter]-you cannot do anything with it, you know, when we say soon [?] [laughs], even though you say "Stop it!" [?] [Microphone appears to have been knocked over. Entire sentence unclear. Parts of following sentences unclear also.] You cannot do anything. Even though you say "Don't!" [3-4 words] next year [2 words]" [laughs], don't do anything. That is the goal of our teaching-where there is no Buddhism and no Buddha.

So we say [2-3 words unclear] as they should, like this. But again, if you think without any training you will have that kind of life, that is great mistake. You do not know what you are doing. When you say you don't need Buddhism, then you are a great fool or you are very selfish person [laughs]. Don't you think so? Maybe, you know, great fool-to be a great fool is better than to be selfish person.

Even though Buddha say same thing, you know, but what Buddha meant and what you mean is-there is great difference-the difference between Buddha's word and your freedom. Don't know what to say-it is out of [beyond?] comparison. You say "freedom" and "nature," but you don't understand what is freedom and what is nature. You say "nature," but your understanding of nature is not true nature. It is something very unnatural nature [laughs], home-made nature [laughs], provided in your kitchen [laughs]. That is nature-looks like nature, but it is not truly nature.

True nature may be, you know, nature which will ignore-almost ignore all living sentient beings. Human being will be ignored, easily be ignored from big great nature. Whether we exist in this earth or not-it is not big problem. Maybe big problem if you realize what is nature; it is actually big problem. But someone who says, you know, whatever you do, that is to follow your nature, and that is freedom-then, with same way, you will be ignored from the sun, from various stars in the space. In the same way you will be ignored.

If you realize that you cannot be ignored from the universe even though you are small, then you realize who you are. And at the same time, you realize that because of some truth being supported by truth you are-you are alive. As long as you are support by some truth you cannot be free. Should follow some truth.

Ahhh. Thank you. Thank you very much.

-----  
Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.  
Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Jeffrey Schneider (8/20/99)  
and Bill Redican (11/17/00).

[1] Quoted from Hekiganroku [The Blue Cliff Record], Case 61, from  
Katsuki Sekida, trans., Two Zen Classics: Mumonkon and Hekiganroku  
(New York, Weatherhill, 1977), p. 314.

[2] SR-71-07-25V.

[3] Feng-hsüeh Yen-chao (Fuketsu Ensho): 896-973. Chinese Rinzai  
master.

[4] Rinzai Gigen à Koke Zonsho à Nanin Egyo à Fuiketsu Ensho.

[5] "Actualizing the Fundamental Point," a fascicle of Dogen's  
Shobogenzo.

[6] Dogen-zenji: "If there is a thousandth or a hundredth of a gap, the  
separation is as great as that between heaven and earth; and if a trace  
of disagreement arises, we lose the mind in confusion. "Fukan-zazengi  
(Rufu-bon)," in Shobogenzo, Nishijima and Cross, ed., 1994, p. 279.

## **10 - Ryaku Fusatsu Lecture**

Thursday, July 29, 1971

Ryaku Fusatsu Lecture  
Zen Mountain Center

As you know, at Tassajara Ryaku Fusatsu-Ryaku Fusatsu[1] may be  
observed as we observe it at Eihei-ji. I want to talk about Ryaku Fusatsu  
tonight and maybe tomorrow night, if I have time. I want to continue  
the spirit of practice of Ryaku Fusatsu.

Ryaku Fusatsu is one of the most interesting practices at Eihei-ji. I  
haven't, since I left Eihei-ji it is almost thirty-seven-or seven-maybe  
almost forty years [laughs]-so-but still, I have the impression now-a  
feeling of, you know, observing Ryaku Fusatsu.

And the history of Ryaku Fusatsu is very long, even before Buddha. In  
India, there were same kind of observation. And in Japan too we have  
still very primitive, you know, custom or annual ceremony or  
observation in some part of Japan.

In Japan, as I remember, January 14th is the day when we gather the

old memorial tablets or old symbols of shrine. And childrens or boys go something holy-some equipment we need to observe something holy. And when it is very smoky, you know, because at that time we burn-we burned firewood, kerosene lamps, or things in [throughout] one year. Things become very dusty and smoky. [Aside:] Smoky? Smoky? No.

And so in January-of course, New Year's Day, we renew all the decorations, so old ones we carry old ones to the shrine, which is always waiting for those things. Old, old small shrines, or just stone-not [2-3 words] but stone deity called-called a doso-jin.[2] Most of the days we do not know even there is doso-jin. But on New Year's Day, or from New Year's Day to January 14th, old-old symbols and ornaments will be there. People, you know, take-take them to the old shrines.

So at that time, we realize that, "Oh, here is shrine." On January 14th [3] we make pretty big shrine, maybe six feet high, with straw. And when it is dark, we set fire on it and burn it. And people-children come with rice, rice balls. Rice ball is made on New Year's Day and it is-we put it-we put it on the branches of the tree-a kind of tree-and we decorate it in front of altar. And on January 14th, children take all the small rice balls dango-dango, and bake it-bake it in that-in that fire we made by the old decoration. Some people knows why we do and some don't.

My mother told me the story of why we do. All the year round, you know, doso-jin-that god go-lived in various part of the village, and [knows] who observe good precepts and who don't. He has-he is supposed to keep the record, as ino also does [laughs], in Tassajara zendo or City zendo [laughing]: who attend zazen and how many times someone didn't come. He has that kind of responsibility. So he is supposed to have all the records, and on January 15th is the day when that-you know, when some god come and check the-his note. And when someone didn't observe, you know, maybe evil deity come-evil spirit come and check the record. And if someone didn't observe good precepts, then that evil spirit will visit his home [laughs].

That was the idea, but doso-jin is very good deity-good god. So before he come he burned, you know, the records. And he may say: "Yesterday evening we had a big fire [laughs], so I have no more records. It was burned away, so I haven't-I am sorry," he may say. So wherever the evil spirits goes, many deities, you know, will say "doso-jin," they say. And "I'm sorry. We have big fire, and we have no records. So [laughs] I am sorry. Next year I will be very careful. Please come next year." [Laughs.] So evil spirits doesn't know where to go, so all the villagers-villagers will be protected from the evil spirit. That is the story.

That kind of, you know, story-legendary stories-were also in India. That story came from India to Japan, and in some part of Japan we are still observing it. It-fourteenth is the, you know, fourteenth some days-sometime fourteenth-sometime the fifteenth; it is according to the moon, you know. Full moon will be sometime fourteenth and sometime



fifteenth. Before full moon it is-we call it white-white days, white nights, and after full moon we call it black-black days. Moon is, you know, more and more become black.

Eighth-eighth or fourteenth, fifteenth is the day we observe precepts. Laymen observe the eight precepts, which is-the eight precepts is the same precepts priests observe, but on those days, eighth and fourteenth and fifteenth, is the day lay-layman observe same precepts as priest observe, or Buddha's direct disciple observe. Those precepts are called hachisai-kai. Hachi-hachi-"eight." Sai is-sai means "same"-sai, you know. If this shoulder and this shoulder is, you know-this shoulder and this shoulder is same-sai. Very balanced, hachi-sai-kai. Hachisai-kai. Why we call sai means-sai means "equal," like your left-hand shoulder and right-hand shoulder is equal. Sai means "equal."

So on that day-fourteenth, or eighth or fourteenth or fifteenth-is the day when laymen and monks observe same precepts. Kai is "precepts." Hachi is "eight." And the rokusai,[4] rokusai is-rokusai, it was six-sai-mmm-it is rather complicated.

Sai in America-we use it with precepts-sankai, saikai [?]-so sai is more and more changed-its meaning changed. And sai later, you know, meant-or nowadays means "pure," but original meaning is "same."

We have rokusai. Rokusai is-before fifteenth we have three days, after fifteenth we have three days. So we have six days to observe pure precepts. And in those six days we observe hachisai-kai-eight pure precepts, which is equivalent to arhat precepts, or Buddha's disciples' precepts. And eight precepts-four precepts of eight-eight precepts is the nature of precepts, and other precepts is prohibitory precepts.

In Mahayana precepts, we put emphasis on nature of precepts. But in Hinayana or Theravada, they put emphasis on prohibitory precepts. Before Buddha, it is some-something-some observation to keep themselves from evil spirit by doing something good. Dana precepts was the very old precepts, both for Buddhist and pre-Buddhist people. Dana precepts. If you observe dana precepts, you will be born in some good land after you die-after you die. That is why they observed dana precepts before Buddha. And why Buddhists observe dana precepts is different: not for to have good future life, but to accomplish buddhahood in this life. That is Buddhist way of-or spirit of observing precepts and dana precepts.

Anyway, this kind of observation of-by observation of the precepts, they-before Buddha, they tried to keep themselves from evil spirits, to protect themselves from evil spirits. After Buddha, they also gathered laymen and monks and Buddha's precepts stick [?] together, and recited precepts, Buddha precepts. And those who did not-those who failed to observe the precepts may-may make confession of it. And those who do not say anything is the people who are supposed to observe the

precepts. In that way, they recited precepts.

So the most important part of the Fusatsu ceremony is to recite Bommo-kyo,[5] the precepts, you know. Bommo-kyo is the Mahayana-about Mahayana precepts. And when, for an instance, I recite those precepts, you should think about, you know, what you did. And if you didn't observe good precepts, you should say, "I didn't. I am sorry." Then, you know, by the power of confession, you-your-your bad karma will-will be weaker. In that way, to purify our mind and to keep Buddha's way, we will observe Fusatsu. Fusatsu is-fusa-fusa-fusa-da-fu-fu-fusa or [1 word] means to do something good-do something good-to increase good or positive side. Da is to stop-to stop doing bad.

Nature of precepts is to encourage good practice and to stop evil desire, or to-to continue good practice, good precept observation, and to put an end to bad delu- [partial word] deluded observation. That is the idea of precepts. Fusa-fusa-da-fusa: "to do something." Something we have. To continue something good, and to stop something good, something bad, or to stop something bad karma arise. That is the meaning of stop. Fusa-fusatsu. In that way, Buddhists have been observed Fusatsu.

Fusatsu is in Japanese or maybe in Chinese too, but it is-characterdoesn't mean anything, but it is transliteration of "posadha"-Sanskrit. So with this spirit, we should observe Fusatsu. And when your everyday practice is good-when you observe, you know, this Fusatsu, you-you feel real spirit of zendo. Fusatsu.

And Ryaku Fusatsu-Ryaku means "abbreviated observation," not full observation, because we have so many precepts, you know, and so many scriptures. So if we, you know, read all of it, it takes long, long time.

So we, in Japan or in China, instead of observing six times a month, we just observe fifteenth and the last day of the month. And the things we-we-Mahayana school of Buddhism, like Zen or Shin or someone Tendai or Shingon, we-we read Bodhisattva precepts-Bodhisattva precepts, Mahayana precepts only. That is why we say Ryaku. Ryaku. Ryaku is what we say. Not full but a part of it.

If we-if this okesa is, you know-if we wear small okesa that is simplified okesa-ryaku. Spirit is there, but more simple. Why we say so is because we do not read all the precepts, one by one, because it takes too long time. Maybe in comparison to Bodhisattva precepts, we should-I should refer to eight hachisai-kai, eight precepts.

The first one we say, "Don't kill." And don't take which is not given to you-don't steal. "Don't steal" means to take something which is not given to you. And do-do not be, you know-do not cling to the nature of man or woman, or nature or-don't cling to the difference of-difference, you know. If it is different is pretty good [laughs]. You cling to it more

than that. Man and woman is-you don't understand in the difference of the nature. It is-if you understand, woman is the form and nature is little different from a man, and then it is [1 word] to understand, nearer to understand. But if you say, you know, man and-nature of man and woman is like water and [laughs] flame, or plus and minus, that is not our understanding. Do you understand the feeling?

When you stick to [1-2 words], it is more than difference. That is why you, you know, you lose your way. If you think, "She is little bit different from me, physically and [laughs] mentally." Anyway, I have no time to discuss [laughs], but think what I mean. Difference? Not opposite-not pair of opposites actually, but different.

Our minds should go, you know-should have freedom from this kind of concepts. Because you are not free from those concepts, you lose, you know, you lose your freedom. You are enslaved by it. Nature is the same, but function is different, and that is, you know, Buddhist understanding about various existing being. There is-we, anyway, we possess everything, you know, possess everything. But difference is something is right, you know, with you. Something is beyond my reach right now. That is the difference. But anyway, by nature, everything belongs to you then. By nature, everything is same. It looks like different from one to the other. This is the third precept: "Don't be sexual." [Laughs.]

Fourth one is, you know-[he says the series to himself out loud in Japanese, then comes to the fourth precept]: "Don't tell a lie." You cannot tell a lie.

First four precepts are the nature of human being. It express how human being-how everything exist. It means that everything has buddha-nature and everything is the same, is one. When your mind is clear, you will understand in that way. When your mind is, you know, confused, you do not understand those men and women, [1-3 words] or other sentient, or something to cure [3-4 words unclear]-someone who cure [2 words], or something true or something which is not true. That kind of duality doesn't exist.

Dualistic understanding is anything, you know-anyway, [1-2 words] is not good understanding. When we-we are free from dualistic understanding of precepts or of being, then you have-you understand what is buddha-nature. So we call it sho-kai-nature of precepts-nature.

And fifth is, "Don't drink sake." [Laughs.] Japanese people like sake a lot. We use sake. Don't sell or drink sake. Don't be intoxicated by liquor or teaching even. When your practice is not good, you will rely on that or you drink [?] sake [?]. It means you are lazy. [2-3 words.] In San-pachi,[6] you know [chants in Japanese]: Ju shin do ho ichijo nan koto nakare. [3-4 words.] You shouldn't be [1 word] to indulge in [2-3 words.] That [2-4 words]. [2-4 words.] You say [1-2 words] good

translation. [1-3 words.] [1 word] as we say.

Student: What?

[3-4 words.] Drinking sake. If you drink sake, you have not much worry. [Laughs.] You don't feel you have to practice-you feel good-because you feel good. But that is just temporal [temporary], tentative, you know, relief. So you shouldn't-you shouldn't be involved in sake such a drinking practice. That is destructive.

And the rest of the [precepts]-the rest-we have three more, and the three is not just three-many, many, many. You shouldn't sleep because of high bed or something like, you know-you shouldn't decorate your, you know, your-you shouldn't use something too beautiful [laughs] on your ears, or on your eyebrows, on your lips, or you shouldn't use too strong incense. [5-7 words, laughter.] Incense has [2-3 words] okay.

Many, many precepts, not just there are three. But tentatively we count just three. Four-five-six-seven-eight-six-seven-eight [1 word], you know. Six-seven is something like that: Don't sleep in high bed. I am a Zen priest, you know. We sleep on this way-this part is [?]-my grandfather used to sleep [probably gestures, followed by S.R. and students laughing]. It looked like needles [?] [laughs, laughter]. He [2-3 words]. So the real spirit [3-4 words]. [Laughs, laughter.] Don't sleep [laughs] on such a grand [3-5 words]. That kind of precept-so many precepts, but tentatively we come-they come to "Don't sleep in high bed." That is next one, maybe seventh-sixth-seventh. I don't-I don't remember. Anyway, something like that.

The last one was very important one. "Don't eat after [laughs]-after twelve, afternoon." That is why John and Jisho, you know, at lunchtime while we-while we are eating before the second service start, we come to the Mañjushri and take back his flower to the kitchen because he doesn't [2-4 words]. That is sad. So maybe I shouldn't [1 word], you know. I shouldn't remain like this, but I-I feel it, you know. Mañjushri is a spirit of a body [?] of precepts.

[Laughs, laughter.] Excuse me, I need to ask a [3-6 words]. I was-I am not, you know, [3-5 words].

That-that is very important-that precept. That is independent precept, and before Buddha set up precepts, you know, for Buddhists it is a very important precept are the four precepts which means our Buddha nature. That is our buddha-nature. How to realize buddha-nature. Don't kill; don't steal; don't be-don't act with unchaste acts, -or that is not literal understanding precepts-don't be sexual, don't tell a lie. Those are very important precepts. But don't eat after twelve is-means Buddha's or Buddhist activity or Buddha's everyday life. So as long as we put emphasis on our everyday life-not only, you know, our ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned.]

... our everyday life is very important. So that is one independent precept, especially in Theravada and before Buddhists. Indian people, after finished their household life, they would go to the forest or mountain, and study-religious study, receiving food from people. And as soon as they receive just enough food to eat on that day, came back and eat before noon. And after noon, they didn't eat and practiced hard, and studied pure religious life. That was the Indian people's practice.

But you say do-they say do not eat after twelve o'clock means you should keep up with, you know, religious-pure religious practice. That is the origin of takuhatsu practice. Takuhatsu. In that spirit we, you know, practice takuhatsu. Do you know takuhatsu-what is takuhatsu? With begging bowl, we go out. And in the morning we go out with begging bowl and receive some food-the priests-and recently money too, and come back.

At Tassajara we have guest season. Guest season is a kind of takuhatsu-should be a kind of takuhatsu. We help people by our spiritual practice, and they give us material-money. So it is practice of dana-a practice for them and for us too. We give them spiritual truth to them, and they-they give us material resource to us. That is the spirit of our guest season-the extended practice of takuhatsu. But guest cooperation is more complicated than takuhatsu, you know. Very similar to city practice or worldly practice. Looks like business.

But if you go out, you know, with begging bowl, it is pure Buddhist practice, direct Buddha's practice. Relationship-monks and laymen will be direct practice of dana practice. So you feel as if you are practicing Buddha's way if you are practice takuhatsu. And if you practice, you know, guest season practice, unless your spirit, your understanding is very good and your spirit is very strong, you will be confused, easily confused. And you will-you mixed up-your practice will be mixed up with usual, you know, mundane way of life. But you shouldn't be mixed up.

So the rest one: Don't eat, you know, after noontime is a very good and very important precept. It is a direct expression of Buddha's practice, like takuhatsu. Don't observe takuhatsu. In one word, it means-it include our everyday-Buddhist everyday life. Same thing: don't eat after noon, after twelve o'clock, and don't-and practice takuhatsu, same thing. And this practice has been long, long practice for other Buddhists, even from before Buddha. For spiritual people this is very important practice.

And more and more in Bodhisattva precepts, is buddha-nature precepts became more important, and three refuges, and the Three Collective [Pure] Precepts was added. So we have sixteen precepts, three refuges, three treasures. We take refuge in the three treasures, and the Three Collective Pure Precepts. Is that six?

And Ten Grave Prohibitory Precepts. "Prohibitory precepts," we say, but it is the precepts of buddha-nature. So Bodhidharma's expl- [partial word]-according to Bodhidharma's explanation-explanation of precepts, we-buddha-nature is pure and clear, you know, each, you know, precept have, we say, buddha-nature is clean, pure, and clear. And the other words [?] follows when he explained the Ten Grave Precepts. That is Zen precepts or Mahayana precepts.

I think I want to continue this lecture. I hope I can finish it tomorrow night. If I couldn't I will continue-I will continue to extend it to the next lecture. Okay?

-----

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joan Amaral and Bill Redican (9/27/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms. Illustrations in Appendix from the Internet.

Appendix:

Doso-jin along a country road in Japan

Bonfiredecorated for the Toasting dango or kagami-mochi

Tondo-yaki (Bonfire Festival) (round glutenous rice cakes)

on the tondo bonfire

[1] Fusatasu: Traditionally, a ceremony held every fifteen days, in which monks in a Zen monastery recite vows and confess transgressions. Ryaku: "abbreviated" or "short."

[2] doso-jin: do: "road"; so: "ancestor"; jin: "deity" or "god." Shinto stone figures of deities placed along roadways and pathways, typically in rural Japan, to protect travelers and villages. The images are invoked for

an abundant harvest, for good health, and prosperity of offspring.

[3] In a festival called tondo-yaki (Bonfire Festival), prayers are offered for a healthy and peaceful forthcoming year. New Year's decorations of pine, bamboo, and straw are gathered for a public bonfire. The decorated bonfire (tondo) is carried out to the seashore, purified, and set on fire. People toast and eat dango or kagami-mochi (round glutenous rice cakes) they have brought to the bonfire.

[4] roku: "six"; sai: "same" or "equal."

[5] Bommo-kyo (Bommo-sutra, Brahmajala-sutra, Fan-wang-chin): a sutra containing the ten major and 48 lesser Mahayana precepts.

[6] See SR-71-07-22V.

## **11 - Fusatsu**

Friday, July 30, 1971

Fusatsu

Tassajara Zen Mountain Center

This evening we observed-this evening is called Fusatsu. As I explained last night,[1] this ceremony actually started even before Buddha. And after Buddha, the ceremony more and more include more positive elements: just, you know, to observe-not only just to observe, to keep their life, human life, from evil spirits, observing some good, and acquiring some strength-and throughout [?] protecting themselves from the evil.

That also-to attain the perfection of human practice, Buddha started-observed this ceremony. The form is merely what we must do, and more and more exactly. But must be nearly the same. But meaning changed little by little.

So if we study what kind of [1 word unclear: sutra?] [in] Buddha's time-Buddhists observe, then we will find out various elements. Last night I explained about it. Better to, you know, to see various kinds of flower in a basket, you know. There are-there-there is many kinds of flowers. Some of the flower is about the precepts about-about our human nature, or buddha-nature. And some-some of them is to-to stop doing something bad. And some of them is about life style of Buddhists-like the last one: "Don't eat after twelve o'clock [noon]." This is, you know-it means-it is the life style of Buddhists at that time. And we are still-we Buddhists, even though we eat three times a day, we have this kind of spirit. And when we chant and you read meal chant, you will find out this kind of spirit.

And tonight [unfolds paper], I want to explain Mahayana precepts in comparison to the precepts they observed at [1-2 words unclear] in

early days of Buddhism. Here-this is the precepts they observed in sixth day of the month-eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-third, twenty-ninth and thirtieth, or some time-yeah, thirtieth-instead of thirty-first day observed it. Thirtieth or twenty-ninth.

One is "Don't kill." The first one is "Don't kill." This is old precept. If you-you can see it [in] Agama Sutra or Kihara or Daibuddhasara.[2] In old scriptures, [Precept Number] One is not to kill, "Don't kill." Second [is] "Don't steal." Don't take. This is not-it was not given to you. Don't be involved in sexual activity. Don't tell a lie. Those are so-called-it bussho-kai,[3] you know. Something about buddha-nature-precepts about buddha-nature.

The explanation of those precepts is to don't be dualistic-or is the-in one word, don't be dualistic. Because you become dualistic you kill something, you steal something, and you are deeply involved in sexual activity, and you tell a lie. And fuakku[4] is about laziness, lazier, easier practice, like to drink or to take LSD. And [laughter, laughs] lazy [laughing] practice.

And the last one is about the life style. And sixth-sixth-sixth precept-sixth precept is include various [prohibitions] not to, you know, use powder or perfume, you know. Don't play with geisha doll, do you know? [Laughs, laughter.] There are lot of "don't, don't, don't," you know [laughs]. Don't use a beautiful, you know, hair-hair-what do you call it?-comb or hair pin.

Student: Ornament.

Hmm? Ornament. Oh. And don't sleep in big bed [laughs, laughter]. That kind of precept.

So those are-if you kept the, you know, the precepts, they observed it is very interesting. Later, you know, the Buddhist precepts more and more became positive, and they put emphasis on from [precept number] one to four. "Don't be dualistic." Actually, you know, that is the purpose of Buddhism. If you just see the-each precept, it is still very dualistic, but-

In short, if your mind is calm and clear, you will not be involved in dualistic idea too much. And when you follow your buddha-nature, which is always clear, then it is not possible for you to do something bad, you know. If you follow buddha-nature, you cannot do anything bad.

So more and more we started to put emphasis on positive practice-to do something good. So rather than to attain enlightenment for us, or rather than to practice for ourselves, to-to-we started to practice for others-to help others. And underlying thought is to help others is, at the same time, to help ourselves, because if we are involved in-as long as we are involved in some good activity, it is not possible to do something, you



know, bad at the same time. That is the secret of not to do something wrong [laughs]-because you cannot do two things at one-at one time. This is, you know, our belief.

You say, "I don't know which way to take." But if you take good way, at the same time, you cannot take bad path. So if you-if you only follow good way, good path, you cannot follow bad path. This is the secret of doing something right.

And in Mahayana sutras we include three refuges, you know: "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the dharma. I take refuge in the sangha." And this three refuges is actually basic framework of Buddhist-Buddha's teaching and Buddha's philosophy. If you understand the three refuges, you know, three-Triple Treasure, you will understand Buddhist-what is Buddhism. And you will understand what is Zen. It is so-the meaning of the three refuges is so deep.

So to be a Buddhist means to understand the three refuges and to accept the three refuges. Then you are completely Buddhist. So to explain about the three refuges is to explain whole Buddhism. The understanding of three refuges covers understanding of whole scriptures and koans and everything. It is so wide and so deep. In Zen Buddhism, we tentatively explain the words, but it's the three refuges. And when you receive transmission, you are-you study, or you transmit the true meaning of the three refuges.

Whether you actually-whether you receive the three refuges or not, the three refuges is nothing but the three treasures you have intrinsically. You have already three refuges in-within yourself. So it is again, you know, study of yourself. "To study Buddhism is to study ourself," Dogen-zenji said. The Buddha in the Triple Treasures is fundamental: the absolute first principle or-or you may call it buddha-nature or nothingness or voidness. That is "Buddha" in the three treasures. Buddha treasure.

And how Buddha, you know-nothingness manifests itself-our realization of nothingness happen is daizamma zai [?]-the law of causality. Whole universe-maybe it is not so, but tentatively we can think the voidness is something like whole universe. It has no limit. And which it has no [1-2 words] or no suffer or no hurt-no emotions [laughs]. Do you know? The top of the universe. Which is top and which is bottom? It is-even the earth, it is difficult to know which is top and which is bottom. If America is top, maybe Japan is bottom [laughs]. But-but Japan is not always, you know [laughs], on the bottom-in the bottom. Sometimes Japan is on top and America [laughs] on bottom. It is-no one knows which is top and which is bottom.

The Sixth Patriarch said, "I have something which has no front or no back or no top or no bottom." That is actually emptiness-the absolute being which include everything. And yet it has no form or no color. That

is Buddha. And its-whether [4-5 words], it is the law of causality, in-in short. But it can be all the teaching and precept. After Buddha realized the truth, it became a-Buddha wrote about it, and that was a scripture told by Buddha-and who realized the voidness of, you know, Buddha was Buddha later.

And sangha in the original Triple Treasure is in the [1-2 words] of or harmony of the voidness and somethingness-of voidness and truth. Truth covers everything. And where there is something there is truth, and truth and law of causality and voidness [1-2 words] doesn't different. It is always in harmony-in complete harmony. So that is why we call it harmony-harmonious sangha.

If you-after Buddha appeared, the people who followed his way was sangha, because they understand the law of causality in Buddha's teach-or Buddha's teaching. And they could-one-become one with the teaching-Buddha's teaching.

So the people who follow the teaching was called "sangha." But in original "Triple Treasure," sangha is the harmony of the reality. And later, after Buddha passed away, we have Buddha in sutras, you know, Gautama Buddha, wooden Buddha, or bronze Buddha. Or even a stone can be a Buddha for children [?] [laughs]. It is-if there is some-some stone like Buddha, children will think, you know, "This is Buddha." So anything can be, actually, Buddha later.

And the written scripture-teacher, this is dharma. Nowadays it is dharma. And priest-the sangha is someone like you or like me. That is Triple Treasure.

So this is just brief explanation of the Triple Treasures. But you now understand-really understand this Triple Treasure and accept the Triple Treasure. You can be a great Zen master or real [?] teacher of Buddhism if you just understand what is Triple Treasure. And this is one of the triple you accept when you become Buddhist. [3-5 words: "It is understood that you say (?)] "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the dharma. I take refuge in the sangha." Words is very simple, but meaning is very deep. And this is the precepts we received first of all.

The next three is the Three Collective Pure Precepts. The first Pure Precept is precept which is the source of all good deed. That is the first. The next-next one is precept which include all good deeds is the next one. And the third one is the precept which include all sentient beings-the third one. It is rather difficult for you to explain it in just, you know, one hour. But some other time I may explain about it.

You must have already noticed that in each, you know, precept [3-5 words] precepts-the three precepts. There were some precepts which you cannot understand by your mind-by your thinking mind. The first one, Buddha, is something voidness. It is beyond your thinking mind.

And the source of the-all the good-all the precepts, next one, is also something you cannot have any approach to. Unless you realize by yourself what it is, not by listening to dharma talk or not by reading, but by yourself through your practice. That is why we practice zazen. Zazen practice is-zazen practice is source of all the precepts. So if you practice zazen, it means that you've got the source of all the precepts.

So to have good practice means to have good precept observation. Why it is so-is better not [1-3 words]. This is something [1-2 words] by your true practice.

Hmm. It is pretty warm, isn't it? [Laughs.] Wet [?].

I am just telling you the framework of the Mahayana precepts. If you really focus [?] strict, I think little by little you will understand what you are [1 word]. But we must have time to know the whole picture of-framework of Dogen-zenji, like you see it, you know, a map of the world. You will make a trip-anyway, you enjoy your trip and enjoy the mountains you see and the ocean you cross. But if you are always making trip, you know, by-even by airplane, it is difficult to have whole picture of the world. That is why I am, you know, giving you a kind of outline [?] with which you can enjoy your trip.

This, you know, map include various trip, too [laughs, laughter]. There is big trip in it [laughs, laughter]. Very big trip. And Dogen-zenji's outline, you know. Very big map.

The best-best map so far we have is Dogen-zenji's Genjo Koan. He explain every corner of the universe [laughs]. It is revealed over and over again. You will not be discouraged in your-whatever experience you have in your everyday life. Anything you experience in your everyday life makes sense, you know, according to his Genjo Koan. If you, you know, don't [2 words]. What I am saying right now is something in Genjo Koan. This is-this kind of study is included in our precepts.

This is-this kind of precepts in this life is very different from the precepts-Prohibitory Precepts. This is Mahayana-so-called-it-Mahayana precepts in comparison to Theravada, you know-the first kind, you know.

And last one-last precept is fulfilling Prohibitory Precepts. That is also explained by Mahayana teachers, especially by Dogen in [title?] explanation of the precepts. How you really understand the prohibitory precepts from the life of buddha-nature we have. So it is-this kind of understanding of precepts is started by Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma's Ju-jukai [?]. [1 word.]

So how you observe precepts is to-to try to be non-dualistic and try to-to extend our pure practice to everyday life. That is why we, you know, give our-that is the way to teach our precepts [1-2 words].

Hmm. Okay? That is, you know, brief explanation of the precepts. Would you give me some questions? Hai.

Student A: I wonder if you could explain a little about [5-8 words] ... men and women?

Suzuki-roshi: I started to explain it last night. I didn't know much bigger than that. [Laughter.] How about you and me [laughter]? We will study very hard. Accident, you know. [2-6 words] what is woman, what is man. You know, don't say: "You are," you know, "woman." Don't say: "You are a man." [Laughs.] It is easy to say so, you know, when you fight. Supposed to be too weak: "You are woman." [Laughs.] "Shut up!" [Laughter.] You are suppo- [partial word]-you are man, and you are suppose to be strong and supposed to help me [laughs, laughter]. "You are man! And I am woman." That is, you know, part of [1-2 words] arise-confusion arise.

If you say, "We are human," it is different-different, that's all. So let's do it [?], you know. Then there is no problem.

Woman thinks they have some privilege, and at the same time men think they have some privilege [laughs] because-just only because she is a woman or he is a man [laughs]. That is not realistic [?], you know, understanding, but that is just idea-idea of mine, and idea of human. In short, that is delusion. There is no such, you know, person as this woman or man.

Some Chinese scholar said, "White horse is not horse" [laughs]. "White horse is not horse." White horse, he say, you know, but is not horse. "Horse" is some idea. White horse is the horse, you know, which was here. [2 words.] "Horse," he said. That horse can be white horse, black horse, and white [?] horse. That is-the whole thing have in our mind. So white-it-there is a white horse. It is quite different [laughs] from the horse we have in our mind. The pony [?] is not [laughs] woman-is not woman, according to Chinese scholar. I am not a man. A man is-can be, you know, better [bigger?] person. But why is can be a woman. [1 word] can be a man, so ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... creating problem. Man which is not actual man. Man which is in-just in our mind without knowing exactly what it is. We think we know, but not quite. So you will lose the complete cause of the confusion. You will-don't have any reason if you-if you involved in dualistic mind-dualistic-your mind.

So in this way we must have general [3-5 words]. That is [2 words]. Hai.

Student B: I don't understand the prohibition on sexual behavior.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: I don't understand the prohibition on sexual behavior. On sexuality.

Suzuki-roshi: Sexuality.

Student B: It seems to me that what it does then is that man alone of all the sentient beings that has not learned to be naked?

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] It is up to the-if your understanding is right, that is something which really exists. But most of the time we are, you know, addicted [to that] which is not real. That is sexuality in its bad sense.

Student B: Then why don't we prohibit the habit, not the act?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Why don't we prohibit the habit, not the act?

Suzuki-roshi: It is- [Appears to speak in an aside for a sentence or so.] We-we don't prohibit. But we, you know-ahhh. [Long audible sigh.] Not-we don't prohibit. But we should know what it is as much as possible [laughs]. As much as possible. Okay?

Student B: Okay.

Suzuki-roshi: Some other question?

If we prohibit, you know, if we try to prohibit it, then again, someone who-who prohibit it [will be] involved in sexuality. So we must be very careful when we read, you know, [2-5 words]. That is why we have comment on things [?].

[Long pause, during which pages are turned. SR then appears to read a quotation.] "Our self-nature is pure and clear. There is dharma of non-attachment. Do not have attachment. Do not cling to anything. There [?] is called not to be sexual." Do you understand? "Self-nature is pure and clear. In dharma world, there is nothing to attach to." Without ar-[partial word: "arising"?]-do not arise. Let it arise cleanly. Mind is-the precept of not to be (difficult [to translate])-or not to be sexual.

When I was making trip-not trip, but takuhatsu,[5] I-I did forty-more than forty days takuhatsu. And I came across with a gentleman. I was alone, and he is alone. And so we talked a long, long time in a small boat [?]. He asked me whether we have some experience of, you know, geisha-geisha-geisha-kai.[6] Geisha-kai means to pay someone to enjoy geisha. That is geisha-kai or prostitution. He asked. So I said, "No, I haven't." He said, "Then you are not qualified teacher." [Laughs,

laughter.] "You are not qualified teacher. Why don't you stay," you know, "with me tonight? I will take you some-somewhere, some good place. Why don't you follow me?" I said, "You-you want me to study [laughs] something, but I don't think I can study [it], you know. We study Buddhism, you know. Maybe-maybe good monk, if it is a purpose of going to geisha-kai house is study of Buddhism, it is not geisha-geisha-kai, you know, service-geisha-kai house enjoyment, you know. We can-I cannot enjoy if that is for study of Buddhism." And he said, "Oh, that's right. It is not-that is not my way of going-your way of going. It is different. So maybe better for you not to come with me," he said.

There is some difference. Looks like same. Not exactly the same. And the same is-difference is big-huge difference. One is, you know, to study how-how not cling to, you know. And other is how to enjoy clinging to geisha-kai. [Laughs.] Big difference. Study of non-attachment and who will enjoy attachment: big difference. We don't have to study about those things. Naturally, you will study [2-4 words] okay [laughs]. Instead you should practice zazen. That is much better. Okay? [Laughs.] I don't encourage you to study something-something like that. Hai.

Student C: [Much of question unclear.] Uh, well, if you have a kind of trauma [drama?] and it's not really pertinent to your everyday life, and an idea comes up to eat some fruit or something. [General laughter.] I don't know. [2-4 sentences unclear.] What is the best method of handling it? Chew [?] backwards, [1-2 words] on the food, or- [laughs, laughter]. [1-4 sentences ] ... life style ... life style ... [laughs, laughter] How can I eat that?

Suzuki-roshi: Zo! [General laughter.] Don't study [stir it?] so hard, you know, don't study [stir it?] so hard. Ten minutes, you know. Just, you know, don't be so serious, you know. Just let it come, let it go. If there is something to eat, eat it anyway. And if you think too much, you know, don't eat in the evening, you know, you may eat a lot and enjoy your food. And if you cannot eat [in the] evening time, don't eat it. Next morning you will enjoy your breakfast anyway. There is not much thing to think about. Let it, you know-when you sit zazen, rest something. Let it come and let it go. To do so, you have a kind of strength-not like this [probably gesturing] but big mind or-I don't know what you say. So better not to be so serious. It will be taken care of anyway by Buddha or someone else [?]. Hai.

Student C: Suzuki-roshi, if we break the precepts, what form of suffering will we experience?

Suzuki-roshi: Grave suspicions [?].

Student C: [1-2 sentences.] Will we suffer because of it?

Suzuki-roshi: Well, physically, first of all, you will suffer. That is obvious,

you know. That is direct result, and you-if you do so, why you will feel bad is you will lose your reason of life, you know. That is pretty, you know, difficult thing to accept. Maybe especially about women [?] [laughs]. If you lose your original fight [?]. So that is why we have the precepts: Don't eat after noon, you know, after noontime. It is a kind of reason of life. The old, you know, Indian teacher had-it is-reason of life is very important. Why you don't feel so good if you do not come to zazen is because you lose your way of life. That is very [?]-and why you come back to the, you know, more domestic life again is-domestic way of life again is you, you know, you miss everything like that you had.

Student C What about for laymen? Should the precepts be adapted to their way of life, you know, they are involved so heavily in an outside world-very much involved in the-

Suzuki-roshi: For layman-

Student D: -small mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Layman-there is precepts, maybe, still. They have, usually, laymen-even laymen observe precepts [that] priest observe and monks observe. And that will give you-give them some-some-not strength, but some release. Even though just once in a while they observe-if they come, you know, monastery, and spend several days having same food and practicing zazen, that will be a great help. Even though their usual-everyday life is not so quiet [?]. Mostly [laughs], layman likes much better [to observe precepts?] than even priest or monks like. I don't know why, but it does not mean that layman's practice is better than monk's practice. But anyway, they feel very good. Much better than monks, you know, maybe.

Student E: Is it possible to become attached to those precepts? Kind of bound to them. [2-4 words.] You can't always say, "No, I won't do that."

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Yes, but precept is not, you know, set up in that way. That is precepts-why precept is good. If you think something [2-3 words], you will be easily bound by. But it is-no one is bound by-will be bound by precepts. It is difficult to be bound by the precepts. The more you observe precepts, you will-the more you will have freedom from it. Precept is not something which you can stick to [laughs]. And our, you know, [1-2 words] is Zen Center, you know. It is very difficult to stick to the same way as you stick to something worldly-in the same way you stick to something-you stick to some extreme. In China and also in India and in Japan, Buddhists call it "precepts," but layman like Confucius-you know, Confucius-Taoist or Confucian-call it "lay." Lay is the set of some behavior-how-how we should behave. Those kind of behavior is separate so that we will not go the extreme. That is the main point of [1-2 words] chu-yo-chu-yo.[7] Middle Way.

It is different from Buddhist understanding of-little bit different from our

understanding of Middle Way, but they also put emphasis on Middle Way or lay behavior.

So it is-it is not possible to be-to go to the-to go-to be dualistic as long as you are observing some precepts or some rule of behavior. And this is, maybe, I don't know Christian, you know, Commandments so well. But Zen [?] or in India or in Japan, we have this kind of culture, but-

If it-if you have time, you can study about those things in comparison to, you know, Western, you know, culture. Okay.

---

Source: Original tape SR-71-07-30 transcribed by Jeffrey Schneider (8/27/99) and checked against tape by Bill Redican (1/3/01). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] SR-71-07-29.

[2] Suzuki-roshi cites three different sutras. The Agama (San., lit. "Source of the Teaching") is the Mahayana name for the Sanskrit canon that correspond essentially to the Pali term Nikaya. Kihara and Daibuddhasara are \_\_\_\_\_.

[3] bussho = "buddha-nature"; kai = Buddhist rules of moral conduct. Buddha-nature as large as the ocean. (See Shobogenzo "Bussho.")

[4] Japanese name for the fifth precept, which prohibits intoxication and/or malicious speech. Suzuki-roshi may have used the other term for the fifth precept, fuinshu. (Phonetically, it sounded like "fukushan.")

[5] Begging for and living on alms.

[6] Here -kai means to buy or hire.

[7] Chu-yo is a Confucian concept and sutra. Chudo is Japanese for the Middle Way. Suzuki-roshi may have been referring to either term.

## **1971 augustus (12)**

### **1 - Words and Zen Teaching**

Sunday, August 01, 1971

Words and Zen Teaching  
Tassajara



At the time of Yakusan-Yakusan Igen-daiosho[1]-we-every morning we recite chant names of Buddha. DaikonEno-daiosho.[2] DaikonEno is the Sixth Patriarch. And SeigenGyoshi-SeigenGyoshi is the Seventh Patriarch. And Eighth Patriarch is Sekito Kisen. And [the Ninth Patriarch is] Yakusan.

At this time, Zen Buddhism was very-became very popular or-and stronger. Every master-there were lots of students. But in Yakusan's monastery there were only twenty, you know. He-he was total [?] strict teacher. And one day, the temple-a monk who is taking care of temple asked him to give a lecture. "You haven't-you haven't given lecture for so long time, so students want to hear you. So please give us some lecture today," he said.[3]

So Yakusan asked ino-sho to hit the bell, so students came to lecture hall. And at the third round, Yakusan appear and mounted the pulpit, and sitting for a while. He without giving anything-saying anything, he went to his room [laughs]. [words] taken care of [Zen master] asked him, "Why didn't you say anything?" Yakusan said, "Because I'm teacher who give lecture and there's some teachers who discuss Buddhism but [words] to give lecture is not my [word]." And his-that was his answer. And then if he doesn't give any lecture. What is his purpose? No one knows but it is difficult to figure out what was his purpose. That there's no reason is actually his teaching.

[words] group [words] you feel good. If your group [words] you feel good. But if your group just [word] you don't feel good. But that is, you know, hmmm, why we're group sometimes. If water has some particular place it is not water. [words] why he didn't say anything. Some true Buddha, you know, he didn't say anything. Maybe because I'm not true teacher I have say to say many things. Actually there is no-not necessary to explain something about Buddhism, what is Zen. And then there is-in appreciating word for the-this story, Zen koan. We should thank, we should thank Yakusan because he appear and [words]. [He] is thankful, thankful. But because he didn't say anything was not so bad, not so bad. But you [shouldn't punish] the monk who is taking care of the monastery students-criticize or punish-not punish-criticize Yakusan for not [giving/speaking] [word/a lecture][words] want to criticize him. He did criticize him because he appeared on the pulpit to sit. That was [appreciating] words for Yakusan. True activity. Let's think about this point more.

Zen Buddhism [in this day]. Zen Buddhism [in this day]. We've got to-It is not something special according to Buddhism [words] if you have eyes to see, if you have ears to listen to, teaches you everything. Whatever it is it is good teaching for you. It is not altogether beautiful. So this is true for Zen master. If you have-If you already have ears to listen why Zen people-Zen master to come to America? Or say something to it [word]? Give you something, yourself, which coming to you so that you can drink it. If you're given to plain water no one will

drink it. So Zen is extra. Teaching [word] whatever the teaching maybe if you have ears to listen to, you know, you can understand [words] which [words] and which has good sense before Buddha. And which you [admit] forever. Before some true Zen master like Yakusan, you should [?] able to escape [maybe]. Your life goes on, you know. You appear and the lecture hall is already a mistake. But at his time Buddhism was so popular, Zen was so popular, when some of the people were in the vicinity they visited him. [word] [words] see them. And keep Buddhist way until [words] that is what he did but he needed some good students that is why he have [word] Buddhist students, maybe. We should think about this [word] little more, before you start Zen.

[words] Zen teaching is something special. Our teaching is expression of your true nature which is inward, usually. You know already what is Zen Buddhism. There's no need for you to ask someone else. But why, you know, you don't [word: hope/work] for with what you have is because of your [strong/wrong] mind. Because your eyes are not clear, because you want to [look] for something [better] which is like-as Buddha said, "You are like someone who has high goal on his [word] and is poking around. He seeks for something good. So, naturally having [word] we search over and over. [words] because you want to seek for something, something good, some other places. But if you do realize what you have on your head then there's no need seek for something good. So what we should do is to clear, to have clear mind. To get rid of excessive desire. And that is, you know, what you should do.

[word] for enlightenment-Enlightenment is-If you realize what you are doing that is enlightenment. If you realize what you are doing you will find out how perfect you are, how [words] special you are, and how groovy [does he say 'groovy'?] you are. So according to Buddhism the problem-our problem is the idea of self which you have, already have and it's [word] the source of all activities, quite [selfish/source of] ideas, which is not actually exist. Nothing has its own self nature, including human beings. When you realize that we have ordinary [word] self then what you hear or what you see will be very clear. And will be [true to self] because [your] [ears are hearing and [word] eyes are seeing not- You know. Probably this kind of idea is very unusual to you because our everyday life is deeply involved in idea itself. Actually our life is [nothing but/not result] [word] not our culture is [2words] culture. It is a human culture but it is not even human culture. It is deluded, self-centered culture. I have no [word] how self-centered culture we have. But even if realize how selfish we are this is so-called [word]. And when we get-get rid of idea itself our activity is-is really Buddha's activity itself. That is the point we should know [word] about.

[words] there is nothing to [word]. But you have something to settle that is the [word] of self [word] and practice of selflessness, that is Zen practice. [words] that kind of practice is [words] practice. But it is actually-If you [complain] with your problem of [word] unless you are very strong person you cannot see, even see how perfect you are.

[word] , you know, [words]if you realize, actually realize there is actually no self you would, you know, cover your ears or eyes. when you -If you are told by your doctor you have a cancer here, cancer here, what will you do? [word] [words] your cancer. Because you are so self-centered really [words]. It's a invitation that you [word] cancer [words]. can be tried [words] But even if you can see-If you can - If you do not [lose] even though you know you have cancer; even though you know your body is [word]. You may be pretty strong person. What kind of strength is your real strength? If it's easy to fight, to win something but if it's difficult to [word] when you [word] it is, you know, easy to go ahead. But it is difficult to be-to remain [ words] your group. It is easy to be first person, always but it is difficult to remain last person, always. Not so easy. [words] can be last person in our society and the world. So if you are always trying to be the first, you know, you will become weaker and weaker. You will lose real, special part. [Word] you have materialistic path which doesn't work so well.

However, if all of us try to be the first we create confusion. But if you always ...

[Master tape changed over and is too difficult to transcribe--for me. Sorry. I'd like to hear the original to see if it is better. Sara]

[There is a question being asked and the sound is terribly muffled. Suzuki-roshi laughs.] Well, I don't think there's a [word] in that sense, you know. ....

Sara Hunsaker, 8-18-99

[1] YaoshanWeiyan (YakusanIgen; also Kodo Daishi): 745-828. Ch'an master. Dharma successor of Sekito Kisen.

[2] DajianHuineng (DaikanEno): 638-713.

[3] From Book of Serenity, Case 7: "Yaoshan Ascends the Seat."

## **2 - Translation Of Unknown Text**

Sunday, August 01, 1971

Translation Of Unknown Text  
San Francisco

Assistant: [1] ... to make it record [verb].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

[Gap, scattered fragments of words and sentences.]

Assistant: ... like that.

[Gap, scattered fragments of words and sentences.]

Assistant: ... push it hard enough so the buttons stay down.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

[Long silent gap in tape.]

Suzuki-roshi dictating as he translates a text:

"Therefore, no buddha attained enlightenment without the form of shaving head-not in the form of a shaved head. No patriarch-no patriarch-is in the-no patriarch is not in the form of shaved head. So the most virtuous things is the virtue of shaved head.

Even though you built a stupa, which-stupa adorned by seven jewels to reach the thirty-the thirty-third heaven, the virtue is great, but in comparison to the merit of shaved head, it is not so good as even one hundredth. And any [1 word unclear] cannot be-cannot describe. Stupa could be destroyed, and once it destroyed, it-the shape cannot be-the form cannot be seen. But merit of shaved head will increase more and more until it reach to the Buddha foot. And its merit will not be lost.

Therefore, without changing our body we are beyond the commoner. Even though we do not attain buddhahood, we are already a son of Buddha. We are the most valuable being-being in the three world, and our life is best of the life-lives in the six conditions of life.

Think carefully now. You change your karmic body and mind, attain enlightenment, and will born in Buddha land. The beginningless karma-beginningless karmic attachment instantaneously stopped, and innate virtue will result. Therefore, after you shave your head, heaven and earth cannot cover you. You cannot be mixed with the rest of being in the six worlds.

A shaved head has nothing to cover, and square-sleeved robe is a symbol of-symbol of emancipation. People who see it will have great at-[partial word]-great encouragement, and your close relative will have good affinity. Your being is the highest in the three world, and your virtue is highest in ten direction-in the world in ten directions.

Kings are not higher than you. Your parents is not-respectable than you. If they are not your teachers you shouldn't bow to them; if they are not your patriarchs-if you-if they are not patriarchs-buddha and patriarchs-patriarchs, there is no one to bow to. Therefore we say the karmic life of three worlds.

It is impossible to cut-cut off love and affection of the family-to cut off. When we go beyond family relationship of love and passion, that is a

way to return the benevolence of-benevolence-the benevolence you receive from them. Thinking about how great it is-how great the benevolence you received from your parents, with sincerity you should refuse it. Thinking about how great it is-the benevolence of the water and the earth-we should return the benevolence by-through real way of returning it. This is real practice of renunciation and the most-the highest way-the most lofty and highest way to live."

-----

Source: City Center tape transcribed by Sara Hunsaker (8/8/99) and checked by Bill Redican (3/23/00).

[1] Thought to be Yvonne Rand.

### **3 - Freedom**

Tuesday, August 03, 1971

Freedom

Zen Mountain Center

I want to explain why we become Buddhist [laughs] or why I myself became a Buddhist. Perhaps here in America, because you have some wish, you know, hope in your future life-future life of a-future-personally your own future life. and sociologically you're concerned about your future society. But to tell the truth, we Buddhists do not have any hope [laughs]. We do not have any hope for our human, you know, life because we understand this life is originally full of suffering. That is, you know, how we understand our society. From the beginning we understand that our world is world of suffering. And we understand why we suffer, you know, is because we expect too much. We always expect something more than you will obtain or acquire.

For an instance, everyone knows that we cannot stay young, but we want to be always young [laughs]. Once in a while, you know, when-even though you are young, once in a while you may feel, "Oh gee, I am twenty-five now [laughs]. Oh, I am not anymore young." [Laughs, laughter.] You may feel in that way. That is, you know, good evidence that you want to be always young. But that is not possible, you know. We want to experience what you have, but that is not also possible.

Things are changing always, so nothing can be yours. So whatever you want-you want to be or you want to have, nothing can be possible for you to obtain or to have it. That is actually how our human world is. Actually it is so. But still, we want to be fooled by [laughs] something. That is maybe why we say human beings do not like something real. But human being like something unreal. That is very true. You don't like anything real. So after, you know, give up all the hopes you have in

mundane world, we become Buddhist.

Then what will become of you if you become Buddhist? If you resign from this world, what will become of you is maybe next question. Why you become Buddhist is to resign from this, you know, world of suffering, to have perpetual, you know, joy we become Buddhist. If you become Buddhist, even though you have no, you know, hope-mundane wishes. But instead you will have the freedom from various restriction which you had in your mundane world. You will be free from restriction.

Actually, because of our many desires, we do not have freedom. We, you know-we restrict ourselves by ourselves. No one want to be-want to restrict you. But you yourself restrict yourself. And sometime you feel someone else is, you know, restricting yourself, but actually it is you who is restrict yourself. Because of your wishes you restrict yourself. Because of your wishes you feel as if someone, you know, [is] making you unhappy [laughing]. And that is not so. You have too much desires. So your society will not allow your family or your friends-will not allow you to fulfill your wishes. Everyone want to fulfill, you know, each one's own wishes so we have, naturally, trouble. And we feel because of your friend-because of your society you suffer. But it is not so actually. Because of your too much-too many desires you suffer.

So purpose of our practice as a Buddhist [is] to be free from yourself, your small self, to be free from your small wishes. That is purpose our practice. This is, you know, Buddhist trip [laughs, laughter]. Our trip is very different from yours-maybe opposite. We are not interested in something we can see, you know. We are not interested in sightseeing trip or space trip or anything, you know, you can enjoy in its ordinary sense.

And here I have-speaking of trip or some koan or Zen story[1]-famous Zen master, Changsha.[2] He was called "Big Lion." [3] People called him Big Lion because he was so powerful teacher. One day he went out of the monastery and [went] strolling about the mountain. And when he came back, shusa[4]-do you know shusa? Shusa means leader of the monast- [partial word]-monastic training-asked him, "Where have you been? What kind of trip did you make? [Laughs.] Where have you been?" he asked.

And he said, "I have been strolling around the mountain." This is already-he is speaking about his own practice. "Strolling over" means, you know, as you know, when you stroll over you have no particular intention of going some special place-anywhere you want. If you see something and you want [to] find out something interesting you will be [?] go that way, and passing many beautiful places. When you want to come back, you may come back. But there is no particular purpose of the walking. That is [what the] story [is] about.

It means, you know, the life free-free from various attachment or

worldly interests. Anyway, he enjoys his life. And why he can enjoy his life is he has-he doesn't-he is not restricted. He is not under restriction. He is free-always free. His mind is always free from himself and from others, and from objective world. That is why, you know, he said, "I am strolling around," he said.

But shusa was a very good fellow, you know, very plain fellow himself. But then "You were strolling about. What-where did you go?" [Laughs.] He asked like that. He, you know, he tried to catch his master, you know. He feel if his master has some special interest, you know, in something he can catch him. If he-if you like good food, you know, he would say, "Oh! I like noodle." [Laughs.] Or "I like sake." [Laughs.] There he can catch him. "Oh! You-you like noodle. Then next, you know, next-next [1 word unclear: sounds like Japanese sukuji], you know, we will make some noodle for you." "Oh good." If he say so, he was caught [laughs] by-by his disciple. "I know-I know your weak point. That is your," you know, "weak point." So whenever, you know, his-he became mean, he may say, "I make noodle for you [laughs, laughter] tomorrow. How about it?" In that way, you know, his disciple caught him.

But he-but what he said was, "I have been gone. I-I saw many beautiful flowers," he said. So shusa, his disciple [thought], "Oh, he likes flowers. He is really quiet as flower, anyway. So if I make beautiful garden-a flower garden, I think he will be happy." In that way he wanted to catch him.

So he thought he caught him. And what he said was, "It is-you look very happy," you know. "You have spring-you feel as if it is-do you feel as if it is springtime?" [Laughs.] "Do you see the flowers and beautiful garden-beautiful flowers?" he said.

But his teacher said, "No, not always so. I felt as if I was strolling about in the autumn," you know, "period-for their last dead leaves-and cold. I had that kind of feeling." That is what his teacher said. It means that he is not caught by spring flowers. Nor he is not caught by beautiful foliage. It is already, you know, frosty late autumn. So he couldn't go-disciple couldn't catch him. If he said, "You are strolling-you looks like strolling about spring field. But now you said you are strolling-walking through the late autumn field."

That is, you know, our trip. We should not be caught by anything. Until you have that kind of strength or freedom, you should, you know, practice hard. Purpose of practice is not to chase after worldly freedom, but it is to have freedom from our small desires or fame or success in our mundane world, and if possible to help people-to make-to release them from that kind of mundane wishes and restrictions. That is, you know, Buddhist way of life: join you in your path, in your ordinary life, and then you will have freedom from ordinary life. There big difference.

So when you have real freedom from everything, you may be very

sympathetic with people who are involved in small, personal desires and-to be involved in competitive world. So naturally you want to help people to be free from-free from this kind of life. To share the, you know, to share the joy of freedom with people is our purpose of life. Usual-usually, you know, people are deeply involved in city life and so they stay in city. But Buddhist, you know, remain in city and live in city to help people who are involved in that kind of confusion. The way upward is to, you know, to-to make ourselves free from the small self of desires. And the way downward is after we have that kind of freedom to help people and to go back to the city is the way downward.

So-and after you, you know, you have freedom you do not-you do not enjoy the freedom around because you-you feel their suffering in your heart. And you-you cannot help going back to city to help people. That is the way downward-way upward. You should go down one flight again. That is Buddhist life. Whether you are priest or layman, you should-you should start our practice from actual experience of suffering of this life.

Buddha, you know, after experiencing many, you know, luxurious life as a priest, and he found out that there is no real pleasure of life in this kind of life. And he gave back his life and escaped from the castle and started to practice to gain freedom from this kind of worldly life. And after he attained enlightenment, he again came back to his castle, and before he came back to his castle he met five of his men who escaped the castle with him. And he preached for the five of these men. And they were-those five people were the first disciple of the Buddha-disciples of Buddha. And he at last came back to his house. And his mother-in-law became a priest, his son became a-not priest, but [laughs] Buddha's follower, you know. At that time there is no such a people like priest. They-their relatives and family became his followers. That is good example of Buddhist life.

So [laughs] if-if you come to Tassajara with some mundane hope, you know, to make a good home at Tassajara it will be big mistake. Tassajara is not some place, you know, where you can stay forever. If you want to stay here that is fine. It means that you will, you know, spend rest of your life help people here. We will have various-many-various kinds of children, you know, we will have. All of them-not all of them want to be a priest or want to be a Buddhist in its true sense. Tassajara has hot spring, and for students and away from the city life it is good place to stay. So it may be [seem like] a good idea to spend rest of the time here. That is big mistake. That is not the nature of this community. This community is for the students who want to-to have some power to be free from our small wishes-small desires. We have many desires. Even though you do not realize it, you have it.

To be free from all those desires and willing [?] to acquire-acquiring big freedom-great freedom from yourself and from mundane world, and always, you know, free from suffering, and always, you know, being happy with people and friendly with people, and without any expectation



to help people in Tassajara is, you know, why we-you stay at Tassajara if you want to stay here.

Wherever you are, there is something to do. Even though you are in such a remoted mountain there is something for you to do to help people. So it is okay for you to stay here, but you cannot stay here just to enjoy yourself, your life. If you, you know, have this kind of idea and stay here, people from outside will not feel so good. I think, you know, way many people like Tassajara-the reason why they like Tassajara, I think-mmm.

Actually, excuse me, I was-I became a good friend of hummingbird [laughs], you know. The hummingbird-relationship between me and the hummingbird [laughs]-not much relationship, actually [laughs, laughter], but whenever I come out they come-sometime two. And they won't to be disturbed by me [laughter]. What unusual birds. "Here-he is always here, and he don't makes me-makes me any harm," you know. "There is no need to be afraid of him, but whenever he come out, I feel uneasy-it is [2-3 words] what he will do. Let's go and he will come."

And, you know, I sometime moves on purpose, like this [probably gesturing], so that they can go away. But they won't go away! They are much more interested in what he-what his friend do, you know. If his friend come, you know, immediately he will go. Until his friend come, even though I move [claps hands three times], he doesn't go. It means that he has his own life. It is very different from mine. But there is some connection, you know, because whenever I come out they-they come. There must be come connection, but not much connection. I think this is very good relationship, you know. I do not give, actually, honey to them. Someone else-I don't know who-give the honey to them. Someone else give them honey treat. So actually I have not much relationship with them, but there is, you know, very close relationship. It is difficult to explain what is my relationship to the hummingbirds. And I think our students and our guests-the relationship between them is something like that, you know [laughs]. We are practicing zazen here. You come to enjoy your life here, or you are vacationing here. So completely different, you know, life-not-not at all same.

But I don't know why but our students like our guests very much, like hummingbird, you know, come to-come out whenever I go out. Not much reason, but we will do it anyway-that's all. I think that kind of relationship is good, the perfect relationship. Usually, you know, what we try to is to have complete relationship-to feel, you know, possessive of something, you know, someone, or to, you know, to make them follow our rule or [1 word] way. That is, you know-that kind of relationship is not based on the real Buddhist way.

You may know, in Dhammapada,[5] Buddha said, "You should be like a bee," you know, "collecting honey from flower to flower-flying from flower to flower, without destroying the flower, without disturbing the

beauty of the flower." That is, you know, Buddhist way of helping people. We do not disturb hummingbird; the hummingbird does not disturb us. And hummingbird is not, you know, bothered by-does not want you to do anything. It's just he want to-to come and see what is going [laughs]-"What is he doing?" [Laughs.] Very, you know-and I f- [partial word: feel?]-day by day I feel very good relationship between the hummingbird and me. It makes, you know, very soft sound. And he can stop, you know, in the air whenever he want to: rrrh, you know [laughs]. He-maybe he could-he could stop in front of me like this: brrr. "What are you doing?" [Laughs, laughter.] He doesn't say so-just, you know, brrr. And he-brrr-he makes, you know, one soft sound.

Relationship between Buddhist and usual people should be like this. How is it possible for you to be like a hummingbird is? First of all, you must have strong practice. You must train yourself so that you can have always big mind-big strong mind. Or else, you know, you cannot be like-you cannot be like a hummingbird. It is easy for the-for the bird to be like that. But it is not so easy for human being to be like that: so innocent, so little bit [?] desires, having great freedom from everything.

First of all, if we want to be like that you should be able to reform your small desires. Even though you have desires, you shouldn't-you shouldn't be caught by them completely. It is okay to have desire, but you should not be enslaved by it. And that is why we practice hard-because we human being is very hard, you know, creature-very difficult-difficult creature. So accordingly we must have difficult practice. So for human being, if you ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

When you have too much desires, why is it-is it necessary to have more desires? If it is too much, you should release your burden. That is, you know, what we should do to have more freedom. If you continue to extend your small desires, more and more your life will be confused and your suffering increase endlessly, and you will be lost in suffering. As our human world is very individual, personal world that, even though you make great effort to help people, it doesn't work. When you have enough money to give, you know, you will be a good person. But if you have no more money, no one will give it to you. No one will say even "Good morning" [laughs]. That is an actual how this world is going. As long as you have money, you have many friends. As long as you are young and beautiful, you have many friends. But if you become 50 or 60 you don't have much-so much friends, and you would be very lonely.

But if you-if your mind is always young, being free from various desires, then, you know, you will have always your friends even though you have not a penny of money. That is actually what will happen to you. How you, you know, have always hope in your old age, how you create, you know, yourself after 50 or 60 is the main purpose of our practice. So that you may not feel sorry when you become old, you practice hard.

When we-we-when-because I want-we want to be always happy, you

know, we practice hard. But as Buddha said, "If too much-too many trees [probably meant "birds"], you know, come to small tree, eventually tree-the tree will be dead." If we have too much desire, we will die. So if you want the tree always green and alive and strong, you must protect the tree from too many birds. Birds likes-like the tree, and tree like birds, so it is okay to have some, but if you have too much [laughs] the tree will die. And bird will be-will be unhappy if tree die.

We do not encourage people so much, you know. We do not propagate Buddhism, you know, so intensely. But what we are doing is, as much as possible, to make people happy is our purpose. As much as possible, we should help people. And "as much as possible" is, you know, important point. Not too much: as much as possible. Little by little.

Even though something is very good-maybe health food is good for you-but if you want all the people to have health food, you know [laughs], that is not possible. And if you try to do so, you will be exhausted [laughs]. Not much people-most people are interested in something sweet or meat or fish, which taste good [laughs]. No one interested in brown rice or miso soup or bean curds. Not much people are interested in it. So if you want to-even in Tassajara, you know, there is some problem-not much-because we-most of us like strong healthy food, not much problem. But still, you know, there is some problem, and each one must try pretty hard [laughs] sometime, because sometime we have many desires. Knowing that this is not so good, but we want to taste it once in a while. That is the trouble.

So if you convince, you know, people through and through in some way it is very difficult. It is almost impossible. It is very difficult. As someone said, "A man can lead a horse to the water, you know, but it is almost impossible to make them drink." You-you may think if you lead a horse to the water: "Now! He came to the stream." [SR hits table three times.] "He may drink, you know, water from it." But if he is not hungry or thirsty he will not drink immediately [?]. If you make them drink, it is a great job. [Laughter.] You need many helpers. And between helpers there will be trouble [laughs]. "No! Not this way!" [Laughing]. "Do more! Do more! You are lazy! Why don't you-? You are afraid of horse!" [SR makes frightened little mocking sounds.] [Laughs, laughter.] "Do it right now! He is trouble!"

Same thing will happen, you know, if you-even though something is good, you cannot, you know, convince them completely. That is human nature. If you do it little by little, you know, as much as you can, that is the best policy. And we will have always good feeling between us. How we bring out-begin about this kind of life in our human life is, you know, too hard. Strong practice is in ourselves-for ourselves, not for others. Without forcing our way on others, but to practice to force the truth on us-each one of us, then naturally people follow your example. And they will share-you can share the joy with people. Because-again, because you expect too much, you cannot share your complete freedom. And

you don't have freedom. Even though you have it you cannot share [it] with people.

The other day I talked about Ummon's[6] the Sun-Faced Buddha and the Moon-Faced Buddha.[7] Sometime we are sick and sometime we are healthy. But to be sick and to be healthy is our practice. Sometime we are healthy and sometime we are sick. Sometime it is hot, and sometime it is cold. When it is cold you should be cold buddha. When it is hot you should be hot buddha. There's no secret. That's all. That is Buddhism. When it is cold, you should be cold buddha. When you are sick, you should be sick buddha. That's all. No secret.

But you may find-find out how difficult practice it is to be just sick. To be just healthy, to be just hot, or to be just cold. If it is cold, you may want to go to somewhere it is not so cold. When you are sick, you want to be recovered. Even though, you know, you want to be recovered if-before time come, you cannot be recovered. So it is better just to stay in bed-just to enjoy the life in the hospital. That is much better. When time come, if your doctor is taking care of yourself, you will be recovered.

Sometime we may feel so sorry for someone who is in agitation, you know: "Oh, I have stayed [in] hospital already one month, but my doctor says 'You should stay ten more days.' Terrible!" And sometime I feel very sorry to-to leave hospital before someone leave, you know. If possible I want to stay more, but they don't allow you to stay. And I don't [1-3 words] with them-with my friend always, whenever I go to hospital.

So the secret is when you are sick, you should be sick. That's all. No secret. Then Buddha will take care of your health. Wherever you go, you will enjoy your life. And you will be needed [?] wherever you go.

If your tendency is, you know, to-I don't know how to say but-if your tendency is to be too much helpful to someone-others, then even though you want to help them, they may not like it if it is too much. You should help them as much as they need you. Unless you are not completely from your ego, that is not possible, maybe. That is the way we help people. That is how we-you can do it is because of the true enlightenment. When you know you yourself, you have enlightenment.

When you have not much, you know, desires or wishes, you have chance to see things as it is. You have chance to have enlightened eyes. That is our practice, actually. So you should know the point of practice, you know, what is practice actually. Our practice is something different from usual practice-from usual training.

I wish I have some more time to-to have your questions about these points. Some more question? Some question?

Anyway, if you find out the difference-if you have some misunderstanding about our practice, you know, or if you find out some misunderstanding about the practice, I shall be very happy. You know, if you find out-if you find out that your understanding was wrong about our practice, I shall be very happy. I want to collect your misunderstanding. Hai.

Student A: Could you clarify if you're just being and allow yourself to be where you are-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: -if you're sick you're sick. If you're-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: -whatever. And if you're lazy then you're lazy-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student A: -how can you get into practice? [SR laughs, laughter.] Can you, without negating that? [SR continues to laugh].

Suzuki-roshi: You know, when you ask that question already you want to be-escape from it, you know. Before you try to escape from it, you know, you should accept your laziness, and your foolishness, and your agitation, you know. "Okay, I am very lazy now." [Laughs.] You know, that is first. Try not to escape from it before you accept it. Okay? If you really think you are lazy [laughs]-sleeping in bed, you know: "Oh! Oh, I am so lazy!" [Laughs, laughter.] Then for ten times you should repeat, "Oh, I am lazy, lazy, lazy." [Laughs, laughter.] And get up! [Laughter.] That is way, you know. Usually, you know, when you feel yourself lazy, you may say, "Get up! Get up!" [Laughs.] You may call up your children-wake up your children and your husband. You see? That is-that-it doesn't work. You should accept yourself to be lazy. If you are lazy, your husband may be lazy, you know. Children will be lazy. You are all lazy! [Laughs.] "Oh, what has she done!" [Laughs, laughter.] It may work, if you really think in that way. Hai.

Student B: What about sleepiness? That's [1-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: That's worst enemy! You cannot do anything about it. But [laughs] the-the only thing it may help is to have good sleep. And to have good sleep, it is necessary to have some-to organize your life. That is very important. So that-that you can practice good-you have good zazen means you have-it is well-organized in your life [?]. It's [1-2 words]-it's-maybe it's one of your, you know, conditions. When-when something is wrong with your, you know, health you will be very sleepy. But it is difficult to know what is wrong with yourself. But when-as Buddha said, if dragon or snake or sleepiness come, don't fight with it.

If real snake or dragon or snake appears, we should sleep, you know. Don't fight with it. It is too late to fight with it. Before it appears, you must do something with it. Hai.

Student C [David Chadwick]: As work leader, the biggest problem I have almost is trying to balance and juggle everybody's desires.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

David: And I don't feel-

Suzuki-roshi: "Juggle?" What do you mean? Oh. Oh. [David is probably imitating juggling.]

David: I'm-I feel sort of incompetent, you know. I-it's-I don't feel like being too much of an authority. But all the time, all day long, people tell me what they want and what they don't want. And I don't really get so angry. I try to do what they want as much as possible. But what-I don't feel like a teacher, you know?

Suzuki-roshi: No. [Laughs.]

David: And I-I-I don't know what to do. It's such a problem. What should I do when, you know-when I could just put people where I wanted them instead of where they want, it would be very easy. What do I do when I hear all day what people want?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. When they ask you something, mostly they are, you know, they are escaping from their [2-3 words]. So if possible, let-let them think about it. Let them decide, if possible. But that is not always possible. It is, you know-so that is a good practice, anyway. And if you have strong practice, you yourself, you know, strong practice-you cannot [2-3 words]. It is-again, it is matter of your practice. And how student-it is their own problem, not yours. Cannot be yours originally. But something like that happens doesn't-[it] means, you know, Tassajara practice is not so good. They are escaping, trying to escape from their, you know, own duty-putting the responsibility on work leader. It is no good.

Not so easy thing, but we should work on this point. This happens to all of us. So that is why we must be-each one of us should be-should have good practice, or else it doesn't work.

Student D: How can I best practice borrowing from Rinzai?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe pretty difficult [laughs], yeah. I think so. The other day someone talked about group practice, you know. But actually we need someone, you know, someone's help. If you do not have anyone to help, you should read. What kind of book is helpful is some Zen story, you know, with commentary is best. Actual story is best, not your-some

philosophy or, you know, something like Japanese culture or something-not something like that.

Some actual story is best. And best, you know, story will be the story you have in your everyday life. That is best koan [laughs]. Why you cannot work on your everyday life as a Zen story is because you understand your own life, you-your own convenience. You don't, maybe-for an instance, you know, if you like diary, you know. It is difficult to describe what you have done on that day, you know. If you-if you write down, you may write down as if you are doing something very good everyday [laughs]. And you will be ashamed of it, you know: "Oh, I am not so good," you know. "I am bad." But actually I cannot write as if-I cannot write as I am, you know. If you are-if able to describe your life exactly as it is, you may be a great teacher. You are solving koan, but that is not so easy. If you write something about you, and if your husband read it, you know, he won't accept it. [Laughs.] But still you think, "I am right! He is wrong! He doesn't understand me!" That is not so. If you, you know, write about you so that everyone of your family understand, then you will be a great, great Zen master. That is good practice [laughs]. To describe yourself as you are, to say something as you are-that is good practice. And if you find it difficult, you should [2-3 words: practice right around?]. Okay? That is good practice.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center partial transcript (approximately 1 page) entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997, plus original transcription of remainder by Sara Hunsaker. Checked against tape by Bill Redican, March 13, 2000.

[1] From The Blue Cliff Record, Case 36: "Changsha Wandering in the Mountains."

[2] Changsha Jingcen Zhaoxien(Jap. Chosha Keishin): d. 868. Ch'an master.

[3] Shin Daichu (lit., "Chin, the Big Tiger.")

[4] Suzuki-roshi said "shusa" throughout, not "shuso."

[5] Verse 49, literally: "As a bee without harming the flower, its colour or scent, flies away, collecting only the honey, even so should the sage wander in the village" [Dhammapada, Narada Thera Vajirarama, 1963, p. 53].

[6] SR may have meant to say Baso Doitsu (Master Ma, Mazu Daoyi: 709-788), the Ch'an master who answered "Sun-Faced Buddha, Moon-

Faced Buddha."

[7] Third case of The Blue Cliff Record, "Master Ma Is Unwell."

#### **4 - On Bodhidharma's Day**

Wednesday, August 04, 1971

On Bodhidharma's Day  
Zen Mountain Center

Tomorrow is the Bodhidharma's Day. We will have-we have special ceremony this evening, and tomorrow also we will have special ceremony for him. As you know, he is the twenty-eighth patriarch from Buddha, [not] counting Buddha as the first, and he is twenty-eighth patriarch. I should like to introduce how he became a successor of Hannyatara, [1] the twenty-seventh patriarch, and then I want you [to] ask some questions. I will briefly introduce you [3-8 words unclear] twenty-eighth patriarch.

Hannyatara-sonja, [2] the twenty-seventh patriarch, asked Bodhidharma, "There are many things." [3] "Things" here means various things we see: stones, or mountains, or rivers, or ocean-everything we see and everything we think about. It include our various ideas we have. Those are "things."

"And what will be the thing which has no form-formless being-what will be the formless one?" Bodhidharma said, Fuki muso. [4] Fuki muso is rather difficult to [explain]-I must explain about it. But it is a kind of technical term. Fuki muso. Fuki is no-, non-arising. Muso is formless.

So it means that before things happen, you know, how it-no one knows how things happen, and how we started to think about things, no one knows. Before nothing arise, that stage is fuki muso. That was his [Bodhidharma's] answer. [Puts away paper.]

But my interpretation is still enough. And-and twenty-seventh patriarch asked him, "What is then the most great thing?" The-and Bodhidharma asked [answered], "The dharma nature is the most great thing." That is question and answer between twenty-seventh patriarch and Bodhidharma. It is rather difficult [laughs], to, maybe to understand. It is not something to talk about, actually, or to understand. But tentatively I have to give you some suggestion, you know. Even though I cannot explain it, as much as possible I have to explain.

Why is it necessary, you know, to-to have this kind of understanding of the situation where nothing happens here-nothing happens? It is almost, maybe impossible to, you know, think about. We don't know when this earth even, this earth started, actually, when the sun started or the various stars started. No one knows exactly when, but there must be-there are various scientists who knows various things, but that is not



correct. No one knows correctly what-how this earth happens, how everything happens. But before it happens, things happen.

But it is possible, you know, for us to think about the stage [?], even though we don't know exactly how, but there must be some way things happen, and if so, there must be some stage [?] where nothing happens.

We Oriental people, you know, start to think about things, one big, you know, one big thing before everything happens. It is, in other word, one. We, you know, our understanding is based on the idea of one-one which is, you know, something. It is something. Our thinking mind start based on idea of some [?]. And your, you know, thinking mind start with many-the relation of many experiences and many forms, and accumulation of those many things is some big being like universe.

But our [Buddhist] way of thinking is opposite. We start from nothing-nothingness or emptiness or one. One will be from which things happen. For you, everything is some concrete entity existing, but for us, everything is at least a part of one big being. The difference is [that] for us nothing is existent. It is just a part of big being. That is Buddhist understanding of things. Do you understand the difference? We infer various idea from one, and you-you accumulate various experiences and scientific fact, and, you know, [you] try to understand one big being-what is, you know, this universe? That is what you call it [?].

And-so Bodhidharma here-Bodhidharma's answer is pointing at that one being which is origin of various existence. And this is also some big, great, great being. You cannot compare that great, great being to anything else. That great being include everything, and it is origin of everything. Everything start from that big being-comes out from the great being. So nothing is greater than that. That is the Bodhidharma's answer.

And actually, you know, how we have-we are able to have the approach to it-it doesn't make sense, you know, even though I talk about [it] this way, you know, it doesn't make any sense to you and to me too [laughs]. As long as we are interested in each existence which we can see-usually we stick to the things we see. So as long as our main interest is something you can see, you know, it doesn't make much sense, you know, to talk about something which you cannot understand or which you cannot see. If you stick-if I say how-how this universe started or how is it possible to make universe-even it is not universe-if I explain how human being can be buddha [laughs], then, an aggregate [?] up [of] many element, then you will be interested [in] what I'm talking about.

But we talk about something which you cannot experience, or which you cannot think about, doesn't, you know, make much sense for us. But here we have [1-2 words] in our understanding about things. And that is

why we practice zazen: to have direct approach to this reality duality which is beyond our thinking. And when you are-when you experience, or when you have approach to this great being, that is enlightenment. And-and then, actually, every existence makes sense, even though it is not constant. It is not, you know-everything do not have any constant form or color. Itself it makes sense.

If each being comes first, then naturally you will stick to it, and the thing you see is each independent being. So, it is difficult to understand the relationship between one thing to the other. But if we understand each being is related being, or part of big being, then it is easier to understand the relationship between things-each existence, and easier to accept the teaching of non-duality and teaching of everything is changing.

Everything is a part of big being, you know, and that big being is not dead. It is always by itself automatically, you know, changing or going or moving. So we are a part of it. So if big being is always changing and moving, then we should, you know, we should move or change in the realm of big being. So it is easier to accept how we, you know, the way how we exist. It is easier to accept things-as-it-is. If you understand, you know, each being is independent, then it is very difficult to understand why, you know, we must have good relationship with each other. If possible, you know, you want to be independent. If possible, you want to cut off various relationship from [with] another being. That is quite natural tendency.

The understanding of each being [as] a part of big being, and understanding of each being goes first. But accumulation of various being in the great being is the two ways of, you know, thinking mind. Thinking mind goes two ways. It is possible to think both way. Mostly, you know, Oriental people think-think [1 word] way you think. For-for us, you know, it is-this is completely different, you know, and I started to talk about something about our practice now. Right now, I explained the way of thinking mind goes.

Your way of thinking is little bit, you know, inadequate to accept Buddhist way of thinking, actually. And to understand why you practice zazen, it is rather inadequate. And even though we will put emphasis on something, you know, some big being which goes first. Even so, it is inadequate to understand why we must practice zazen. It makes sense-zazen makes sense [laughs], but, you know, you-you will understand why we should have group practice, or why we should have good relationship between teacher and disciple, and why it is necessary to have [dharma] transmission. It is easier to understand, but not complete because it is, again, a kind of, you know, way of thinking. The nature of thinking mind is to limit the reality and to understand-to make reality easier to understand. That is the nature of thinking mind.

So what we think about is not real; it is a shadow of reality. So how we

catch the shadow is, you know, through zazen practice. In other word, when we do not depend on thinking mind, then we will have real understanding of-about things, about yourself, and about things around you. That is zazen practice.

So, when we talk about Buddhism, there is two ways of, you know, two ways: One is-maybe three ways-it is by thinking mind, first of all. The next thing is to talk about something, you know, goes before our thinking mind happen. And the third one is to talk about our practice: How it is possible to have approach to the right-the three ways? And we put best emphasis on practice rather than thinking mind. We can understand in that way, briefly. This is outline of, you know-this is how you-how you have-how you can-everything [?] have approach to the reality.

To some other religion, reality can be a god or deity, but for us, you know, we have no special deity to worship, or no idea of god-independent god which controls every being. Each being-each being or-[SR rejects "being" for "reality."] Reality is how things exist. How things are going is understanding of the god for us.

What is god? Maybe it's you. If I ask you what is god, maybe, if you are Buddhist and because you are-you are not Oriental thinker, maybe everything is god-accumulation of everything: If you add up everything, that is god. You may answer in that way, you know. If you-if I ask some Chinese or Indian or Japanese, they may say, god is something which exist before each being exist. That is god, they may say. But if you ask really, you know, what is god, [they may answer], "You yourself is god-god."

But only when you practice zazen, you are god. And when you extend your understanding of you to everyday life, you are god. You may understand-and you may answer in that way. So we put great emphasis on the practice, because thinking mind does not make much sense.

Mmm. Okay, you know, I will stop [laughs]. To talk about [laughs] this kind of, you know-even though I talk about [it] over and over, it may be same thing. If you have tape, you can hear it again [laughs, laughter]. It is same thing, you know. And so that is why I want you to ask me questions. Then, you know, it may be easier to understand what I mean. Hai.

Student A: Is the world of the mind ... then I also hear you saying ... [1-2 sentences.] ... there's an actuality of the potential? [2-3 words] one is not differentiated.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. No. Uh-huh.

Student A: -then there are many [1-2 words] that its manifestation.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Manifestation, yeah. You-you-yeah. Manifestation of one big [1 word], you know.

Student A: Does it matter that one is on-on the [1 word] of the [1 word]?

Suzuki-roshi: One of-? "One of," we say, but actually it is one, you know. We-it looks like many-looks like many, actually, but it is one. They are one.

Student A: But does the memory at any given moment a-a totally-are they equal to the one? Isn't there more to the true potential than the one that is not manifest?

Suzuki-roshi: More potential-?

Student A: -at any given moment.

Suzuki-roshi: At any given moment-at some moment, you know, one-me, you know, has big potential, you know, because I-it is not possible to separate me from many being, you know-rest of the being.

Student A: What about those that aren't manifest?

Suzuki-roshi: It include which was manifested and which is-which will be manifested.

Student A: All of them.

Suzuki-roshi: All of them. One include, you know, things this way and this way [may be gesturing]-time span and space span. One include everything. That is right understanding. In that way we exist-each being exist. So it is not accumulation of many things.

You know, if you pick up something, this include everything. Before, you know-I don't know, there is no limit, you know, you cannot figure out how big it is. It looks like small. It looks like a cat. "Only a cat," you may say [laughs], but actually it include many things which exist in this moment and which existed before and which will exist in future.

That is true, isn't it?

So thinking mind goes, when, you know, you have no trouble in your thinking mind, it goes sssht!-in one moment from various directions. You may have heard Dogen-zenji [say] "thinking about non-thinking" and [3-6 words] [laughs]. If you, you know-if there is no trouble to understand in that way, your thinking mind goes to Buddha directly-ssst!-in one moment, when you say so, and it include, you know, Buddha and even before Buddha.

If you think, you know, many times, then, you know, each time you think will include everything. So times goes-usually we think time-time go this way, from past to future, but it is not so. From present to past. You are center of, you know, time and space. So time goes this way and that way. That is real, you know. You are real. If you cannot think in that way, why is because you stick to some-some idea of time and space which actually doesn't exist. It is convenient, you know-for convenience sake we say "time and space," but it is just idea and just, you know, way of thinking which doesn't exist. But it will help you understand it, you know, that's all. Then you shouldn't stick to the idea of time and space. That is enlightened mind. Okay?

Student B: How would you define "memory"? I don't understand that.

Suzuki-roshi: Memory-when you think about it, that is "memory," you know. So you include the memory. Memory-you think memory is something which existed long long time ago. So if you-if you have-if you stick to the idea of time, you know, what you will have in your mind about past is something which doesn't exist, but something you can keep it in memory. That is memory, isn't it?

Student B: [1-2 sentences intermittently unclear.] What about ...'s memory? The memory of a ... seems to be confused ... ?

Suzuki-roshi: That is-that is, you know, Buddhist [2-3 words]. That is not true, you know, quality said heresy of thinking mind. There is no [1-2 words].

Student B: [1-2 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: What?

Student B: [1-2 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Again, that is, you know, not Buddhist way of thinking. We have no soul, you know [laughs]. Your-our body, according to you-your science, our body is accumulation of cells, but that-that doesn't exist, actually. Modern, you know, physicists may-may not accept that kind of idea of-it is a kind of opposite [?], not actual being. Tentatively you can call it cell, but no such thing exist. That is maybe difficult for you to accept.

Student B: That's what it seems [?] to say.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. Maybe so.

Student B: That's just a saying.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Nowadays that is what they say. More and more, you know, if you think more and more and more nothing [laughs]-just

nature, you know. That is hossho,[5] we say. That is the greatest being, and it is-ultimate [?] dharma-nature-dharma-nature which covers everything, which can be a nature of various phenomenal being.

Student B: [2-4 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student B: Then how does the experience [2-4 words] when you talk about how [2-4 words] practice.

Suzuki-roshi: The third one, third, not stream [?] but third way, you know-

Student B: Is this like-what I'm curious about is-is this what the Orientals call the Pure Land? Or is it something else?

Suzuki-roshi: Pure Land is-

Student B: -a phenomenon [?]-an interacting [?] phenomenon [?] and-

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. That is more like it, you know. That is so-called-it "Buddha-land." Buddha-land is big, you know, something, in which everything exist in harmony, you know, and we are a part of it, you know. We are ornament of the Buddha-land [laughs, laughter].

Student C: I was going to ask if the thought of it exists, what does exist?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? Nothing exist.

Student C: Nothing exists.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Nothing, you know-you think something exist, this exist, but not always in that way-changing moment after moment. That is dharma-nature, you know, which goes on and on and on. Hai.

Student D: Change exists.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: Change exists.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Change-something changes is-no, not "something"-but change exists, that's right [laughs]. I cannot do some things, you know-if I say so, it is already some emptiness which doesn't exist [laughs]. So it is-actually, you know, if we talk about [it] this way, this is very funny discussion. It doesn't exist at all [laughter].

Far better to invite some teachers [?] [laughs]. But if you make such a

question to him, he may give up [laughs]. Hai.

Student E: [Long question-all unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: No. No. [Laughs, laughter.] That is, you know, is the difference between-between Buddhist and non-Buddhist, you know. In case of no change, you know, there is no need to-to have practice or no need to, you know, think about or no need to make effort, you know. Whether you are [1-2 words] or late [laughs], it doesn't matter. You may say, you can say so, but actually our practice-this, you know-our practice start from that point-actual problem we have. When we talk about it, there is no problem, but when ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

Why we have-no one give you any problem, but still we have problem because we cannot accept the reality as it-as it is. We don't know why, so our-something, some delusion-that is, we say, because of ignorance. Bec- [partial word]-if we know the reality as-it-is, no problem, as we said. But we cannot accept the reality as-it-is, unfortunately. But, you know, that we cannot accept as-it-is, is important. Because of it, human being exist, you know. Because human being doesn't care anything about ourselves, human being will not exist. Because of our delusion, you know, deluded mind or attachment, our ignorance will exist in that way. So "ignorance," we say, but it is again because we think-we discuss something in some light, in some special standpoint [?]. So ignorance it is-so actually ignorance itself is a part of buddha-nature. So if we [are], you know, enlightened of ignorance we are buddha. If we are not enlightened of ignorance, we are ignorant. [2-4 words, possibly in Japanese.]

Student E: Whenever you make it to enlightenment, [do] you still exist as human beings?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student E: If you're enlightened, do you physically exist as a human being?

Suzuki-roshi: If you-?

Student E: -exist as a human being?

Suzuki-roshi: If you enlightened, you will exist as a human being in one way; on the other hand, you will exist as a [1-2 words] of many being. Same thing, you know. We are, you know-we-each being has same value, in one way, but each one has different function and different form, you know, way it goes. But even though each being is different, but it is same-same being, you know. So ignorance and enlightened mind-if you [are] enlightened of ignorance, you are enlightened. If you are ignorant about enlightenment, you are ignorant.

So if you really understand how we exist, it include, you know, morality, our practice, our many, you know, human culture. It include not as a special culture only, but also, understanding of our being [?] as one of the beings of many beings. That is right understanding of real human being; but if your understanding is limited-limited understanding or human-centered understanding, or if you are-if our human culture is human-centered culture only, it doesn't make sense. We will be human culture more and more separated from the nature. That is what is happening to us now because we are-our way of thinking, our culture is too much human-centered culture. Our unders- [partial word]-our mind doesn't go beyond, you know, human culture.

Student F: Roshi, reincarnation is [3-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Incarnation?

Student F: Reincarnation. What do Buddhists believe?

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that is-it has been Buddhist belief, and no one can deny it, you know. It is difficult to say it doesn't exist. It is very difficult to say. [To say,] "It does exist" is easy [laughs], but we cannot-if you want to deny something,[6] it is very difficult, you know [laughs]. It is easy to say, "I am not enlightened." This is easy. But it is very difficult to say, "I have no easy [?] desires"-I have no such easy desire as you have. Can you [laughs] clearly declare in that way, you know?

Maybe, you know, your idea-the thought of reincarnation-someone may say it is-it is superstition. It is easy-it is not so easy to say that is superstition. You have to prove, you know, everything from every angle if you want to say that is-reincarnation does not exist. It is almost impossible to deny something, some idea which you have. So maybe we shouldn't [laughs]. It is better not [to].

And actually, some of you may say that is superstition. Some of you may say so, but he himself, you know, what exactly what he does, actually, is based on that kind of idea-idea of reincarnation. That is how he is-how human nature is going. I may die tomorrow, you know, but I-until I die, I think I will live tomorrow too. When I go to bed I think I am quite sure [laughs] that I can get up tomorrow at five o'clock. I am quite sure. But we cannot be so sure [laughs]. You see, we-I believe in my future life always. That is actually what we are doing. So it is more than belief, you know. [It is] actual life we have. Okay?

Student G: [Most of question unclear: 4-6 sentences.] Roshi, when you say that women ... say that ... I consider it in some way that it's like ... and I can't help but hear that you are not ....

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, but that is-[laughs, laughter]. [Unclear brief exchange among SR and students who are apparently reacting to the



question.] Is that democratic [?]. Are you proud of that understanding [laughs]? Are you very proud of your understanding of us [?]. You know, you must be very sorry that you cannot understand in that way [laughs]. That is a very important point, which you miss-always missing, that point is always missing in our practice. You know, very important, but I have to ignore big, you know, hole you have in your-in your practice. You know, it is too much to say so.

It-it is, you know-our practice is-if we put the emphasis on that point [laughs], you-you will not stay here, I am quite sure. More and more, you know, as you understand the Buddhist teaching, our philosophy, more and more you will pay more attention, and, you know, less think [?]. You think you are something [1-2 words], but something is bound to-bound to [1-2 words] our thinking. That is human-centered way of life. That is very important point, you know.

Student G: [Partially unclear.] I think I've heard .... But as a ... female I ignore it because it's too much. I think, you know, that takes care of itself. I'll ... I think ... But it means I start to-to feel that [1-3 words] I just get upset. ...

Suzuki-roshi: Upset-

Student G: -it just can't mean anything [2-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Upset-you shouldn't be upset [laughs]. You should-should-you should enjoy instead of being upset. So you should do it step by step, a little by little. That is how you will [1-2 words: "treat it"?], you know, even though you feel you take care of it so that I than live [to] one hundred and fifty. "I am not so happy" [laughs]. If you take care of [1-2 words] or take care of migraine [?] or something else. I feel much happier if you, first of all, if you take care of yourself, you know. That is how you actually think [?]. That is Buddhist practice. I don't want to, you know, explain too much [laughs] or [1-2 words], you know. You understand? That is the main point: how to be Buddha.

Student H: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student H: Is there an ideal that you are aware of-is there any definition of masculinity and femininity [3-6 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Similarity?

Student H: Yeah. What's the ideal? [3-6 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: From-where it from? Where does it come from, you mean?

Student H: -in the Oriental mind.

Suzuki-roshi: Oriental mind.

Student H: -would there be any ideal of masculinity or femininity in [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Oriental-Oriental culture is very much, as you say, it looks like, you know. Hmm? [Responding to something said by a student.] [Laughs, laughter.] There are many reasons, you know. It is-there is, maybe-there are many reasons. One I can point to or more, but, maybe two-important point is-Buddhism or Indian thought is based on religious life of people who entered religious life after finishing their household life. Okay? That is one [1 word]. And in Mahayana Buddhism we put more emphasis on how to help people-how to help people. It is easier for-for-for us to help others when you are single. In Mahayana school, to help others goes first, and to help thems- [partial word]-ourselves is next-especially [for a] Mahayana priest.

Those two reasons I can, you know, give to you, I can count. And there are many something like-must be some like, you know, background which exist wherever you go-still exist-some discrimination man and woman-about man and woman, or some discrimination about sexual activity, you know. There are many reasons for it.

But there is no reason why we should [1-3 words] a man from-a woman from man or [4-6 words]. You know, that is, you know-when we-when we talk about the teaching from the reality, no discrimination, but when we talk about our practice, you know, there is some difference. It is actually easier for a man-for a single man to practice our way. It is easier, you know. And it is much harder for couple to practice our way. That's all. We-we have, you know, more special rules. Hai.

Student I: On that same talk [?], you talk of change, and you-everywhere changes always. And everything changes. But some things don't change because man can [8-12 words] everything else that changes.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that-"everything changes" is a kind of, you know, law. That is why Buddha is called, you know, the teacher of the teacher. He is teacher of everything-demon [?], even, you know. Even though you go to heaven, things [are] changing.

Student I: I want to avoid the [1-2 words] I'm thinking of change and everything is still changing. And the way that I hear you is that there is change and there is everything else but change. But change does not change.

Suzuki-roshi: Change does not change, you know. No, it doesn't [laughs]. It is-it is not possible to deny the teaching [of] things changing. This is not possible.

Student I: Everything changes but change.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Everything change but change-change. Yeah. Yeah. That is very much so, and that is very important point. That is why we call dharma-nature, you know, nature. We don't say "dharma." If we say dharma it looks like something which does not change exists, you know. So we say dharma-nature-because it is nature it goes, it is nature's thing. Hai. Hai.

Student J: [Question unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: I think you understand. You are not [1-2 words], but nowadays [4-8 words]. You know, if you think so, you will have big trouble. You will be confused, you know. You cannot be honest with yourself. If you have children, you must face it. Or someone must face it. Your country at least must face it. Then we should pay tax [laughs, laughter]. And if you let other people, you know, raise your children, you don't feel good. Do you feel good? If you feel good, that is, you know, okay, but I don't think [3-6 words] Next time someone [4-7 words]. Anyway, to have children and to have family is one step to the problem [laughs, laughter]. You will have to know that, you know. Without, you know, being prepared for that, you know, if you get married that is big mistake. Hai.

Student K: Where there's a single person [1-2 words] freedom that a single person might practice. Maybe they go to a monastery and accept limitations-a very restricted situation. Why couldn't the couples use the limited situation of their family life that restricts them in certain ways-use that as a situation for practice? They [1-2 words] not use it in a monastic limitation.

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughing as the latter part of the question is asked.] You know, it looks like possible, you know-it looks like possible, [but] actually [it is] very difficult. Well, that is actually what we are trying, isn't it? And we are doing pretty well, I think, even though we have, you know, problem. And still I think we need some single monk, you know, single monk or nun here, you know. And it-that is not so easy for single person or a married couple here. But if you understand our life, if you are mature enough, maybe it is possible. More and more, even though you are young, you are pretty mature.

So I-I hope you can manage it, you know. I hope, but still I see many difficulties. But it is good to have difficulties, you know, and if you don't have any difficulties, it is not fair [laughs] when everyone in the world having difficulties. To, you know, to exist without difficulties is not fair. You don't feel so good, you know. So I think we are doing pretty well, and I agree [with] what you say.

Student K: [1-2 words] most of our monks are married, and maybe it is

a stabilizing factor in their lives. [2-4 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Yeah. I think so. Normally it is so. But, you know, still when you become very idealistic, you know-some of us are very idealistic, so idealistics should stick to single life [laughter] because they feel good. So you shouldn't compare, you know, single life to married life, and we shouldn't say which is better or, you know-that is something which-which we shouldn't discuss so much. We should-if we-if we have good understanding, then we can live together-married couple and single together. Married monk and monk together.

Student L (David Chadwick): Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

David: I don't think that single men and women can exist any more themselves [6-8 words].

Suzuki-roshi: [1-2 words] imperfect?

David: How do think single men and single women live together and stay single?

Suzuki-roshi: With? With what?

David: How do single men and single women live together and be single men and single women? What-what magic do you have? [SR laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Give me one more kalpa [3-4 words]. I will tell you my magic. Many people still doing, you know, and many people, you know, have been doing, you know, have been doing pretty well. There must be some magic. And magic is [2 words] zazen practice. If you sit hard enough, you know, you can be single. Zazen practice is a kind of magic. That is true. I am not single, so I can-I cannot prove it. But many teachers have proved how to remain single, how to be authentic monk-Buddhist monk. The magic is zazen practice, that's all. If you say so, there is no magic. You have, you know, when your foundation or when your foundation of life is based on individualism, you know, that is not possible. When we-you believe in the oneness of man and woman, and non-duality, then that is possible. And how to actualize non-duality in our physical life is zazen practice. So, you know, zazen practice is something more than you think about. Hai.

Student M: [3-4 words] that when you say something that I don't fully [?] expect-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student M: When you say something that I don't expect you to say, I

can't believe that you don't exist when you say that you don't exist for me. I think, well, am I making you up? And then how can you say something that I don't expect? It's-what [2-4 words]. I don't understand who is talking when you are talking, and I don't really understand who is listening when I'm listening.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is true. That must be so. You know, it is not you or me who is talking, and actually we are not talking about anything [laughs, laughter]. That is very true. So, you know, we say Buddha didn't say anything for nine-forty-nine years he didn't say anything, or we say "tongueless speech," you know. He has no tongue. It looks like he is talking about something.

That is very good, you know-it was big koan for well-trained Zen master. Me or you is not qualified enough not to talk about this kind of, you know, koan because this kind of koan could be discussed when we have no attachment [to] what I say or what you listen to. It is actually, you know, same thing. Mountain speak, river speak, insect speak, you know, Buddha's teaching. Whatever you see, that is Buddha's teaching. Right understanding of it is not to have special, you know, eyes or ears to see, but it means just to listen to it, you know. That which exist is not mountain or not-not you, but, you know, something which result between you two. A sound-not insect or not you, but sound. That is more true, you see? So actually I'm talking about [that] which you can understand, you know. I am not fooling about-fooling around either. I am talking about some ultimate truth which I can accept and which you can accept, that's all. Nothing special. But you feel I am talking about something special because your way of thinking is very special, that's all.

Oh. [Probably sees how late the hour is.]

-----

Source: City Center transcripttranscribed by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by and made verbatim by Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Japanese for Prajñadhara (Prajñatara), "Pearl of Wisdom," the 27th Indian Patriarch.

[2] -sonja: An honorific title for Hannyatara, roughly corresponding to the Japanese -daiocho or -soshi (the latter used for Bodhidharma).

[3] Suzuki-roshi is translating the traditional transmission exchange between Prajñadhara and Bodhidharma: "The Buddhist master Prajnatara asked Bodhidharma, 'What among things is formless?' Bodhidharma said, 'Nonorigination is formless.' Prajnatara asked, 'What

among things is greatest?' Bodhidharma said, 'The nature of reality is greatest.'" (Transmission of Light, Keizan Jokin's Denko-roku, translated by Thomas Cleary, San Francisco, North Point Press, 1990, p. 118.)

[4] fuki muso: fu ("no"); ki ("away") [?]; mu ("no"); so ("form").

[5] Hossho: The real nature of the phenomenal world; the original state of phenomena.

[6] Perhaps "to prove a negative."

## **5 - Bodhidharma**

Thursday, August 05, 1971

Bodhidharma  
Zen Mountain Center

If you want to practice in its true sense so that you may not regret what you have been doing, it is necessary for you to have good confidence in your practice. This is very important, or else it is not possible for [you to] practice true way. There may be many great teachers in various countries, but even though there are great teachers, if your way-seeking mind is not strong enough you cannot study. Even though you meet him, you don't know who he is.

Tonight I want to introduce the story between Bodhidharma and Butei in China.[1] Bodhidharma went to-arrived at China [in] 520, according to traditional record, and he lived with the King of the Liang. And he-the king, who was a great supporter of Buddhism, he built many temples, and he studied himself-by himself-you know, he studied Buddhism and a great teacher-daishi.[2]

He himself was already good scholar, and at the same time a great scholar-supporter of the Buddhism. As soon as Bodhidharma arrived at China he visited the king. And this is a very famous story, as you may know.

The king asked him, "What is Buddhism? What is Buddhism?" Bodhidharma's answer was [6-8 words unclear][3] is like a clear sky. And "there is no sage"-it means that also "no sage or no common people." That was his answer. And so Butei asked him again: "You say there is no sage or no common people, then who is you-who is sitting on front of you-who is you?" he asked, you know, and his answer was, "I don't know." [Laughs.] That was Bodhidharma's answer. This is very famous question and answer between Bodhidharma and the king.

Last night I told you something about usual understanding of our life and Buddhist understanding of life and Oriental, you know, way of thinking in comparison to your way of thinking. The difference- Although the king knew Buddhism very well, but his understanding, his way of

thinking, his way of supporting Buddhism was something like, you know, materialistic. He supported many, you know, priests, and he himself studied Buddhism and built a temple and set up-helped setting up various ceremonies too. And in Japan and in China, still we are observing the ceremony he set up-he, you know, helped setting up the way of observing ceremonies.

So apparently he is a great supporter of Buddhism, but the way he support is, you know, in one word, materialistic, which is, you know, based on accumulating the merit, accumulating, you know, visual materialistic practice and observation of ceremonies, and more intellectual understanding of Buddhism, or philosophical understanding of Buddhism. That was his way.

So, in short, many goes first, you know, accumulation of many goes first, while Bodhidharma's way is-start from nothing, start from one, you know. "One is everything. Everything is one." That is what we always say. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. But for-for us, emptiness comes first. Or one comes first, and many comes next. One and many.

The king's way was-the king's way is, "Many comes first." Many is more materialistic, more substantial. Many, you know. And accumulation of many will eventually become great-that is more or less his way. And so to his, you know-and knowing Bodhidharma's way-(ah-excuse me) [may have dropped mike]-the king's way, Bodhidharma said "no merit" [laughs]. No sage or no common people because this-because he must-they must have talked more about it, according to the record. He told him-told Bodhidharma about what he did and what will be the merit of building temples or helping students or teachers-what will be the merit? Bodhidharma says no merit [laughs]-no merit comes first, while king's way is many comes first. In short, emptiness comes first. One big great empty being comes first. It's opposite.

But if you understand-if the king understand what Bodhidharma says, then his, you know, merit will make sense. But he couldn't understand what he says. No merit or no sage or no common people. If the king understand, you know-

Why it is so important for us to understand what Bodhidharma said is a growing [?] of your practice is in the realm of duality or accumulation of many merit. Like "I have [2-4 words] for three years, four years, ten years," you know. "How many years" comes first. It doesn't make sense. And you will be regret[ful] later. "I have been practicing zazen so many years," [laughs] "but, you know, nothing happen." That will be, you know, how you feel after accumulating your practice-its merit of practice. And actually, it is just, you know, from great [?] Buddhist viewpoint, it is just, you know, a speck of dust. Even though you say, "[For my] whole life I have been practicing zazen." But whole life just a speck of, you know, just one moment.

So when you are-maybe when you become old or when you are dying, you know, you are one-your one life [?]-you are sixty or seventy or one hundred years of life is just one moment. So accumulation of many doesn't make sense.

When everyday practice- Only when everyday practice makes sense, you are-you will not regret of your practice later. This is very important point. Why it is so is-it is-it may-may be, even though I say so, you may think it may be difficult for you to accept it. But anyway, I have to explain it. If every day of your many days' practice is directly related to the somethingness or emptiness which exist forever, then everyday practice makes sense.

I'm not talking about something very unusual. I know some of our students [are] practicing very hard, sacrificing without doing something he should do [?]. He will stay here, you know, without helping his mother or his father because he think it is necessary for him to stay here and practice our way. So naturally his practice will be very sincere. But if his practice is based on the idea of accumulation of many [1 word] practice or accumulation of merit-it doesn't make sense.

And some of you may think "I want to practice, true practice. And I ... want to see some great teacher and practice with him," but, you know, it is difficult for you to know who is a great teacher and who is not, unless you have eyes to see or eyes to tell who is great and who is not. Maybe you feel "I know if I see him-I may know who is great and who is not," [laughs] but I wonder.

Why do I wonder who is-because of his eyes, his way of thinking. His eyes is not clear enough. His way of understanding is not clear. For him, you know, if someone looks-looks like [laughs] a great teacher, you know, he is a great teacher. But if you have eyes to see, even-even a common, you know, teacher who doesn't know not much about Buddhism could be a great teacher. And actually there is that kind of really good teacher, but you cannot see them-how good they are.

So as long as you have arrogancy [?], it is impossible to have good practice and it is impossible to have a kind of life you will not regret later about what you have-what you have been doing.

Why do I give lecture every night like this is to help you to have, you know, good eyes and good understanding and good confidence in your eyes to say [see?] what is teacher, what is the-what is Buddhism. If Buddhism is something, you know, written up, you know, in a book like this [probably holds up a book], Buddhism is already waiting for you.

But actually it is not so. The most important point is to have good confidence in your eyes-dharma eyes. When you trust your eyes'

understanding of Buddhism, then that, you know, that will eventually



bring you good practice-good confidence in you-and you, more and more, your dharma eye will open. Dharma eyes is not something which someone will give you, you know. You should-you yourself should open your dharma eyes, you know. Actually, I am talking about how to open your dharma eyes, and how you can practice your way in its true sense wherever you go. That is, you know, what I am trying to [do].

I a- [partial word]-I [am] always telling you that intellectual understanding doesn't take so much-intellectual understanding of real and real [?] practice. The difference between them is very great, you know. Intellectual understanding cannot be actual, you know, enlightenment. But we can open, you know, our dharma eyes even though it is impossible to attain enlightenment by some other-some other [1 word]-you-unless you yourself attain enlightenment, no one can, you know-maybe [someone] can help you, but no one can give you real attainment.

So you yourself should attain enlightenment. But if you want to attain enlightenment, you will not have right practice, and you will not have right dharma eyes. That is why I am continuing this kind of lecture.

As it is-as Bodhidharma said, I think I must explain some more about his question-question and answer between Bodhidharma and the king. As I said, Bodhidharma-the king asked him, "What is the first principle?" Bodhidharma said, "In the realm of clear"-it doesn't say dharma world, but-"In realm of clear dharma world, there is no sage or no common people." That is Bodhidharma's answer. And the king asked him again, "Who is you in front of me?" And Bodhidharma said, "I don't know." And so-but the king couldn't understand what he meant by "no sage or no common people," or "I don't know who-who I am." He couldn't understand.

So Bodhidharma crossed the river-Yangtse River, and went to northern country. And he stayed [at] Shao-lin Mountain[4]-Suzan-Shao-lin Mountain in Suzan and practiced hard for nine years, facing to the wall [laughs]. That was the old story. The vast dharma world of no sage or no common people is the world of emptiness-the world of first principle. That is first principle. That is answer, you know, no sage, and no mountain, and no river. Nothing exist. All those things exist, but nothing exist. It is the actual, you know, reality of the world or-of dharma world.

It looks like the mountains and rivers and animals and human beings and everything-it looks like so, but actually-it looks like so, but nothing exist in its true sense because, as I explained intellectually, everything is changing.

Tentatively I exist here, but-they say, everything is changing. Six million [laughs]-six million-more than six million Buddhist scripture says. So six million and it is-nine million, or six million nine hundred and sixty-oh-ninety-six hundred thousand-oh, I don't know how to count [laughs]. I

am already lost [laughs, laughter]. And nine hundred eighty thousand [laughs] in one day can change so many times, scripture says. So if we change so many times in just in one day, you know, we cannot exist in the same way. We haven't exist in the same way.

But anyway, it looks like I am here. But in its strict sense, it is changing rapidly like a electric-electric light bulb, you know. In it, you know, electric current going back and forth like this. I don't know how many times, you know, it goes. It looks like one place, but it not so actually.

And same is true with us. So it looks like there is sage and there is common people, but in reality, nothing exist. But something is changing, we say, you know-changing to, you know, [2-3 words]. Change- Change exist, but nothing exist. If we can say is [1 word: "really"?] is not existent. That is what you said, you know.

[Bodhidharma said:] "It looks like I am here and you are there. You are king and I am a, you know, priest or monk or Zen master. But it is not actually so. You are very proud of your merit of building temples and, you know, observing various ceremonies and help be [?] instructed in zazen. It looks like so, but actually what-what did you do? No sage, no [1-2 words], or no priest. That was what he said.

It is-it is so, but that is not all. Even so, even if it so, as we discussed last night, even it is so, you know, if you-if you not-as long as you are here, if you do not get up for zazen, you don't feel good, [1 word: "knowing"?] there is no practice, or no Tassajara, or no monk [?]. Whatever you it is nothing but [1-2 words]. Even though you understand in that way, actually what you feel is different. How we can change our feeling from this kind of confusion-confused mind or suffering to joy of practice is the point.

So purpose of practice, actually, to change this kind of ignorance to the wisdom, or to-to be enlightened of those ignorance is our purpose of practice. Unless you reach Bodhidharma already [2-3 words]. So he [2-3 words]. But if I say so, you know, it is-I-I help [?] you. Crazy [laughs] crazy monk. I cannot say so. I cannot open such a big mouth [?]. I can explain it, but I myself do not feel in that way.

But I am very much encouraged about this kind of understand- [partial word]-way of thinking and way of practice that is-that is for us [?] and continuing this kind of practice. When you open this kind of dharma eyes, then wherever you go and you will see your teacher. You will have eyes to see your teacher. And even though you find a good teacher you will not, you know, stick to the teacher. You will not rely on your teacher completely. And you will continue your own practice by aid of the teacher. Then what you will find out through teacher-there is some possibility for you to find good teacher.

If you think there must be some good teacher somewhere [laughs], that

is-the idea of-already idea of existence which is not Buddhist way of thinking. No teacher-no true teacher exist as long as your dharma eyes is, you know, stick to the idea of existence.

And there is two heresy to misunderstand it. One is idea of non-existence, and the other is idea of existence. If you say "I exist," that is idea of existence. And if you say, "I don't exist, actually, because things are changing," that is also heresy. That is idea of non-existence. What is real understanding is the understanding which goes beyond existence and non-existence. That is real understanding.

So real understanding is, you know-if you ask what is real understanding, I may say existence-idea of existence. And sometime someone ask me again what is, you know, your-what is Buddhist idea of life? And I say "non-existence." [Laughs.] My emphasis is sometime existence and sometime non-existence. And there is no contradiction if you, you know, if you-even if you intellectualize, if you understand what is reality.

Idea of existence and idea of non-existence. Joken[5] and danken. [Next sentence essentially sung by Suzuki-roshi in Japanese.] Danjo no niken gyonen to shite shozu.[6] That is, you know, a way of our life. Danjo. We don't stick to idea of existence or idea of non-existence. Our mind is very clear. No cloud. Cloud is-idea of existence or non-existence is cloud. No cloud whatsoever. It is like a clear sky. That is Buddhist way of understanding. I already repeated this point over and over again-idea of contradiction. The reality is always, you know, in contradiction.

Maybe it is better to talk-to have question and answer so that you can fully participate in this kind of, you know, discussion. Hai.

Student A: You're left with ... whereas if you ... another ... in fact ... encouraging ... The practice is an inheritance. The difficult thing is what do you do with the form [?]. Or how do you the practice ...?

Suzuki-roshi: How you-how-yeah. Yes. How you use is you can-how I try to encourage you is, you know, to encourage you to have confidence in your practice, you know. Every night you come zazen you repeat some words [?]: Nanzo gikano gassho bozatsushite. Nakokono jinsho [all phonetic]-I am try [?], you know. "How can I give up my rakusu and [go] wandering about?" That is, you know, how I encourage you. It does not mean you should stay here, you know. But wherever you go, you must have full spirit in your practice, because if you cannot practice right now, here, there is no time for you to practice true way. If you think, "If I go somewhere else, then there will be some good teacher." That is already, "I'm afraid. I'm afraid." You are, you know-your thinking-way of thinking is idea-involved in idea of existence, which is not-which is one-sided view which is not true. Why good teacher is ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Will one's teacher appear when one is ready? Will this happen or must one seek a teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: Look for teacher? Excuse me, I-I am very-

Student B: When-when the student is ready to be taught, will the teacher appear, or must the student go and seek a teacher?

Suzuki-roshi: Student-

Student B: When the student is ready-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: -the teacher is-

Suzuki-roshi: I-I-I understand, you know. When, you know, you say "when student is ready." When-it means that when your practice is-you are-when you have-when you are ready, you-you can tell, you know, whether your teacher is, you know, right teacher or not because of your dharma eyes. If he, you know, is involved in one-sided view of existence or non-existence, he is not right teacher.

And another point is, you know, whether what he says and what he actually does, you know, to some extent, you know, it should be well-balanced. Not completely-it is impossible to have complete balance, you know, as we are human being. But to some extent, you know, there must be some balance. That is another point.

It is, you know, from dharma eyes-dharma eyes can tell whether his understanding is right or wrong, you know. And another point is whether his practice is really good or bad. You can't-I'm sorry to criticize. You can see, you know, easily can see what he says and what he does. If you-if you-there must be some balance-understandable balance.

So, you cannot tell by a book who you love [?], you know. You cannot tell by-by his speech. Or you cannot tell just by his zazen practice. The point is whether his zazen practice is extended in his everyday life. That is very important. So you, you know, your dharma eyes, you know, like-like-like your eyes to see which way to go, you know, which teacher you should teach cheese-choose.

And your practice, you know, understanding of practice is another, you know, something like your foot, you know. You should walk by your foot. So it is necessary to-to have two points: this and this [presumably points to two things]. Actual, you know, some actual cut [?]: not just

eyes or knowledge or intellectual understanding or philosophy. Even though he knows he has a big knowledge about Buddhism, he cannot be always good teacher for you. If you want to be the same kind of teacher, it is okay. But if you are-if you want to practice our way as a part of your life, then, you know, you cannot follow that kind of teacher. Okay? Hai.

Student C: ... thinking mind and ... if you don't know what to do and you don't feel that the behavior ... let you know, is it because you don't really know ... or is the viewing [being?] not necessarily the same as the knowing?

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Being [and] knowing should be same, but [it is] difficult, you know, to be same. Knowing is something different than doing [laughs]. I am sorry. [Laughter.] Yeah. That is very-very much so-very much so, but even though many people-many Buddhist teachers are like that, but there is no reason why you should follow their example [laughs]. You cannot criticize them, you know, as they are also-they have karmic life too, you know, because it is difficult to be free from its own karmic life, you know. It is difficult. So we cannot criticize.

But you should know that it is his karmic life and that is his practice and that is his understanding. That is [what it means to have] dharma eyes, you know. If you have that-that kind of eyes, you know, then your teacher, you know-your teacher cannot be-could be anyone. But you will-the point is you will receive little encouragement [laughs] if his [1 word: "style"?] of practice is not so strong, you know, he will, you know, he will not help you so much. But he is good teacher, even though he has, you know, not much, you know, encouragement for you. But if you, you know, if your situation of practicing Zen is very, you know, immediate, difficult situation, then that difficulty will help your practice-your-that difficulty will encourage your practice.

Difficulty exist when, you know, when you want to do-for an instance, Tozan-daishi[7] was one of the maybe greatest scholars in Chinese Buddhist history. He-he is-his mother was-his family-his parents was very-were very poor, and he was-he had-six [?] elder brothers. But he was not so good. So he-his mother couldn't depend on him so much, so it was he who could help his mother. But Tozan-for Tozan, Buddhism is everything, and who-and he had great confidence in study of-in practice of Buddha's way.

So eventually he became a great Zen master after all. And he became a master of Sozan.[8] So hearing about this, his mother, you know, wanted to visit him, but he was-she was so fevered and so old and so poor, and he-she became a-she became blind. She couldn't eat so much. Blind-she became a blind beggar, but before-she thought before she die, she must see her son who became a great Zen master already.

But Tozan-his students said your mother came. But Tozan said she

cannot enter. It's not- You should stay- She should stay out! [Laughs.] And, you know, you may think he is very vicious. But everyone thinks Tozan will be the most kind-kind-hearted man for his mother. He wrote many letters to her about Buddhism and how to practice Buddhism and how to help her [1 word] by practice of Buddhism. He may did [?] every way-every possible way to help his mother. There is no such Zen master to have-so kind Zen master for mother.

But he didn't see [1 word] and at last his mother died outside-outside the monastery. And so he told, you know, children to have funeral for her. And when he saw her, he found out little rice on her back, so he pulled out the rice and said, "This-this rice is less [of an] orphan, you know, than my mother."

So he took it for breakfast-he said so-[as] next morning's breakfast. He asked his student, you know, this is her last offering for us. Please accept it. What is big [?] is very simple. And way he helped her is very simple-write, just write letter. But he couldn't help his blind mother even. But everyone acknowledged that he will be the most kind-kindhearted Zen master we ever had in China or in Japan.

Student D: ... my theory that ... that relationship ... and the relationship ... they always have ... a part of the message. And it seems to me that whatever else she could do for them she already did.

Suzuki-roshi: What-what-what in that story-some of them are just story; some [laughs]-some of them is real stories-not stories [laughs]. And there is some meaning, you know, you know, each-

Student D: .... And it seems to me that-

Suzuki-roshi: It is not truthful. Again, you know, that is your way of thinking. Youthful [truthful?] or thinking mind does not solve this kind of, you know, problem-you know, problem in our heart. If your way-seeking mind-if you are confidence in your teaching is very strong, that will happen, I [1-3 words].

But that doesn't, you know, happen to everyone [laughs]. It didn't happen to me-only for, you know, one or two lay people. The mind will [1 word] our teaching. It shows us the depth of the teaching, that's all. He [Tozan?] cannot be your example, and there is no need for you to follow his example. I am not, you know, encouraging you to follow his example.

Student D: [2-4 words] why you [2-4 words] why do you [1-2 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: You don't understand the depth of wisdom [?] and real practice of Zen, that's all. And you will say "Why? Why? Why?" [Laughs.] That makes-doesn't make sense. And after you understand what is Buddhism, and after you practice very hard, you know, then that

kind of thing could you understand, you know, after a long long practice or great great teacher. I cannot understand, actually.

Student E: Why do you call it [1 word]?

Suzuki-roshi: Why do I-?

Student E: [Entire question unclear.] [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: [2 words.] That is your way. Most people are like that. So your practice, you know, easily like this. If it is necessary, if it-if it is good I listen to you, and if it is something which I cannot understand, it is-it is waste of time to listen to that kind of lecture. That kind of question is the most discouraging question for me, you know. Instead of being encouraged by Zen story, you, you know, you think it is not-[you say] "I cannot understand." Something you cannot understand is no good-no use. That is [1 word: "pragmatist"?]. That is the most materialistic attitude toward the truth. Do you understand? [3-4 words.]

So your way-even though your way of life looks like maybe [?] Buddhist life, but in its true sense, you have no backbone! How can you find yourself something which is different you don't take? You don't grow in that way. Your practice is not strong enough, and you do not have spine, you know. So wherever you go, even though you meet great teacher, it doesn't make sense to you. Great teacher has-all the good-great teacher has that kind of spine [?]. In one way, he is very gentle, but on the other hand he is very strict with [1 word]. And his backbone is always straight [laughs]. That is, you know, that is Buddhism. That is the difference between city [?] way and Zen way [laughs]. Don't you think so? Doesn't work. Only [1 word] way doesn't work. You will need, you know-I don't say you will [laughs], but-you will need some backbone.

Because Tozan had that kind of backbone, he could, you know, be a good example. He could support Zen Buddhism in China. We don't need such a great teacher-so many. But one is enough. If he really, you know, if he was really kindhearted person, on the other-on the other hand, which is-which has been devoted himself completely to the Buddha [?].

What he is saying is "nothing whatsoever [2 words]." He completed the teaching of mujo seppo.[9] Mujo seppo means [1-2 words: "welcome"?] teacher of mountain and river. It-many good teachers discuss about it, and think about it, practice about it. That was not enough. But he completed that practice. When he has no, you know, tainted mind. When his mind become very clear, even free from-even, you know, when his mind is like a mirror, without any doubt [?], then he can talk about-he can listen to the-[1-2 words] speech of mountain and river. We say, "Wherever you go if you see flower, that is the teaching." If you go to the mountain, that is teaching. That is not mujo seppo-teaching of

mountain and river. Only when your mind become like a mirror, you know. Everything reflect on the mirror is teaching. As long as your mind is self-centered mind: "This is good. This is bad. Human beings should be like this or like that." Then, you know, you cannot listen to the voice of nature.

It is possible, you know, to listen to the mountain or river. When your way of life is so selfish, so self-centered, so idle, that is big mistake for us. How long time it takes to accomplish-to listen to the teaching of mountain and river? There were disciple of the Sixth Patriarch named-excuse me-his name [1 word] Echu-Nanyo Echu.[10] He started to talk about the teaching of mountain and river-mujo seppo. And it took almost-more than hundred years before he-Tozan completed that study. Not many teachers can accomplish that kind of study.

But in America, how many people talking about teaching of nature? The meaning is completely different. But I am interested-interested in what you say, you know, because it makes some sense. But if you think this is Buddhist way-that leads to mistake [?]. If you think [thumps table with each of the next six words for emphasis] this is-should be-human way, then it means that all [thumps table for rest of sentence] the [2 words] way is human way. I cannot accept [?]. But how you feel is good [?]. And try to free from-try to be free from our framework of society is-makes sense. Maybe one step toward the real practice.

If you-if all the students in Tassajara stick to this idea and having Tassajara, you know, [thumps table five times] we have Zen Center here. If you say so, I couldn't stay here. If you do not say so, I am trying to listen, to welcome teachers and mountains and rivers at Tassajara. I can accept it [2-3 words]. But if you say [thumps for each word] I am hearing every day, I am [1-2 words], and nature helps you, and we are helping you-that is Buddhist way. If you say so, without [laughs] knowing what kind of effort you are making, I cannot accept it.

In human life we have enough difficulty. It is big mistake [to think?] if you can escape from our human difficulty unless we make big effort to establish real way-real non-human-centric culture. That is our duty. If you are really involved in this kind of big duty, your mother will be actually, you know, happy to have that-that kind of boy who is strong enough and good enough to support all the human being. And without this kind of confidence, you cannot understand what is Buddhism. If you understand something which is good only, avoiding which is not difficult-which is difficult [corrects self], then , you know, you cannot enter from Tassajara gate, you know [laughs]-you will be [1-2 words] the gate we have [laughs]. But you cannot enter, even though you think you are-you are inside of the gate, but you are not. And so you are a little bit [laughs] angry [1 word] you.

But I am very happy to be angry with you [laughs]-to be able to be angry with you, because I feel some support from you. So I can, you



know, I am able to be angry with you. I think if I say this much, some of you will agree with me. And some of you will accept the real spirit of Buddhist. Do you understand how difficult thing it is to talk about-even to talk about Buddhism?

I know several student who are, you know, practicing hard. So as long as we have some students, I am happy to stay here. Okay? [Laughs.] Still, you know, you don't have to explain what is Buddhist to your friend in this way. "Buddhism is, you know, some teaching." Another example of Buddhist is to get [?] serious [?] guy out the monastery [laughs, laughter]. Maybe that is very bad example [laughs, laughter], but that kind of thing is possible to happen here [laughs]. Okay?

You have got much fever [?], you know. That much possibility in your practice. So you don't have to be always good or, you know, a good son. If you are really, you know, trying to be a good Buddhist, you don't have to be confined in the framework of usual society. You have big freedom [laughs]. Bigger is waiting for you. You will be-you will have very good. Don't cry, you know, even though teacher didn't understand you. "It's okay, come here," Buddha may say, you know. That is what-I think you have big, you know, advantage in your practice because of this.

When I was, you know, young, my master was very strong person [laughs]. So wherever, you know-as long as I am in [2 words] I could do anything I like, you know. I could say anything I want to say. Whatever they say, it was okay with me because strong master is there-was there. And if I do something wrong, my master will scold me, but not my neighbors. If I am wrong-"Tell my master what I did," I said. "My master will scold me if I am wrong. And tell my master exactly what I did." You see? Exact-exactly what I did. You don't have to protect him. If I am wrong, my master will scold me. I am quite sure about it.

So as long as I say something from bottom of my heart, it was authentic [?]. It was [2 words] because he is responsible for what I did-what I do. And if I am wrong, I should say "excuse me," you know. And I should say, "Excuse me" to-to him-to him. That's all.

So Zen master should be very strong in one hand [?]. Without this kind of spirit-truthful spirit to the truth or strong confidence in our mind-pure mind, we cannot practice [1 word: "here"?]. That is why you have big freedom, you know [laughs]. You should [1-2 words] to be a Zen monk. That is true. But we shouldn't mix up usual Zen [2-3 words] with true mark of master.

I wanted to have new [?] questions [4-6 words]. I continued thanks to ask good question [laughs]. I am very sorry [?]. But now is, you know, not much schedule [?] for us, so we give [get?] up.

Thank you very much.

-----  
Source: Original City Center tape. Verbatim transcript by Bill Redican (2/23/01). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Suzuki-roshi is referring to Case 1 in The Blue Cliff Records or Case 2 in The Book of Serenity:

Emperor Wu: "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?"

Bodhidharma: "Empty, without holiness."

Emperor Wu: "Who is facing me?"

Bodhidharma: "I don't know."

Butei: Chinese Bu + -tei, emperor. Also Emperor Wu or Liang Wudi (502-550). Butei founded the Liang (Ryo) Dynasty in southern China. One of the first Buddhist emperors, he built many temples, translated sutras, and lectured on Buddhism.

[2] daishi: Japanese dai, great; + shi, teacher or master. Hence, posthumous honorific title meaning "great master" or "great teacher."

[3] On Page 4, Suzuki-roshi said Bodhidharma's answer was: "In the realm of clear dharma world, there is no sage or no common people." So this unclear passage may be similar.

[4] Shao-lin Monastery was founded on Sung Mountain, Henan Province, in 477 by Emperor Hsiao-wen of the Northern Wei dynasty. Sung Mountain is the central peak of China's Five Peaks.

[5] jo (eternal); dan (stop); ken (style of looking at the world; view; philosophical school). Joken: the doctrine that the world is eternal. Danken: the doctrine that nothing survives death.

[6] danjo (danjo-niken: the two extreme views of joken and danken); no (as); ni (two); ken (views); gyonen (concentrate); to shite (become); shozu (appear). That is, "It is easy for us to formulate danken or joken, but it is difficult to keep to the middle way and avoid the two wrong views." Or "It is easy for danken and joken to appear as opposite extremes."

[7] Tozan Ryokai (Dongshan Liangjie), 807-869. The story of Tozan's mother can be found in Transmission of Light (Denko-roku), translated by Thomas Cleary, San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990, p. 165.

[8] Sozan Honjaku (Caoshan Benji), 840-901.

[9] mujo: insentient beings; seppo: to preach orally or by other means. "Mujo Seppo" is the 53rd fascicle of Dogen-zenji's Shobogenzo: "Insentient Beings Speak Dharma."

[10] Japanese name for Nanyang Huizhong (675?-775?), early Chinese Chan master and student of Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch. Also known as Chu-kokushi (Jap.).

## **6 - Communication**

Saturday, August 07, 1971

Communication  
Zen Mountain Center

I want to discuss with you about, you know, how you study Zen. Zen is actually, in short, maybe, communication-communication-communication between your friend, and communication between your teacher and disciple-

Can you hear me? Oh.

-communication between teacher and disciple, and communication between we human being and our surrounding-communication between man and nature. This is, in short, Zen. To have perfect communication-wherever you are-to have perfect communication and you and the outside world.

Communication-if we say "communication," it looks like there is subject and object, but true-if you understand real relationship between each existence, it is originally one, and tentatively we understand in two ways-two duality-dualistic way, so it is quite natural for us to have perfect communication between each being, and why it is difficult to communicate with each other is because our mind is always in duality.

That is why it is difficult to communicate. So perfect communication-there is actually nothing to say, even, and when there is nothing to say, that is zazen practice [laughs]. You don't have to say anything when you sit. And yet you have perfect communication with everything. So when you understand-if you want to study Zen, first of all you should know how to study Zen. How to study Zen is to-to be acquainted always, you know, to your surroundings, and that is how you have, for an instance, dokusan with your teacher. Perhaps when you come to dokusan you feel as if you want-you must have some question to ask [laughs], you know, but it is not necessary so. It is not always so. When you are very attentive, then even though you have no question to ask, if you enter the room and see your teacher, then-and you should be very

alert-alert enough to see what is the mood of the teacher today [laughs]. Is he happy or unhappy [laughs], you know, is-is-is he busy or not so busy, or is he ready to accept you or not? You should be very attentive. And that is how you practice Zen.

Actually, if you are a Zen student, then you should be very-or you should be always alert. How to be alert is-alert is, as much as possible to-to be attentive to your surrounding, without having personal preference, or without being involved in your own feeling. That is very important point.

If you come to Zen Center, maybe, I hope you feel as if you are, you know, students. We say "Zen student," and so you must be a kind of student, but you are students who study Zen. You are not students who are studying something, you know, mathematics or geology or science or physics. You-you are studying who are you, and who is your teacher, and what kind of relationship we have between us. And it is more like community, because we are always trying to understand with each other and trying to help each other. So how to help each other is how to-first of all you should understand your friend first. Unless you understand your friend, it is difficult to help. Even though you know your friend pretty well, as we are human beings, sometime you will [be] sun-faced Buddha. Your friend will be sun-faced Buddha. And sometime moon-faced Buddha [laughs]. Sometime he will be sick, and sometime he will be emotional.

So you should know how he is today [laughs]. You should say always, "How are you? How are you?" [Laughs.] It is not just greeting. It means-it is very important to know how is your friend, how is [1 word] your teacher. And if it-and you should understand exactly what your friend means and what your teacher means when he says something. That is pretty difficult. You cannot always take words-your teacher's words literally. When he says something-he does not say only to make you happy, you know. He may say sometime to make you unhappy. [Laughs.] It is true. Teacher may say according-knowing what kind of mood you are in-in what mood you are, and say something. And if he understand something very well, you know, he may say something-something to discourage your understanding [laughs]-to discourage your intellectual understanding. Because if your teacher says, "Oh, your understanding is very good," then you may stick to it. That is a flaw.

So to-not to stick to some understanding: Teacher may say that is not true-that is not always true. Although your understanding is-is right, but on the other hand you became arrogant because of your understanding. In this way, back and forth, your teacher will be taking care of you, so that you are-so that you can develop your practice in its true sense.

So student must be alert enough to understand that. If you take his words literally, you know, it is difficult for you to study with your teacher. There are-there are many koans, but those koans is, you know,

the story between teacher and disciple-communication between teacher and disciples. So if you-when you read it, just read it, you cannot understand at all, you know, maybe. Even [if] it is very simple story, it is pretty hard to understand.

When I was young-maybe I was fifteen or sixteen-I-I came back from memorial service of our member with my teacher and his-several of his disciple. It was already almost dark. Until you-until we go back to my temple, there were-there were not one mile but pretty long-we had to walk through the woods and through the trees, and it was a kind of slope. And at this time of the year there are poisonous snakes sometimes apt to appears. And waiting for us-not waiting for us, but they come out because it is too hot. They have to cool themselves and come out from the tree, and roadside they are waiting. It is rather dangerous sometime. When we came to the bad [?] tree-trees, my master said: "You guys are wearing tabi," [laughs] "so why don't you go first. I will follow you." [Laughter.]

So we-we-we thought we are pretty brave monks to go first, and moreover we are wearing tabi. So do what he say, we thought [laughs, laughter]. And we said "Hai!"-and leaving teacher behind, we went first, and we came home. And teacher, as soon as we sit down [said], "Oh, why don't you sit here-sit there? I have something to tell you." [Laughs, laughter.]

We realized something is happening [laughs] because he said-sit, he says, sit down, you know. When he says "sit down," something, you know, happens. We know that. So [laughs] what will it be? Anyway, we sat down. He said, "I know you-you boys are not so alert, but I didn't know you are so dull boys," he says, first of all. This is what-what he said. Still we couldn't understand, you know, why he is so angry. We did exactly what he told us: wearing tabi and came back. We walked fast [first?] and came back to the temple. That is what we did. He said, "When I am not wearing tabi, why did you wear tabi?" [Laughter.] That is something which we didn't, you know, notice. Our teacher didn't wear tabi.

Long long time ago he, you know, took off his tabi-tabi and put-put them in sleeve and walked, but we didn't notice them [laughs]. We carried a lot of goodies. We-we happily came back wearing tabi. It is very-I was-we were very-very much ashamed [laughs]. What we do? We couldn't-we didn't notice that he didn't, you know, wear tabi. Moreover, when he said, you know, go ahead, he didn't say, "I am not wearing tabi." He was very [laughs]-you know, I don't know how to say, but he didn't [1 word] us he didn't say, "I am [not] wearing tabi, but you are wearing tabi so go ahead." Then we must have noticed, you know, but because he didn't say anything about his own tabi, so we couldn't notice. We-we could have-we should have noticed that-at that time we should have noticed that he didn't wear tabi. This, you know, kind of communication is pretty important in practice of Zen. Zen is not

just intellectual understanding, you know.

To polish up our mind, to be alert enough to communicate with others always, you should be very-not careful, but you should be attentive always. Even though you are sleeping, you know [laughs], you should be attentive. That is Zen student's way. My teacher would talk about one good ino. He-he was-because they get up so early every morning, in daytime he-they became sleepy. So he-they, so they -when they start chanting, even when they are chanting, they [laughs] become drowsy. And that ino always-even though he was ino, he was sometimes sleepy. But when you should strike the bell, he wake up: gong [laughs]. You know, chin, chin, gong [laughs, laughter]. He-he doesn't miss. He never miss. That kind of alertness is something-not only-that is not only he knows very well but also a kind of alertness. There are many stories like that, even, you know, nowadays. I don't know nowadays, but when I was young, or when I was in monastery, there are many interesting stories something like that.

So we have no time to stick to our own problem. [Laughs.] It is so, because everyone is very alert. So we have no-not much time to stick to our own personal problem. In this way we will be-we will continue our practice. Here there is [2-4 words]. If you do not know what is Zen practice, it is maybe rather difficult to understand.

Hofuku-Hofuku[1] [was] the name of the-one of the students-a disciple of Seppo[2]-I think Seppo, yeah, disciple of Seppo-and Chokei[3] also, brother disciple of Seppo, went out. And Hofuku pointing out mountain and said, "This mountain is the famous mountain, Myoho." [4] Myoho mountain-Myoho is the famous mountain which appears in KegonSutra.

You know Zenzai-doji. [5] Zenzai-doji is the lay Buddhist who visited five-fifty-three masters in southern India, but even Zenzai-doji couldn't, you know, visit the Mount Myoho. So because of that, Mount-Mount Myoho is very famous mountain. The first [?] pointed at some mountain and said, "That is the," you know, "famous Mount Myoho," he said. And his brother, Chokei, said, "Well said, but it is pity-it is pity that you said so." That was the question and-and answer between them.

Actually, it is not Mount Myoho, but what pointed at [?] the mountain that is the Mount Myoho. And Chokei, his brother, said, "Well said-it was said [?]-but it was pity that you said so." That is the question and answer.

And in this kind of question and answer, you have no time to think about it. You should understand it immediately. The moment, you know, Hofuku said, "That is the Mount Myoho," then, you know, immediately his brother should understand what he means. Actually he understood immediately, "Yes, well said, but it is pity that you said so." [Laughs.] This kind of question and answer.

Usually, as this is koan, after thinking, you know, about this story over and over and over again, and find out the meaning of it, but you-that is not good enough. You should understand immediately.

When we read some Zen book, it is better to read just question and answer, whether you can understand it or not, whether you are alert enough to understand it or not. Maybe sometime, to stop your, you know, confusion-confused mind, it is good to think about Zen stories. That will give you some encouragement. But that is not good enough. Actually, before I give you lecture, I spend some time to read something short [?]: Shobogenzo, or Hekigan-roku,[6]or Shoyo-roku,[7] you know, to-to break something, to warm up my Zen mind [laughs]. So, when you want to listen to lecture, it is-if you just come and listen to the lecture, which, you know-that is enough.

But when I ask-ask you to give us-give you some question, you know, whatever the question may be, you should-you may think-sometime you may give me wrong question, sometime you may be scolded [laughs] because of it. But you should be ready [laughs] for that, you know. If it is wrong, you know, that is, you know, communication. If it is-even though it is wrong, I don't say it is good question, I don't say so. That is perfect communication. We should be-the question and answer should be very honest.

So it is quite okay to say-if you-if you cannot accept what I say-"I don't understand, I cannot accept it," you know. Then, sometime I shall be angry, like brother do, but that is okay. And to give wrong question, and to be angry about the students is a part of practice, you know. In that way, prac- [partial word]-real practice, you know, should go on and on and on.

There is many, you know, simple koan or Zen story like this. Since I give you a story, since you may not understand what-what does it mean, you know. Myoho-Myoho is supposed to be a mountain where Zenzai-Zenzai-doji couldn't visit, couldn't-couldn't climb up. Why was it not possible to climb up? Because that mountain is the mountain which covered-covered all the mountain in the world. Wherever you go, that is the Mount Myoho.

So before you climb up, before you visit that mountain, you are on the mountain. So if you try to find out where the mountain is [laughs], there is no wonder that you cannot find out where is the mountain. Actually, you know, in reality, each existence covers whole world, whole universe. So actually it is not possible to see, even though you think you saw it, but you-actually the mountain or river you saw is not the true mountain or true river. That is, you know, true mountain or river. So when Hofuku said, this-that is Mount Myoho, when he-he said so, it is so-actually it is so, but we should-Chokei should understand the other side of it. Although that is Mount Myoho, or that mountain-Mount Myoho can be any mountain, or can be a river. So what he said is right-because he

knows that when he say so, Hofuku didn't say-Hofuku didn't mean that is some special mountain. That mountain covers everything. Not just mountain. It-it is something more than that.

Because he understand what kind of truth is [1-2 words], you understanding what is the real-what is Mount Myoho. People say Mount Myoho, Zenzai-doji couldn't go to Mount Myoho. Maybe that is true, but on the other hand Mount Myoho could be any mountain, and that is actually-must be Mount Myoho. [1-2 words], that is what his brother meant. But when he says that it is pity that you said so-if you-if you do not say so, your understanding is perfect, but it is pity that you said so. Because you said so, someone may misunderstand you or think, "Oh"-someone may think that is Mount Myoho. If someone think that particular mountain is Mount Myoho, which you will find out in Kegon Sutra. That is his [1 word]. That kind of, you know, understanding-perfect understanding of the mountain is communicated between them.

Sometime when some disciple doesn't-is not-does not notice-do not have perfect understanding of reality, then maybe he will be scolded by his master. So it is necessary, of course, to have some understanding of reality. In- [partial word]-intellectually we have-we must have some understanding [of] what is reality. But even though you have understanding of it, if you-you are not alert enough, or you are not ready to experience that kind of perfect reality ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

You may-you may think, you know, Zen practice is, you know, a kind of training. Yes, it is training, but our training is very different from usual training. Your training, first of all, [is] based on zazen practice. That is one point. And your training should be-purpose of the training should be how to experience unselfish practice. That is another point. Whether your practice is selfish practice or unselfish practice will be pointed out by your teacher. Your teacher knows whether your practice is, you know, selfish one or right practice. Your teacher can easily tell.

And you should not stick to same old question or same old problem. The problem will help your practice when it arise, but if you stick to same old problem [laughs], you know, that-that will make your practice worse. It is necessary, when you feel you have to stick to same old problem, you should reflect on your practice: whether that practice is selfish practice or unselfish practice. If it is selfish practice, you know, you shouldn't stick to it. You should find out another topic to think about. You should choose right material, you know, to think about. And if you, you know, have to-or if you are always involved in same old problem, then you should ask someone's help, with humble-humble-humbleness of your mind-that is important-without thinking whether your understanding is right or wrong. That is another matter.

Even though your understanding of the problem or way of solving problem is right, if you have to stick to same old problem, then it is bad



enough. Even though you think your way of solving problem is right, but it is not-it is bad enough for Zen practice. As a Zen student, we must be ashamed of thinking same thing over and over. But you may think if you, you know, come to your teacher, your teacher will help you. Maybe so [laughs], but way he help you will not be same way, same old way. We-we don't help you same old way. Something positive, something negative: according to the situation he may take many different ways.

Sometime he may agree with you; sometime he may not agree with you. If-he may give you some suggestion how to solve the problem, not by words, but give you some measure [?] or medicine. That medicine sometime may be sweet and sometime may be bitter. But when it is bitter, what you may think: "Oh no, this medicine doesn't work [laughs], not for me. I need some-I need some sweet medicine-sweet water, not bitter water like this." And, you know, when you think in that way-your feeling, when you feel in that way, that is, you know, how your teacher help you. If you-if your teacher give you always sweet, you know, answer it doesn't help at all. You will be involved in same old problem again and again.

And if you always confront with your actual problem and work on it to improve your practice, then you will have power to help others. Because you treat your problem as your own problem, and to solve your-solve the problem as your own to feel better. So even though you have good chance to practice, to improve your practice, you cannot. This is very important point: How to, you know, solve-what kind of attitude-with-with what kind of attitude you solve the problem is very important. Actually it is not your problem-it should not be your problem, although it will give you chance to develop your practice.

Maybe-do you have some question? [Laughs, laughter.] If there is some in your brain? [Laughs, laughter.]

Student A: [10-15 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: To me that is good, you know [laughter], because, you know, you-you-you are-you wanted to come here, you [were] eager to come here, and your mind is, maybe, fully devoted to your practice here. So I think that is good. Fear-fear you say, that is not just fear, you know. You see? There is some-when you are very-your mind is very alert, you know. You feel that kind of feeling too. That is how you felt, how you felt, but there-you may feel some other way, you know. At that time you felt it. Sometime you will feel great joy instead of fear-some unusual feeling, you know, in your heart [?]. If you really want to do something, you know, you will feel a kind of excited. When your mind is excited something unusual will happen to you, but that is not bad. You-you-you shouldn't feel-you shouldn't have negative understanding about it. Okay. Hai. Oh, no? Question? Hai.

Student B: What part does emotion [1-2 words]-what part does it play

in [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Emotion-emotion. Emotion-emotional, you know, activity-or emotion-emotion will-if you-if you refine the emotion it is good, but if you take let-alone policy [laughs] for emotion, it is not so good. It needs some effort [?] to refine or to-I don't know. Emotion itself, you know, cannot be always acceptable, or they will train it. But that kind of element is necessary. It will, you know, push your practice.

For an instance, putting various problems aside, if you practice zazen, you know, still you will have-emotionally you will be involved in some particular problem even though you are sitting. But in that-in such case, the emotion you have-for an instance you have girlfriend, you know, and came to Tassajara and practicing zazen. The emotion you have about her will help your practice, will encourage your practice. And how you feel, maybe, "Since I came here saying-convincing myself that I have to practice zazen anyway. So I came here. If I don't practice zazen, you know, here, I am fooling-I am just making excuse for her." And you will feel very bad if you do not have good practice here. In that way your emotion-same emotion will-will result [in] some different effect on you. So to have problem is good. Without problem, it is very difficult to practice.

For an instance, here we have not much mosquito, you know. In Japan, while we are sitting, mosquito will bite us. But still we-we cannot move as long as we are sitting. Mosquito will help our practice a lot [laughs]. It is, of course, disturbance, but because of that disturbance we will have good strong practice [laughs]. That is pain, or a kind of an emotion. You may not like, you know [laughs], that kind of practice, but actually it helps.

So it is not emotion which is bad, but you-because you make it bad, emotion is bad. Because you are spoiled by it, emotion is bad. If you are not spoiled by it, emotion is good. Instead of being helped by-instead of receiving emotional help, trying to help others with-instead of helping yourself emotionally, you help others, you know, with same old emotion. But-emotion is same, but if you-if it is directed in right direction, it will help our practice.

So when our emotion follows buddha-nature it is good, and when our emotion spoil our practice or [are] against our practice it is bad. But emotion is not different. Emotion itself is same. That is how, you know, I feel about emotion, but emotion could be treated various-many-various way. As you are an American, you must have some other way of treating your emotion, I think. I don't force-I don't ask you to follow our way of treating emotion, but there is many ways of treating it. But usually people do not know how to treat our emotion. We always treat our emotion by same old way [laughs]. That is why, you know, we should-we should say something about emotion practice. Does it make sense? Some other questions? Hai.

Student C: Roshi, I [4-8 words] want to make the most of it.

Suzuki-roshi: It is okay.

Student C: What's wrong with me [?]? I don't understand [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, we don't understand-is okay. Don't try to understand things. It is a kind of small-minded practice. You need something to sit on, you know. Actually that is not necessary. When you are you, that is okay. Before you understand who, you know, you understand things much better. But if you feel you understand things, then you feel better, that's all. And if you don't feel good, you are not so happy, maybe. That is not so good.

Whether you feel good or bad, you know, you should be-you are you, and you should accept yourself. The feeling is just superficial, you know, problem, not real problem. Our understanding is just excuse. Most of the time, that is, you say, "help." But it is not actual help. If I have-if I have a book when I give lecture, I feel good [laughs]-something like that. You see?

So it is good to have books. It is good-just to have some understanding is good, but if you stick to it then you cannot do anything. You will burned-you will be burned by it. You cannot open your mouth. You cannot do anything. When you do something, you should forget your small understanding, and you should listen to others, again and again forgetting your own viewpoint and your own understanding, and try to understand again and again the situation you are [in]. That is, you know, right practice [?]. So you don't have to have any question when you come to Zen Center. You should expose yourself. Hai! [Laughs.] I am here. Maybe-is there something wrong [laughs]? That is [4-8 words unclear]. Hai.

Student D: [10-12 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Literally-sometime literally. But why you have to observe is, you know-you-that is more-more-more important than understanding of rules. Or else you cannot-the rule will be dead. Even though you observe it, sometime you will be-you are violating it. Rules is not for master [?]-for the monastery, but for yourself, you know. To help your practice we have rules.

Student E: [4-8 sentences.]

Suzuki-roshi: If you are in individual practice, of course.

Student E: How?

Suzuki-roshi: How? [Laughs.] Because you don't know why. [Laughter,

laughs.] Do you understand? [Laughter, laughs.] First you burn [?].

Student E: My problem is, Roshi, sometimes I follow the rules and sometimes I don't, because I wanted to see what would happen [laughter].

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. I see. You can, you know-you can find out what will happen without observing our rules. There are many chances to-to-to test yourself. But what you-you mean is whether I become angry or you will be criticized or something like that or? Maybe-it may not be so-some other things, perhaps. Perhaps I know, but that is too much curious-curious-curiosity, you know. You are very-very curious about your practice. Not-it is not main road, you know. Your practice is not following main street or main freeway. You are kind of making trip by bicycle or something. [Laughter, laughs.]

Student E: Maybe more and more if I ride the bicycle [2-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Then-then maybe you better try some other place, you know, not main freeway like this [laughing].

Student E: [3 words unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: That will be better. Hai.

Student F: Why do we bother at all?

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student F: Why do we bother to do it?

Suzuki-roshi: Bother to do it? [Sighs.] There is many reasons. The reason why-I cannot give you all the reasons, you know. But it may be better for you-for your practice, if I am just usual person and usual teacher of zazen [in] some usual way. Like a river or mountain, I exist in that way. That will be better. If I give some reason why mountain is a mountain is like so. Why river runs slow in that way? That is too much, you know. If you come to the river, you can bathe or drink from it. That is maybe better. I-I-I don't want to give, you know, I don't want to talk about reason why I am here or something like that. Hai.

Student G: Why is it so difficult to get up in the morning?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student G: Why is it so difficult to get up in the morning?

Suzuki-roshi: Because of your, you know [laughs]-if you get up, you know, very easily it means that you have pretty good practice. Practice I mean-you-natural-you are [2-3 words], and you are very much one with

the practice. Without trying to be something good you can do something good. Without trying to be free from various desires you are free from desires. We say if you-if you can eat anything offered, then already your practice is very good. It's the same thing, you know-to eat which was given to you, without, you know, discrimination.

So if you cannot get up right-the moment you hear the shinrei[8] bell, it means that it is difficult for you to die. You know, if you-if you can get up quite easily, you know, it means that when you have time to die you can die quite easily. Big problem and small problem does not [make] much difference. To die is big problem [laughs], people think. To get up at the moment you woke-wake up is small problem. But it is not so.

So to get up is very important practice. So-so even though you are sleepy, you should get up anyway, you know, [at?] once. And if it is necessary to go back to your bed, then you can go back. But anyway you should-you should get up. Same thing is true to observe our way. Anything-you-you should say YES!-or if you are Japanese, HAI!-say to yourself, with very strong, sharp, you know, clear practice. That is correct [?]. If you are able to say so, it means that you have not much attachment to things, you are pretty free from your clinging. Very important practice and very important point. Okay?

One more question. Hai.

Student H: In the [1 word] it says that how [1 word] is everywhere. I was wondering [2-3 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Oyo? [?]

Student H: [3-4 words] nyoho.

Student H: Yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Nyoho.[9] Nyoho is "things-as-it-is." Is it-in Japanese-are you-nyoho-do you mean nyoho?

Student H: Nyoho, yeah.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere-yeah-everywhere, everywhere-it-when [we say] everywhere it means here and here, here, here-everywhere. But that one-one thing shall include everything. It means that. That things, you know-this is the [1 word] of [4-6 words]. It include various possibilities of the great being. Nyoho. So it is very personal. It is about everything, and it is about a great being which include us. That is everywhere, they say.

So nyoho means when you get up you should get up, you know. When you go to bed you should go to bed. That you-you can get up when you should get up means that you can die when you die. Same thing. So one

practice-if you understand one practice, one activity, if you can do one activity with good spirit, then you can do everything in the same way. If you are good friend of Tassajara student, you will be, wherever you go, in the same way, you will be a good-good friend of people. That is nyoho. Okay?

Anyway, tomorrow morning we will have just one zazen [laughs, laughter]. Five past ten, so one more question please. [Laughter, laughs.] Hai.

Student I: Roshi, you were speaking about death. What-what should the awareness of death be in our karma?

Suzuki-roshi: Awareness-it he- [partial word]-it will-it is not possible to experience death, to think about death even. But some time I think you may think about it. Most people have some experience of thinking about their death. Most people has. But that is not actually death. But I don't think it is necessary to have actual picture of death in your mind. But it is pretty big problem-must be pretty big problem, and we should be ready for death.

Why I say so is, if you think about it always it will be a big-great encouragement for your everyday practice because it is the most big problem for-for everyone. There is no bigger problem for us, so it is very good practice to be ready for death.

Student I: [Question (6-8 words) unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Not thinking. You know, you cannot-you can think about it, but why you think about it is to-to have some good feeling about it. That is why you think about it, maybe, you know. The point is emotional problem. It is problem of desire or defining. Thinking mind may accept our death quite easily. What is death? You may explain what is death quite easily, but emotionally [laughs] it is not so easy to think about. After our death is not so easy to accept. To have actual feeling about it is very difficult.

So some people say it is like to go another way from this way-open the door and go on the [2-4 words]. If you go to the next one, that is death. But even, you know, [if] someone explain about death in that way, still you have-it is big problem for you.

So if you accept your food properly, if you get up, you know, when you should get up, then it is not so difficult for you to accept your death. It is really so, and that is only way of helping your practice in its true sense.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Joan Amaral and Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Hofuku Juten (Baofu Congzhan): d. 928. Dharma successor of Seppo Gison.

[2] Seppo Gison (Xuefeng Yieun): 822-908. Dharma successor of Tokusan Senkan.

[3] Chokey Eryo (Changqing Huileng): 854-932. Dharma successor of Seppo Gison.

[4] Literally, "wonderful dharma" (Denkoroku, Chap. 4).

[5] Zenzai-doji: A bodhisattva in the Avataüsaka (Kegon) Sutra.

[6] Pi-yen-lu (W.G.), The Blue Cliff Record: A collection of 100 koans compiled by Setcho Juken (Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien [W.G.]).

[7] Ts'ung-jung-lu (W.G.), The Book of Equanimity: A collection of 100 koans compiled by Wanshi Shogaku (Hung-chih Cheng-chueh [W.G.]).

[8] shinrei: shin ("swing"); rei ("bell"). The wake-up bell.

[9] nyoho ni: nyo: "splendid"; ho: dharma. A dharma term with wide application: "in accord with suchness"; "just as it is"; "Buddha's great teaching," or "truth itself is dharma."

## **7 - Question and Answer**

Sunday, August 08, 1971

Question and Answer  
Zen Mountain Center

Tonight I have nothing to talk about [laughs]. Empty hand. No book. I just appeared here [laughter]. But as Yakusan-zenji[1] did, I wouldn't go back to my room without saying anything. If you ask some questions, I will answer. In that way, I want to spend just one hour with you. Okay? If you have some questions, please ask me. Ask. Okay. Hai.

Student A: Roshi, I notice that often when I wake up in the morning the first minute or so my mind is sort of unclear. [Remaining 3-6 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: It is because you are [at] Tassajara pretty long time, and

you have not much problem to follow our schedule. So you have, maybe-you have time to think [about] something else, you know [laughs]. That is, maybe, the reason. At first, as we-as it is difficult to follow our schedule and to know exactly what we do in zendo. First of all you think about [how?] to go to zendo anyway, you know. That will be the first thing you think about. But more and more, you feel as if you can do pretty well. I think that is main reason. I think that is not so good, but that is-anyway that will be the problem for the student who stay pretty long time here. So if it is so, I must give you a big slap [laughs], but now I-I want to ask you-I have a question, you know. Why do I give you a slap-because your practice is not so good? [Taps stick several times.] What will be the reason for-reason of the slap?

Student A: It seems [1-2 words] to my mind, to-to wake me up right now.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student A: And I [4-8 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. When you just wake up, you know, you have-you don't have, you know, so many things in your mind. Your mind is clear. And when your mind is clear, you have to come to zendo. And our practice should be continuous view [?] of practice, but that is actually not so easy. So-but if-if something appears already, it can't be helped, you know. You shouldn't fight with it. Even so, even [if] you have problem, [and] your mind is not clear, you should come. That is what you should do. To encourage that kind of practice, I give you slap or doan or ino will, if you are still in bed, you know, for an instance. Someone will go to-to bring you to the zendo.

That is-usually it is, you know, we understand it is not so good, but once it happen in that way it can't be helped, you know. And even though we go and [on?] catching, but it is not because your practice is bad. Don't understand in that way. Something already happened. We should not criticize it. But we should encourage him to have good practice, that's all. Do you have some other question? Hai. Be careful. [Laughter.]

Student B: Each one of us has [1-2 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Colors. Uh-huh. Colors. What do- I don't.

Student B: What does [1 word] mean when we see colors? There's no [1 word]. It's entirely blue, with [4-5 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Do you see something or-

Student B: Sometimes color.

Suzuki-roshi: Color?



Student B: Green and blue.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Blue and green, maybe.

Suzuki-roshi: When-even though you open your eyes? Ahh. [Laughs, laughter.] Blue and yellow. Something like, you know, something like trip. Maybe-maybe-did you-do you have some experience of drugs?

Student B: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe that is you think of something like that-association with it. I don't know exactly why, because I don't see any color [when I meditate] [laughs, laughter]. My enemy is drowsiness, that's all. Do you see some color?

Student B: Only in the back of the [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Drowsiness or color?

Student B: Drowsiness.

Suzuki-roshi: Drowsiness [laughs]. You have same experience-you see the color?

Student B: Not really [8-10 words.] [Laughter.] I thought green [3-6 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Green- [Severe coughing episode.] Blue-do I look like blue? [3-4 words.] Hai.

Student B: [3-4 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: But I don't think that that is big problem. If you see the color always, it will be problem sometime. You know, many things happen. We say another name of delusion is ganka, [2] you know, flower of-flower-flower of eye-some, you know, color or some vision. That is another name of delusion, so you don't have to worry so-so much about it. Hai.

Student C: Last night in your lecture, you were discussing how it's possible to make a journey on the path of communication. I was thinking afterwards that it seems like the idea of communication involves communication between two things.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: And it seems to me that what you [4-6 words] you reduced

these two things to one. And I think that communication, maybe, is a bad word from the point of view of [1 word]. At a certain point, you're no longer communicating. You're-something beyond that-something-I-I couldn't think of a better word for that.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Communication. Communication is usually something which happens between two, but that is one-one-sided understanding of communication. Yeah-why we can communicate is, you know, there is-between two there is some oneness [?] that is there. That is why we-we can communicate. You see? Communication is-is something which happen between two, and at the same time, communication will be unders- [partial word]-a same understanding, you know, through words. To reach same understanding, we communicate. So it is actually based on same understanding, which doesn't happen. Looks like happen; does not happen before you communicate.

But there is potentiality or, you know, possibility before you communicate. So it is not actually two. It is just two-two ways of understanding. Do you understand? That I can speak to you is because there is possibility, for you and for me, to reach same understanding. So if-if we try to communicate without sticking to one's own view too much, communication is possible. But if you do not give up one-sided view of yours, communication is not possible. Only when one of the two person give up his own viewpoint and take same viewpoint, communication is possible. [When] both of them in turn take the other's viewpoint, the communication is possible. Isn't that so?

So problem of communication is problem of viewpoint or ego. If you stick to your ego, communication is not possible. Or it takes long, long time. Maybe waste of time sometime. So one of the two should give up his own viewpoint and feel sympathy-sympathetic to-to others. That is only way to communicate. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, often when I'm chanting [2-4 words] I'm sitting zazen, when it [6-8 words] particularly the Heart Sutra in English. And it started out different-the meaning of the words. Is this thinking of the meaning of the words [6-8 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Meaning of the words-yeah, if you chant in English, naturally, you know, you will think of-think about the meaning too. But it is not actually-it is something which-which we-appears or which come to your mind immediately. You see the characters, or immediately you say something. It is not just sound.

The Prajñāparamita Sutra is-the meaning of the sutra is about emptiness, you know. So each word suggest [to] you the reality of the emptiness. So, especially when you chant Prajñāparamita Sutra, it is just words which suggest [to] you the emptiness. It is like you cross your legs, and to have your mudra, and you take breathing. Same

thing.

Maybe before you understand the meaning of the sutra, you know, then you may be wondering in your mind, "What does it mean?" Then that is not, you know, zazen. That is reading. Do you understand? The chanting sutra is something which you can do after you know the meaning. It is not reading. It is expressing your understanding through words. Do you understand the difference?

Student E: [2-4 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Difference? Difference between reading and chanting is- chanting is something, you know, you do after you know the meaning, after you have some confidence, you know, in your understanding of the sutra, so your mind does not-do not wander. The chanting encourage your chanting [understanding?], and if you chant, it-chanting encourage your spirit or understanding-actualize your understanding with-with your voice. That is chanting. Reading is to think about it: "What does it mean? I don't understand." That is reading. Do you understand?

Student E: I guess [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Hai.

Student F: Roshi, I don't know-the first time I listened to [1-2 words] zazen, and I usually-when I'm in the zendo there is a struggle in my mind. [6-8 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: You come to struggle [laughs] with your resistance, you know. That is okay with you [?], or else you will not stay here. Why you stay here is to struggle with your resistance. That is okay, isn't it? That is why you are here. The struggle makes sense, you know. You know, zazen is not some-zazen is-Dogen-zenji says zazen is the most comfortable and easy practice [laughing], he said- but it is not so for us. For us, zazen is something difficult.

But anyway, we think we have to continue, for-while you are con-[partial word]-if you sit you feel better, you know, even though your sit-your zazen is not so calm. But much better than not to sit. It is, you know-you feel some resistance to zazen, you know, but if you do something else you may feel in the same way, I think. That is not problem of not-problem-not problem of zazen, but problem of you, you know. Problem is always with you.

So if you feel in that way, you should think more, and you should try to solve that problem. That is, you know, why you think. So zazen will be the shortcut to solve that problem which you have-which human being have.

Actually, you know, because, you-your-it is not because there is

Tassajara or Zen Center, you know, that you sit. It is something we should do, whether there is Zen or not. Wherever you-you are, that is a problem we have, actually. And that is the problem we should confront with. Okay? Not a, you know-it is not problem of-of Zen. Do you understand? [Laughs.]

You may feel, you know, your parents, you know, encourage you to go to Tassajara. And that is why you came to Tassajara. You-you may-I don't know-something-that kind of feeling you have, in-in some corner of your heart [thought?] [laughs]. Don't you think so? But actually the problem you have is not your parents' problem or my problem or Zen Center's problem. The problem-we all human being has similar problem. That problem-big problem is [1-2 words]. Okay? Hai.

Student G: I'm looking at a koan which uses the [1 word] word of "transmigration." Can you say something about how it might be a [3-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] Transmigration. It is-did you have koan mu?

Student G: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: And do you-did you get through the koan?

Student G: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: And next one is transmigration?

Student G: No.

Suzuki-roshi: No?

Student G: This is-this is a long [1 word] many people [4-6 words]. And this is one.

Suzuki-roshi: One of the-one part of-huh?

Student G: It is one [2-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Who is-who is your teacher?

Student G: Many different ones. You know, [2-3 sentences. Names 3-4 "roshis."]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs, laughter.] Yeah. But all the teachers are different, but same thing.

Student G: I thought maybe there was one [6-8 words] it.

Suzuki-roshi: Why, you know? You know, trans- [partial word]-why we

say transmigration, when we say transmigration, underlying thought is each individual being, you know, each being. Isn't that so?

Student G: I [3-6 words]. I'm sorry. I wouldn't think that.

Suzuki-roshi: Transmigration happens, you know, because there is many things. And is there-does-do they exist? Transmigration. Because many things exist, you know, so usually one change to the other. That is transmigration, isn't it?

Student G: That is one way. There's another way [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Many ways, yes [laughs]. So, what is that? So, we don't exist-transmigration doesn't exist [laughs, laughter]. And still it exists. So it is something, you know, beyond words. So you should, you know, point out actual fact, you know. That is how you pass koan. If you drink a cup of tea [takes sip], this is transmigration [laughs], without, you know, saying-explaining it by logic. You shouldn't get, you know, caught by words anyway, but you should catch the actual fact which include various koans. That is koan study.

Student G: Well, I'm starting to get the feeling, you know-it sounds good. But then sometimes one teacher will say, like, "Don't be stuck by the words," and another one will say, "What's the word [6-8 words]."

Suzuki-roshi: Because you-your answer is not actual, you know, you-you stick to words. As you ask me the explanation of it, you know, you may-you may be thinking in the same way. So that is why they say-they do not say yes.

Even so, intellectual understanding is necessary, and it will help. But that is not-that is just help, you know. The actual koan cannot be like that. It is direct experience. But this kind of philosophy will help [you] to have direct experience. And this kind of logic will lead you-lead your practice and will show you the right path, instead of wandering about. Hai.

Student H: Roshi, we do our best to assume all of our responsibilities all the time. And [1 word] would be encouraged. [1-2 sentences.]

Suzuki-roshi: [Laughs.] I think that is pretty good, you know. You will-you should be, I think, exhaust your energy. You should-you should, you know, be always in complete combustion [laughs]. You see? That is practice. That is, I think, pretty good, you know. That is why we do not take so very strong food, you know, and we do not take too much sleep. You will-you will be always little bit-little bit [1 word], but still you must sit [laughs]. That will, you know-this kind of practice will help your actual practice. You will not-this is how we put a snake into bamboo [laughs]. If a snake is too strong it wouldn't go into the bamboo. So limiting your sleep and [laughs] food when snake is eating [laughs]-it

grewed [laughs, laughter].

Student I: [4-6 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: No-suppose [laughs]-suppose not. Hai.

Student J: Roshi, you said something about factors [6-8 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Out-outside of Center.

Student J: Yeah. Out.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. As-even though you are outside of the Center, you know, I-I want you to sit one period a day. May be pretty difficult. Morning time is best. Wake up earlier than usual, and beside your clothes [?]-where you sit and everyday if you sit with this kind of cushion, that is [1 word].

And in everyday activity, you should be concentrated on what you do, or, in other word, you should greet people or [1 word] as if you recite sutra, or it become usual [?] careful feeling [?] of respect-thinking those are all buddhas. And sometime your boss or your friend may not understand what you are doing, but even though they don't understand, you should practice in your own way, with big mind. In city life-in this-in this world-it is big world, you know-wherever you go, people need you. If you have right spirit, people need you. Without you, their life doesn't make sense. We say to shine one corner of the world-one corner, just one corner. So if you, you know, shine one corner, then people around you will be-will feel better.

You should be always, you know-you should feel as if you are carrying umbrella, you know, for the people [laughs] to-to stay away from the heat or rain. It is rather difficult, you know, to take hold of an umbrella, but still that is Buddhist giving. And without umbrella, they don't feel good, actually. It is not arrogant-arrogancy, but it is-actually it is so, because we are too much involved in self-centered practice, self-centered life.

For an instance, you know, Buddhists sometime go-go out for takuhatsu. At war-time, sometime I went to takuhatsu. And if they are making ditch-you know, ditch?-for shelter from the bomb, I helped them [laughs]. I am not so strong, but I could help them. And I transplanted cucumber or eggplants [laughs] around the ditch, because we get, you know, good dirt from the, you know, from the trench, and planted cucumber around the trench. So sometime I helped in that way. If you do not need ditch-even though you do not-you may not use the trench, you may-you can eat cucumber [laughs]. So I-I prepared, you know, cucumber-vegetable garden and trench. I dug this [probably gesturing] and here was [laughs] vegetables above.

So wherever you go, you will-if you have this kind of attitude or this kind of feeling, you know, you can help people quite easily. And sometime people are, you know, sleeping, exposing their belly in the sun-many people [laughs]. So sometime I help them to cover their belly. And they are very happy, you know, to see you, and they will help you too. If you have that kind of feeling, you have no trouble. And you can help people quite easily, without anything. With-with empty hand you can help people, and there is no need to give lecture like this [laughs]. That will be how you can help. Some question? Hai.

Student K: What is laziness? Could you [2-3 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student K: What is laziness?

Suzuki-roshi: Laziness.

Student K: [3-4 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Laziness is big enemy-as big as large [1 word], yeah. So when you feel lazy ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... someplace like this. People in the city are working hard, very hard. And our practice looks like very difficult, but actually I don't know which is more difficult: our life at Tassajara or city life. I don't know which.

In many ways we are supported by city people. And if we are lazy students-uh-oh. And on the other hand, you may say we are Zen students. People may think we are doing something good here, but if you are lazy, and if you are not doing actually something, in some way, people may expect this is a kind of deceptive practice. So we should not be lazy, especially when you are at Tassajara. When you are [in the] city, maybe, you know, you'll be okay-allowable. But if you are monk or if you are [at] Zen Center, you cannot be lazy. Hai.

Student L: How do you overcome our laziness?

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student L: How do you overcome our laziness?

Suzuki-roshi: Overcome? If you-if you know exactly what you are doing and what people are doing, then you will make your best effort. That's all, you know-there is no other way. But maybe because you think-you feel-you think you are doing something good here, that is why you become lazy. Don't you think so? Anyway, you must make best effort. Hai.

Student M: [3-4 sentences.] Is there ever [2-3 words] that we should

know?

Suzuki-roshi: Should. "Should" means, you know, maybe it is so, because we will know how things are going-we know dharma, you know. Dharma is, maybe, the idea of "should." Or actually "things are going" is dharma. And we human being thinks-one-thinks [of] dharma in two ways. So we must say "should." "Be" and "should" is always [laughs]-make one pair. When you-dharma is way things are, so it-it is the word of "to be." But for human being who is selfish, you know, who have choice, you know-because we have choice, "to be" equals "should."

So hummingbird, you know, will be always "to be" [laughs]. Or cats-"to be" is enough; they don't need "should," you know. But [laughing] unfortunately, we have choice, you know. So if we want to follow dharma, you know, we have to say "should." So if the teaching doesn't sound like "should," it is not true teaching. That will be the word you remember, isn't it? It looks like so. Because of our ego-centered practice, because of our idleness, you know, to use fire, to use airplane is actually idleness-idle practice. And we-we human being create many things to be idle, and we have many choice. So "should"-you-you have word "should." But "should" equal "to be." "To be" is more strict word for us. "Should" is, you know, not so strict as "to be" for human being. There is, you know, some way to escape from it. "To be" [laughs] is very strict, very cold-coldness from which you cannot escape.

But you think "should" is awful; "to be" is much better than "should." That is opposite, isn't it? So "to be"-before you attain the stage of "to be," you have-you must practice very hard, so that you can just follow the dharma. You know, to follow our schedule is a kind of practice to follow, so that we can follow the truth. One more question, please. Hai.

Student N: I was [2-4 words], and I was wondering if you could say something about practice [1 word].

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Where-where?

Student N: [1-2 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Wilderness. Wilderness. Uh-huh. And-

Student N: I was wondering if you could say anything about practice in the wilderness.

Suzuki-roshi: Wilderness. How many people are there?

Student N: [1 sentence.]

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, I see. Have you ever practiced in wilderness before?

Student N: Yes.



Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Many times?

Student N: Not so many.

Suzuki-roshi: May I ask you the-why you are going to the wilderness?  
Why or-

Student N: Why I'm going to that [2-4 words] going to the wilderness is [6-8 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Easy to-to be yourself, or something like that?

Student N: Yeah, I think so. Probably to [2-4 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. [Laughs.] I think if you are going, there must be some purpose, you know, because you-to solve a koan or to think about some particular teaching, you know, that you [are] bothered by people or something, or to change your old, you know, same way or habit, or to stop smoking [laughs, laughter], to, you know, to experience hunger or something, you know-you must have some purpose, I think, you know. So if you are going, it's better to be concentrated on some-some point, you know. Having some purpose of practice, you should be concentrated-your practice should be concentrated on it. So-if so, you have not much disturbance, so you can confront with the problem, I think. So each time you go, you will achieve something, you know.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican, 12/7/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Yaoshan Weiyan (Yakusan Igen): 751-834. Dharma successor of Sekito Kisen. Master of Ungan, Sensu, and Dogo.

[2] gan = eye; ka = flower. A disease of the eye. Hence, delusion.

## **8 - Obon**

Thursday, August 12, 1971

Obon  
Zen Mountain Center

Tomorrow-tomorrow is the thirteenth, is it? In Japan tomorrow is-tomorrow-13th, 14th, 15th, 16th-is Obon[1]-Obon days. We say Obon. At some place, we observe it July 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th. Thirteenth is the-thirteenth-[on the] evening of the thirteenth, old souls are supposed to visit their family-old family. And 16th is the day old souls leave their old family.

Why we observe two months? Before we observe it in the moon-by the moon calendar [July], but recently we observe it by your calendar [August]. That is why we observe, you know, sometime-in some place, July. Somewhere-in some place, August.

This is-this kind of observation started even before Buddha. Before Buddha-in India, they were-people were concerned about their future generation. And if they do not have their children, they worried very much. And they-they thought they are not faithful enough to their ancestors.

This kind of, you know, idea is also true in China, and maybe after Buddhism [was] introduced to Japan. Japan [was] also concerned about their generation-future generation. It is Chinese custom. And after Chinese, you know, culture were introduced to Japan, they started to write Japanese history, something like China. Nihon-shoki.[2] Before Nihon-shoki we have Kojiki.[3] Kojiki was written by Japanese, purely, of course, by Japanese, but only-mostly Japanese-according to Japanese custom and thought. But Kojiki was written after Chinese culture was introduced, and Kojiki was written something like Chinese history.

But anyway, Japanese families [2-4 words] were very much concerned about their future generation. So even Brahmin-after finishing their duty as a Brahmin-Brahmin, as you know, is the highest class of four classes in India-after Brahmin finished their duty as a Brahmin, as a leader of-religious leader of Indian people, they started-some people started-started family life, household life again. Mostly Indian people started religious life after finishing household life. To finish their household life means, maybe, to have children and to raise children, and they left their home-home.

But Buddhist, you know-when Buddha-Buddha's disciple-after Buddha's disciples became-came to Buddha, they didn't have their children, of course. So they may be, you know, con- [partial word]-still they may be concerned about their children, and according to Indian old custom, it is, you know-if they do-they do not have their children, their ancestors will suffer in-in-in their future life. So this kind of-I think, this kind of cultural background-because of this kind of cultural background, Obon festival started.

As you know, Obon festival-

As you know, there were two leading, famous disciple of Buddha. One is Shariputra,[4] and the other is Maudgalyayana: [5] Mokuren-Sharihotsu and Mokuren[6] in Japanese. Shariputra and Mokuren is good friend from their young age. Maybe came from same district of India.

Shariputra was a kind of alert, learned philosopher.[7] And his father Vanganta[8]-his father Vanganta was a ronji.[9] Ronji means-scholar-anyway scholar, who argued-who make an argument with other-argument with learned fellows. So every king had ronji, and Vanganta was one of them.

And Bimbi- [partial word]-King Bimbisara gave one village to him for his learning. But he [Vanganta] was defeated by Desa [or Desha], who came from another country-who visited Bimbisara's country, and Vanganta [was] defeated by him in discussion or, you know, argument-philosophical dispute. And he lost his village-and he had to leave his village. And instead, Desa became ronji of the Bimbisara-King Bimbisara. And Desa gave his daughter to him, and that was Shariputra's mother.[10]

Do you know some sparrows [?]? We have many sparrows here. I-I haven't seen the bird who-who comes in autumn. And he-he eat mostly frogs and some insects. Very strong bird, and his-his eye is very sharp-sharp, and he is singing something like ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki [laughs]. Do you know that bird? Do you have those-that kind of bird? And he imitate various kinds of birds. He sing in various way to attract other bird, to catch him-to catch other bird. So attracting bird by singing, they catch small birds. Not big birds-maybe as big as this [probably gestures]. That is shari. And his mother was like a-has sharp eyes like shari. So after that bird, her [his] mother was called Shari. And because Shariputra is daughter-a boy of Shari, they-people called him Shariputra. But his proper name is after Desa. Upadesa is proper name. [11]

But anyway, he was-at-when he became sixteen, he was already a very learned scholar, and his father's disciples became his disciples. And Mokuren was-was his good friend, and both Shariputra and Mokuren studied more under Sañjaya Velaññhiputra.[12] He was one of the six Indian scholars.[13] At that time there were six outstanding scholars, and he was one of them.

And [after] six week of studying under him, they become a leader of [the disciples of] Sañjaya Velaññhiputra. They were so alert. And-but they didn't [weren't] satisfied with their teacher. And he-they promised that if one of the two find out some good teacher, they will inform each other and study under the better teacher.

At that time, Buddha was [at] Rajagaha, and one day Shariputra went out of the-went to the Rajagaha and saw one of his-one of Buddha's disciples, Assaji. Assaji [was] wearing, you know, at that-Assaji [was]

wearing robe neatly, and walk slowly and calmly, and with-full of dignity. So Shariputra was very much interested-impressed by him.

He asked, "Who is your teacher?" And Assaji said, "My teacher was," you know, "Gautama Buddha." And so they become Buddha's disciples. But pretty soon they become also one of the leading disciples of Buddha too.

Mokuren is noted for his power of walking-power of walking fast.[14]

In old time, someone who-who has strong foot-they were very much, you know, respected. [In] my father's days, in Japan there were no train. Yest- [partial word]-my father's-[in] my grandfather's day they have no train. So mostly they walked. I was told many interesting stories how fast someone walked [laughs]. Do you-do you have that kind of story in America? Back and forth, they visit-went to some mountain and chanted on the mountain and came back-come back to the home-to their home-something like that. Some-some monks-do you know I-you may not know the Hakone Mountain. It is maybe fifteen-fifteen miles, you know. To go up to the mountain it takes more than seven miles. And to come down, it is seven miles. So [it is] maybe nearly the same distance to-or from here to-from here to-what was the name of the-one by here-what do you call it-oh, I thought that someone may know-last village.

Student: Jamesburg.

Hmm? Jamesburg. Maybe same distance-maybe fifteen miles? Oh. Everyday, you know, Yoki-zenji[15]-Nishiari-zenji,[16] from-oh, more than that-from that mountain-Hakone Mountain is already fifteen miles. And from Mishima to-Mishima is the town where Ryutaku-ji[17] is, where Nakagawa Soēn-roshi[18] is. From Mishima to Hakone it may be-it is five miles or more, maybe. And so maybe almost twenty miles-more than twenty miles.

Nishiari-zenji, you know, getting up early, and left Odawara[19] and went to-oh, no, no [corrects self]-get up early and left Mishima and studied-went to Odawara, and chanted sutra-morning-attended morning sutra-morning chant, and attended lecture, and came back in the same day in the evening-walking fifteen miles walk-back and forth, maybe. I don't know if everyday, but they say-they said every day. And there are many stories like that.

So, in India, at Buddha's time, there must be some strong fellow, you know, who could walk so fast. Mokuren was famous for his strong walk-walk, and he appeared at various places all of a sudden [laughs], like, you know, as if he fly through the sky to the other place. He was famous for that. But, of course, he was very famous scholar too.

And origin of the story [of] Obon is, one day he [Mokuren] went to-

because of his strong, mysterious power of flying or walking, he could see [see] his mother in hell. And his mother was almost skin and meat-and bone: the strong suffering of the hell. And he was very-very much stricken [stricken] by the sight of his mother's suffering. He came back to Buddha and asked him how to save him-save her. And Buddha said, "As people do, it is good idea to make offering to" Buddha-not to Buddha, but to [laughs]-he himself is Buddha-"to make some offering to priests or monks." On the day of-the last day of the training period, it is fifteenth of-July fifteenth. So giving various-offering various fruit and vegetables-fresh vegetables, and many other things like something to sleep on, or some medicine, and beautiful flowers, and some-some-something which is-which give good smell or a fragrance, and candle, incense. Maybe those offering, they had a kind of festival, and priests-monks and priests chant sutra or give some sermon to the people. That was what they did-in that way, [1-3 words], old way of-old custom-old usual custom. But idea is different but what they did is nearly the same.

And in China when, you know-Liang-Liang Dynasty-maybe it is 500-Bodhidharma went to- Bodhidharma went to China [in] 520. Just-I think just before Bodhidharma went to China, that king, Butei, [20] started this Obon holiday. And in Japan it was-we started maybe 1263, the time of Fuko emperor. [21] Since then we-we are observing Obon [1 word: Foyo?] each year.

This morning I-we talked about Obon [1 word: Foyo?] in Japan and [1 word]. And they say if you observe it, it may be very dangerous [laughs], because we have to fire-you have to have fire for the souls-old souls, you know. In Japan, we invite-we make our gate bright-burning-burning pitch-cut pine pitch as long as this [gestures?]. And we welcome old souls. So we cannot observe it anyway. We just say, "Maybe so." [Laughs.] But it is a kind of Buddhist, you know, tradition to observe Obon[1 word: Foyo?].

Since I came to America, I noticed many Japanese customs, you know, which is very different from American way. When I was [in] Japan, I think that [those customs] was quite usual, but if you see Japanese custom from America, it is-what they are doing in Japan is very, you know, special and maybe interesting, you know. But it is, maybe-it is very difficult to apply it.

Anyway, we have Obon festival. We start from-from [for] tomorrow I start-I studied little bit about Obon. When-in China it was started [in the] fourth year of Emperor Wu or Butei, and in Japan [in] 1266 it was started.

And [it is] about, you know, Indian old custom, to be very much concerned about future generation. There is, you know, famous Mahabharata-Mahabharata. [22] It is old old-Indian-Indian verses. In Mahabharata, explaining the meaning of putra-putra like "Shariputra." Putra means-putra-the root word of putra is Put. [23] Put is a kind of

hell, where their father or their mother is, maybe. A kind of hell. So it is their duty to save their mother-their parents. How they save their parents is to have children. If you have children, they will be, you know, saved from the hell. That is the root word of-of putra. Shariputra, you know, putra. And there-in dictionary there are many similar stories, which is-which is-which are found in old Buddhist-Buddhist scriptures. So most likely those festival started before-even before Buddha. Buddha tried this kind of custom.

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: Roshi, how do the parents-how do you-how do Buddhists learn how to celebrate Obon or to save the suffering of their parents?

Suzuki-roshi: In-in Japan?

Student A: Yeah. I am thinking also-

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Yeah.

Student A: -about their not taking up the [2-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Buddhist are ordained-if you become or if you receive ordination, that is the best, you know, way to help their parents. We have that kind of idea: not only your parents, but nine-nine ancestors. If you-one-your father is one, you know, your grandparents is two-in that way nine ancestors will be saved. If one become a priest, that is [1 word]. So for-we have Buddhist-a priest visit their fa- [partial word]-members' family-family shrine and chant sutras. And in-in each family, they offer many things. And in some family they will make special altar for the family ghosts [laughs], who may-who may come with their-with many souls.

So we help-help people to observe Obon festival-Obon service. That is what we do-what priest does, you know.

Suzuki-roshi: Some more questions? Hai.

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student B: I think it's in Buddhism we have the [3-4 sentences unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: You know, you say so, but if you have two parents, you know-you have two parents, and you have four grandparents, you see? Two have two, and eight, sixteen [laughs]. Soon it will be a big, you know, a great number of people. You may think, you know, we human beings started by two, you know [laughs]. I don't know which is true. If you think more about it, you know, you cannot say that is explanation

or to-to have special idea of-about our parents. So we have-we are-we-  
anyway, we are one in [1-3 words]. Even it is so, you know, if you-if  
you pick up one, it included, you know. That is proper understanding.

So it looks like we pick up just my parents, you know-I pick up just my  
parents. But it is not-our true understanding is not so. And so we say  
that is-Buddhists do not have idea of soul as usual people understand  
what is soul. Our understanding of soul is different. It is a kind of big  
mind. But even though it is big mind, it is at the same time our-each  
one's own ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

... mind, you know. If you think each one's mind does not exist at all,  
that is one of the heresy. If you ignore each one's own mind. And if you  
ignore the big mind that is also the heresy-heresy. So we must have,  
you know, complete understanding of the reality. Do you understand?

Usually, you know, you will fell [fall] into, you know, danken or joken.  
Joken means to believe in something which exist forever, constantly,  
like emptiness or something. Danken means to believe in each  
existence. It looks like-to him it looks like separate, independent being.  
So dan is, you know, "cut." Dan is "to cut." So each one will be cut from  
the rest of the being. That is why we call it danken.

Joken means to understand things [are] just one, which exists forever.  
That is joken-idea of constancy. They do not-really want change of  
things. They do not realize things which change. Do you understand?  
That is Buddhist understanding. So if you think Buddhists do not have  
any idea of small mind, you know, it is one-one of the two heresies-  
heretic understanding.

Buddhism go-should go over this kind of one-sided understanding. And  
Buddhist understanding should include both side. Did you understand  
this point? This is very important point-a good question. But most  
Buddhist, may, you know, some Buddhist stick to the idea of oneness,  
and the other will stick to the idea of many things which changes. And  
they do not-they do-they do ignore the what is changed. If they do not  
ignore the fact things change, they cannot ignore the idea of oneness.

Student C: Experiencing another person is the same thing as [1-2  
words]. If there is no "I" to experience small mind, how can we  
experience anybody else's small mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student C: If there is no "I" to experience small mind, then how can-  
then how can there be any-

Suzuki-roshi: No eyes?

Student C: I-you know, I-ego?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, "I."

Student C: "I" in that sense. [2-3 sentences.] I mean, can there be any experience of anybody's small mind?

Suzuki-roshi: Through-through-only way to experience big mind is through, you know, small mind. Do you understand? There is no approach to the big mind. When you understand-when you, you know, have a cup of water which is same as all the water, you know, then you will know what is water, which is same as water in the stream. It is like to-to put the water of ocean in-in small cup. We cannot experience how great that water is, but if you dip it in a small cup and have it, then that experience is experience of great ocean. It is [4-8 words]-something like that.

So because you try to understand it just by thinking, you cannot understand it. This kind of thing should be accepted by actual zazen practice, shikantaza, or experience of enlightenment. Do you understand? [Student laughs.] Maybe you don't. [Laughs, laughter.]

If you can, you know-I am just explaining it, you know, so that is-you have that kind of criticism. I am explaining it, bringing the truth to the words. What I am talking about is words. But you will understand what I am talking about, maybe. Okay? Good.

So purpose of-most important point of practice is to experience things directly, one by one. And one experience should be whole universe. To experience one-one right now-to experience one right now on this moment is to experience whole world. So this is the only approach to the emptiness. This is very important point. That is why we practice. This is the point of practice. Okay? Very important point. Maybe you-you must think about it over and over, you know, over again [laughs]. It is comparatively easy to realize things are one. It is comparatively easy, or easy to accept, you know.

Maybe I-when I was maybe about twenty-six- -seven years old, you know, I had some discussion with my master about this point. At that time, I could accept that things are one. But it is, for me, it is very difficult for me to treat everything different [laughs]. That was very difficult practice for me. To treat things one by one, and to-to treat one thing means to treat everything-all the rest of things. That much care should be paid when you treat one thing.

So even though you realize things are one, that is very, you know, very, you know-kindergarten [laughs, laughter] understanding. And then you start how to treat things one by one, each different way, with full care. That is, maybe, I think your practice, you know.

Shinku-we say-shinku-myou.[24] Have you heard of-this is very



important technical term-shinku-myō? Shinku is "emptiness," you know, "real emptiness." And myō is "every existence"-in emptiness, shinku-myō.

Unless you get through the idea of emptiness, you are not Buddhist. But if you stick to the emptiness, you know, if you cannot realize things happen in sheer emptiness, you are not Buddhist yet. Shinku-myō. Things, we say, should be something which arise from emptiness.

I didn't expect you to ask that kind of question [laughs, laughter] after my talk.

So even though you sit, you know, and watching something like sunflower [laughs]-someone was looking, you know, in front of sunflower-watching the sunflower in hot sun, and I tried. It was wonderful, you know. I feel whole universe in the sunflower. That is my, you know, experience, but I don't know how someone [else] experienced sunflower meditation. [Laughs.] Whole universe is there in the sunflower. It is not so simple [laughs]-very, you know, wonderful, wonderful complicated feeling. You can see whole universe in a small flower. If you say, "Oh, this is sunflower which doesn't really exist" [laughing], that is not our zazen practice.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (10/19/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] Also Bon, O-bon, or Urabon (Japanese Festival of Lanterns or Festival of Souls). People clean their houses and offer a variety of food, such as vegetables and fruit, to the spirits of ancestors in front of the family altar. The altar is decorated with flowers and paper lanterns. On the 13th, lanterns are lit at home, and people go to their family's gravesite to call their ancestors' spirits back home. On the 16th, people guide the ancestor's spirits back to their graves with lanterns or fires.

[2] Chronicles of Japan: With Kojiki, one of two national chronicles that record the origins of the Japanese islands, the births and lives of its gods, the foundation of its imperial household, and the history of its empire up to 701.

[3] Record of Ancient Matters.

[4] Shariputra (Upatissa): 6th Century B.C.E.

[5] Maudgalyayana (also Moggallana, Mahamaudgalyayana, and Kolita):

6th Century B.C.E.

[6] Also Mokkenren or Makamokkenren.

[7] His father was a Brahmin teacher.

[8] Throughout, S.R. pronounces the word as "Magra" or "Magada," which may refer to the North Indian kingdom of Magadha, of which Bimbisara was king.

[9] ronji (Jap.): master of discourses.

[10] Rupasari (hence Shariputra).

[11] His personal name in Pali (and possibly Sanskrit) was Upatissa. Shariputra was the oldest son of the leading family of the village where he was born (Upatissa, near the capital Rajagaha), and some commentators believe that he was named after it. Upadesa is probably the Japanese transliteration or pronunciation of Upatissa.

[12] Also Sañjaya Velaññhiputta or Sañjaya Belaññhaputta (Sañjaya of the Belañña clan), a skeptic who taught in the area of Rajagaha.

[13] Sañjaya is known as one of the Rokushi gedo, "the six teachers outside the [Buddha's] path," or six non-Buddhist teachers.

[14] Possibly the power of astral travel. Maudgalyayana was known for his supernatural powers, just as Shariputra was known for his wisdom. Maudgalyayana used astral travel to find where his deceased mother had been reborn in order to thank her for her care in raising him.

[15] Suzuki-roshi probably corrected himself: i.e., probably did not mean to say Yoki-zenji.

[16] Nishiari Bokusan-zenji: the most prominent Meiji scholar of the Shobogenzo. He was a teacher of Oka Sotan-roshi and Kishizawa Ian-roshi. He served as abbot of Soji-ji and head of Soto-shu, and he was author of Shobogenzo keiteki, a highly respected commentary on Dogen's Shobogenzo.

[17] A Rinzai temple near Mishima, Japan. Nakagawa Soen-roshi was its abbot.

[18] Nakagawa Soen-roshi (1908-1983): Japanese Rinzai master.

[19] Odawara is a city approximately 16 miles NE of Mishima, Japan. Located at Odawara is a large Soto temple named Saijo-ji, which is where Nishiari-zenji may have walked to and from.

[20] Emperor Wu (Liang Wudi, Butai) (502-550) founded the Liang

(Ryo) Dynasty in southern China.

[21] Possibly Japanese Emperor (Go-) Fukakusa (-tenno), who reigned 1247-1259.

[22] Mahabharata (San.): "The Great War." The great epic poem of India.

[23] The etymology of putra (San.) is said to be uncertain, but it may be a compound of put-tra, "preserving from the hell called Put": i.e., by means of a son or child (Monier-Williams, p. 632).

[24] shinku-myou (Jap.): shinku = absolute void or true non-existence; myou = wondrous or mysterious existence.

## **9 - Special and Equal**

Friday, August 13, 1971

Special and Equal  
Zen Mountain Center

Last night,[1] when we have question and answer, we came across the very important point. In the-in Japanese, we say [phonetic] sabetsu-soku-byodo, or shinku-myou.[2] Sabetbu-soku byodo. This is-sabetsu means "speciality," and byodo means "equality." Speciality means, you know-speciality means various being which is special. Each being are special, and each being has its own meaning of existence. When something exist, there is some reason why something exist. That is speciality. And equality is even though things is different-different, but strictly speaking each things does not exist in that way, because they are changing, constantly changing.

So if it is changing, we cannot say something really exist, you know, something we see [laughs] does not exist. You think you exist here, but it is not so. And which is easier for you to understand is, you know-maybe intellectually it is easier for you to understand things does not exist. Equality is easier to understand, and speciality is difficult to understand.

When you say "freedom," the meaning of freedom or feeling of freedom is more like equality. We are, you know, each-"We are equal, so we must have freedom." [Laughs.] That is what you say, but to us it is absurd. You know, if-if-if you want to be special, then it is not possible [laughs] to have freedom at the same time. When you are special, there is-you have some special reason to exist, you know. So, for an instance, a woman should be a woman, you know, and a man should be a man [laughs].

So there is-when we put emphasis on the reason why you exist as a man, why you exist as a woman, you know, then woman is valuable. Because she is a woman, she has, you know, her own reason why she exist as a woman. And he has his own reason, which is a different reason from woman exist. That is why a man is a man and a woman is woman.

So when you want to have equality, woman should be woman, and a man should be a man. When a man is a man, and woman is a woman, and a stone is a stone, cucumber is cucumber, eggplant is eggplant, then [laughs] they are equal. No one can change their value. Each cucumber is valuable as a cucumber-cucumber. But as human being is very selfish, so someone who do not like eggplant may say cucumber is better [laughs]. But actually cucumber and eggplant is the same. And so is man and woman, because each being has each own reason to exist. And each being cannot be replaced by some-something else. So we say each being has same value-equal value. So equality we mean is not equality [that] you mean, maybe.

So when we understand this point, we say because it is-everything is different, everything is equal value. That, you know-how we can obtain equal value is to have their own reason to exist, their own way to exist. And it is same-same with-with one person. Today I should be different, you know, and next day I should be different again. If I am always same, there is no reason why I should live. Day after day because I change from one being to the other it is-our life make sense.

So equality is-at the same time should be speciality-speciality at the same time, you know, equality. So if you put emphasis on just equality, that is-we call [you] "tamban-kan" [laughs]. [3] Tamban-kan means-tam is carry. Ban is board. "Carrying board fellow." [Laughing.] He is carrying board, so he cannot see the other side. He can see this side only because there is partition. If it is very high I cannot see this side [probably gestures]. If I carry a big board here [probably gestures] I cannot see the other side.

So if you stick to equality or freedom only-freedom is at the same time restriction. Restriction is freedom, you know. If you just stick to restriction or rules or freedom, you know, that is, you know-you are carrying a board on your shoulder. So you cannot-you can see just freedom or just restriction, or speciality or equality, emptiness or form, you know.

"Form is emptiness and emptiness is form." That is, you know, our understanding. To see form is to see emptiness. To understand form or color means to understand something more than that-something more than color or form-something which makes form form and color color, you know-something which give you color, something which give you form. You have-each one of us has some form, given by the emptiness. You-you call it "God" or something, but we call it emptiness. If you say

"God," God could be someone who may create many things. But our God is not someone who create something-who create everything. If you are a Christian, you may be scolded if you say [ask], "If God created earth then who created God?" [Laughs.] You may be scolded. But will-immediately we ask, you know, who created God? If, you know, God is created by someone-some-someone else, then God is also, you know, not different from us, because they are created as we are-as our form and nature is given by emptiness. Actually we came out of emptiness.

Maybe if I say so I am already-already creating some trouble or misunderstanding, because form itself is emptiness, and emptiness itself is form. We cannot say "create" or "to give form" or anything like that. But so that, you know, you can understand what I am saying easier, I am saying this way. And this kind of thing which could be understood by practice, by zazen practice, you cannot accept this kind of truth by thinking mind.

Anyway, I want to introduce you [to] some saying: Tamban-kan. Tam-ban-kan [S.R. says each syllable separately].

And how to, you know, how to get rid of stickiness of our mind is our practice. Our mind is very sticky. We easily stick to something-some idea, or speciality or equality, or man or woman, teacher or disciple, you know. We easily stick to some idea. I am disciple, you know. But you are not always disciple. Teacher is not always a teacher. Teacher could be sometime student. So we shouldn't stick to the idea of teacher or disciple. That is real freedom.

So-so that we can [be] free from sticky, you know-stickiness of our thinking mind or emotional feeling, we practice zazen. And if you will practice zazen, your character will be more and more clear and simple. Your-if someone say, "You are student." "Yes, I am student." [Laughs.] And if someone say, "You are teacher." "Yes, I am teacher." No stickiness, you know. "You are like a man." "Yes, maybe so." [Laughs.] "You are like a woman." "Yes, it is so." No stickiness in accepting various idea. So you have freedom, you know. That is how you attain freedom. That is the point of practice.

And many teachers or many people have pretty difficult time to get rid of this kind of stickiness of human mind. So you should remember this point, and you shouldn't lose the point of practice or study. So whatever you do it is study. If you eat something, you know-if you don't say "I like this" or "I don't like it," then that is freedom. If you eat something, you know, well-cooked, you should, you know, appreciate the taste of it. If it is raw, it is also good [laughs, laughter]. That is how to get out of stickiness-stickiness of our feeling. "Everything is good." Then you are free-you have freedom.

So you shouldn't be concerned about what people may say about you.

You know, it is okay. Whatever they say it may be so [laughs, laughter]. As they say so, maybe so [laughs]. But because of your sticky mind, you say, "No, I am not so." [Laughs.] Then you will lose your freedom. You make your world narrow-small for you. Wherever you go you have freedom if you are free from the idea of sticky mind, if you do not carry a board on your shoulder. It is very heavy-actually very heavy. Because of this board you will suffer a lot [laughs]. Tamban-kan. Kan means "fellow," you know. Exact translation is "fellow." Tam-ban-kan. Tamban-kan.

And we-we have this kind of technical term: aku-byodo.[4] "Wrong," you know-"wrong equality." Wrong-when you stick to the idea of equality, that is wrong equality. If you stick to the idea of equality, you want everyone the same size. You will be too high. Chuck Hoy is extra high. So we must cut their head [laughs, laughter] to make them equal. That is, you know, wrong equality.

Our equality is-because Chuck is high he is equal, and we need him. When I cannot reach for something he may help out [laughs, laughter]. That is why he is, you know, he has his own virtue. [Laughing.] If we make you-if you-if I make you same size, you know, you will be-all of you will be dead, you know. There is no reason why we have so many people. Maybe one is enough. If you are same size, and same-and your hand and feet and face are same, you know, one person will suffice. We don't need so many people. That is so-called-it, you know, wrong equality, aku-byodo.

So something should be equal-only one thing should be equal, but rest of things should be different. And to understand how important it is to be different is actual practice. This is the practice [to which] many teachers devoted themselves. Practice of difference is very difficult. That was the, you know, point we came across [in last night's lecture].

Here is a Zen story about Hyakujo-Hyakujo. Do you know Hyakujo?[5] Hyakujo is a great Zen master in China who established Zen precepts. And what we are observing at Tassajara or in Japan is mostly Hyakujo's way. How we live in [leaving? leave the?] zendo and how we-what kind of sitting we have is almost [completely] set up by Hyakujo. And we are still following his way. It is difficult to, you know, to go out of his way.

Hyakujo once mounted the pulpit-the altar like-like this, you know, and koan says whenever he appears on the altar, the old-an old man also appear at the rear of the row-in the corner of the lecture hall. And when-when people leave, you know, when students leave, that old man also left. One day-one day, all the-almost all the students left, but that old man did not leave. He was still sitting. That is trouble [laughs]. Anyway, I have to explain. [Laughs.] That is already trouble.

And Hyakujo asked him. "Why don't you leave?" And the old man said, "At-at-in the day of seven buddhas"-you know, before Shakyamuni

Buddha we count several [seven?] Buddhas-and Buddha-Shikin[6] Buddha-"when the time of Shikin Buddha, I, you know, I was a teacher." And someone asked him-wise man-if-if wise man will fall into the teaching of cause and effect or law of cause and effect. And I said to him, "Well-trained teacher or enlightened man will not fall into the rule of-law of cause and effect. Because I said so, since then I became a fox-wild fox. And actually-I am actually an old fox who live in the mountain." And the fox or the old man asked him, "What will be the right answer," you know, "for that question?" And Hyakujo said, "Enlightened person will fall into the law of karma-even an enlightened person cannot get out of the law of karma. That is my answer." And old fox attained enlightenment and vanished. That was the story.

What do we mean by-by a fox? Fox is not fox. It is actually emptiness, or absolute, or source of all being, or forms and colors is the old fox. So it-it appears-when people appear, it is okay. When, you know, an idea of emptiness or absolute is in our mind, it is: trouble because we are already-our mind is already stick to the idea of an old fox, or idea of emptiness. That is trouble-already trouble.

So when people, you know, or everyone leaves zendo or leaves lecture hall, there should not be any idea of the first principle or idea of form or emptiness, because each being, each student in zendo is the absolute itself-emptiness itself. When each one of you feel you have the absolute value, you are embodiment of the absolute truth. So when you leave, everything should leave. When you leave, mountain and river should leave. Everything should leave. Then there is no trouble.

Because you stick to the idea of, you know, form or the absolute, there is trouble. And the question and answer here they made back and forth, "to fall-the law of karma-to fall into the law of karma" means to stick to the, you know, law of karma, cause and effect-to lose freedom from the law of karma. So that is, you know, to fall into the idea of karma. Not to fall-the idea of karma or law of karma means not to stick to it, and stick to-not to fall. The idea of karma is to ignore the law of karma. You cannot ignore the law of karma. And we cannot-cannot stick to-we shouldn't stick to the law of karma. There is two, you know, [of?] our attitudes.

Sometime, even though you follow the teaching of karma, it does not mean you lose your freedom from the law of karma. Do you [laughs] understand? So when at first-when he [the soon-to-be old fox] said so, because he thought he understood equality of various being, he said, "Wise man will not," you know, "stick to the idea of karma." But when stick-he does not stick to the idea of karma meant for him, you know, no, there is no such, you know, thing like law of karma because each being does not exist [laughs] originally, you know. We are empty because we are changing. So I-when I don't exist-when everything doesn't exist in its strict sense, how is it possible to live? To-for everything to follow the law of karma, that was what-how he

understood. It is-he was tamban-kan. Because of his one-sided understanding of the truth he became a fox.

But when Hyakujo said you will-you must follow the law of karma, even though enlightened person, as long as he has-he is human being, he has physical body, it is not possible for him to be-not to follow the law of karma. So he could understand the reality he felt from both sides. That is why he [the old fox] could vanish from the zendo. That kind of fox shouldn't exist in zendo. In zendo there must be, you know, only student, and teacher and student. Teacher or student is each being, you know, in the realm of speciality. So what you can see is each student; you cannot see the absolute or old fox. When you have, you know, real understanding of the reality-old fox, does it exist? That was the parable-manifestation of [1-2 words] Hyakujo [1-2 words].

Do you have some question? Hai.

Student A: If [4-6 words] in the beginning you said that if you're not in the zendo, then you don't have any [1 word], and then you don't have to go, well-everybody is centered [?] in the zendo [1 word]-at least they are now.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, yeah.

Student A: Then the fact that we're in freedom resumes that center [?], and I think [3-6 words] what we have.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. Uh-huh. That is real freedom, you know. But whether we feel, at the same time, you know, specialness-so you cannot be arrogant, you know, even though you have some special talent, you know [laughs]. That is your speciality. And someone else may have, you know, his own speciality. And so that is why everyone is same. And you cannot be arrogant about it, you know. And at the same time there is another danger-danger, you know. "This is my speciality," you know [laughs]. So you will be very much individualistic-selfish, sometime, which actually does not exist. Self doesn't exist. At the-at that moment, you know, when you say, "This is my speciality," speciality exist. But it doesn't exist in-in the same way always. If you stick to your own speciality always, in the same way, you will be dead [laughs]. No one will be interested in you if your-if you are saying same thing over and over again like a fake record. What you say should be changed, and your feelings should-should change.

So speciality exist, and at the same time it doesn't exist, so both, you know. Exist and doesn't exist. So double-edged, you know, sword. Exist/not exist. It is not so easy, you know [laughs], this practice. You have no time to rest. "This is my speciality. All I have to talk [about] is in this book." [Laughs.] That is, you know, [1-2 words]. Even though you become buddha, you know, buddha cannot stay always as a buddha. [Sentence probably finished. Tape turned over.]



... buddha must be someone else. Buddha should be a friend of people, or else buddha cannot help people. That is why Jesus is, you know, a messenger or son of a god. God himself cannot do anything with people [laughs]. Only, you know, buddha is not buddha [god?]-he can help people. The same thing is true with everyone. We cannot be same way always.

Student B: Would you say that equality cannot exist with differences?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student B: Would you say that equality cannot exist even with differences?

Suzuki-roshi: Ahh. Cannot exist in the same way, you know. At that time, right here, in this moment, it exist, actually. But I don't know next moment-I don't know. Next moment you will exist, you know, in some other way. Like Dogen-zenji said, firewood-when firewood is firewood, you know, firewood has its own past and future. And when firewood become ash, you know, ash has its own past and future. Firewood is firewood, and ash is ash [laughs]. So, you know, I am here right now, but tomorrow I-I shall be ash, not firewood. Looks like same, but actually it is not, strictly speaking. That is why, when you understand the-all things in its strict sense, we cannot stick to any idea. But right here, at this moment, everything exist. I'm-looks like arguing [laughs] something, but it is so, isn't it?

Student B: So the things are constantly in change-

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, constantly.

Student B: -[1-2 words] the young ones-

Suzuki-roshi: Everyone.

Student B: -[4-6 word] when I was growing up that things can be constantly in change, and change can be different. [1-2 words] you know, you have a tall man and-you have a tall man and a short man. But they can be the same [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: Anyway-anyway, thank you. Abstract things can be rhetorical.

Suzuki-roshi: Rhetorical? Abstract? Abstract? [Laughs.] Yeah. There is, you know, some difference between your understanding and my understanding, you know. The equality is not-for-to me it is not abstract thing; it is very real. But to you, because you have no experience of the

abstract, you know, to you it is some idea. So idea doesn't change, you know-has no validity. It is equality, you know, because-ahh-[laughs]-it is rather difficult to say. Maybe you understand, you know.

Equality, if it doesn't-doesn't have any power or, you know, any meaning-for an instance, everything has, you know, salt. In each plant has salt, you know. But salt for you is something, you know-salt is salt-salt for you. When you eat vegetable, you don't feel there is salt in it, you know. But once you know, you know, the real taste of salt, then you will find out the salt in each vegetable, you know. So for you, salt is, you know, something in-in-in some container, and white stuff is salt. There is not much difference, you know.

Salt for me is-even though actually I don't feel salty when I eat apple or some other vegetable, I don't feel salty. But imagine if there is no salt-no salt in vegetable [laughs], what kind of taste you taste? You cannot imagine, you know. May be very-it may be terrible taste. Because of salt, apple tastes like apple, eggplants like-taste like eggplant, cucumber taste like cucumber. Do you understand? That kind of difference.

That is why-why we practice zazen, and we start our life from nothing. After you sit, you know, especially in morning, instead of lecture, you stand up, you feel, you know-your feeling will be indescribable. It is-that feeling is something quite different from feeling you have in your ordinary practice. That is the feeling you have when you come out from empty-emptiness. That is the taste of the real vegetable.

Okay? Maybe [laughs], I think-does it make some sense to you?

Student B: [2-3 words] I can see the idea that [4-6 words]-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Yeah. That is enough.

Student B: -the idea of a vacuum-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student B: [1-2 words] the fact that I am even telling you about it-

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yes.

Student B: -it would take a lot of discussion, first of all. I don't know if [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, I know. Anyway, old fox appeared [laughs], right here. So we have to discuss about the old fox. It appeared last time and still, you know, almost vanished [laughs]-almost. If you practice zazen tomorrow evening, it will go [laughs, laughter]. Something like that, okay? It is impossible to, you know, to explain it fully. It is not

something which is possible to explain from the beginning.

Some-some question? Hai.

Student C: Roshi [4-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -and in my mind I get some pictures and they're [4-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: -and I try to get rid of them so that I don't have any picture of what it is.

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: Then I don't feel that I have any understanding of what it means when you say "emptiness."

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah.

Student C: So both ways it seems like there is not right or not left. Is there some other way?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm. [Laughs.] Some other way, you know, is practice. You have to, you know, you have to be trying to figure out intellectually what it is from various points, you know, comparing one understanding of emptiness to another understanding of emptiness, because we use many words, you know: symbolic words, first principle, buddha-nature, or emptiness. Each time, why we apply that various words is to destroy various idea of, you know-special idea of emptiness. So real understanding of emptiness is-you should be-you should experience what is emptiness rather than idea, you know. That is, you know, in Rinzai that is kensho. Even though it is not so big, once you have kensho, you know, you have taste of it, which is not words.

And shikantaza-in shikantaza you have also taste of emptiness by actual-through actual experience, or else it doesn't makes much sense, you know. If I talk about it, it is already a kind of philosophy. Our teaching should be philosophical, but philosophy doesn't reach to the reality; it is still words, and result of thinking mind. But if you understand this kind of thought-Buddhist thought, your practice will be more and more concentrated on important point, or else you-your practice will be, you know, lost in various direction. You will go round and round same place, or you will go in wrong direction. And there are so many directions, so you will be lost.

So, in that way, for long, long time-long, long time ago, Indian

philosophers, teachers, you know, discussed about our religious experience: What is real religious experience? And those people were called ronji.[7] So Zen priests or teachers of various schools of Buddhism were at the same time a kind of ronji-a kind of philosopher who can discuss-who can discuss the truth with various schools of teacher-teachers of-of various schools. And they tried to-to be concentrated on some important core of religious experience.

That is something what I am trying here with you. Okay? You may be confused, I know, because maybe you are trying to understand-trying to-maybe you are-instead of thinking, you know, by yourself, you try-you depend on, or you are trying to understand what I mean. But what I am trying is to destroy your, you know, various wrong idea of practice. That is the difference.

I know you-you have various, you know, obstacles. So to get rid of those obstacles from your mind is my purpose of lecture. Do you understand? Because you may have so many ideas, you know, so that is not what I mean-that is not what I mean. This is-this is wrong, and you take off, you know, various obstacles from your mind, so that we can [be] concentrated [on] more-most important point, so that you can trust yourself, trust your buddha-nature which you have. Okay? I am not trying to give you any idea, but I-I am explaining something by your words [laughs]-not my words, by your words. I am using your words, but what I mean is something more than that.

Thank you very much.

---

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 9/27/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] SR-71-08-12, p. 9.

[2] sabetsu or shabetsu (speciality, separateness, or discrimination); -soku (immediately; is); -byodo (equality; all the same; non-discrimination); shinku (absolute void or true non-existence); myou (wondrous or mysterious existence).

[3] See also SR-69-03-30: "We call someone who understand things from just one side, we call him 'tamban-kan.' Tamban-kan in Chinese or Japanese means 'a man who carry a board on his shoulder.'"

[4] aku (wrong); byodo (equality).

[5] Hyakujo Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai): 720-814. Ch'an master of T'ang period. Student of Baso Doitsu, master of Isan Reiyu.

[6] One of the six buddhas who preceded Shakyamuni Buddha.

[7] ronji (Jap.): master of discourses.

## **10 - When wind stops, flowers fall**

Sunday, August 15, 1971

"When-when wind stops, flowers fall"

Zen Mountain Center

When-when wind stops, flowers fall.

When a bird sings, mountain become more calm.

That is a kind of Zen poem. My translation is not so good. [He recites the poem in Japanese, saying each line twice.]

Kaze yande hana mae otsu.

Kaze [Tori] naitei yama sarani yunari.[1]

Kaze yande: When wind stops, but still flower falls. No-there is no wind. If there is no wind, flower should stay, but flower-after, you know, there is no wind, still flower falls. If a bird sings, it is not calm. But if you hear a bird sing in the remoted mountain, you feel the calmness of the mountain more. Kaze-Tori naitei yama sarani yunari.

This is again-this poem again refers to the feeling of "there is" and "there is not." There is, and sometimes there is not. And there is not, sometimes there is [laughs]. When a flower falls, why flower falls is because there is wind. But when there is no wind, flowers still fall. And when you see a flower fall, you feel the wind, more than wind is up [?]. When a bird sings, you feel the calmness of the mountain more than you-more than when you did not hear any sound. That is true. Isn't-isn't that true?

That is real feeling of "there is" and "there is not." That is actual feeling. But usually we are involved in the idea of "there is" or "there is not." "There is not" means there is no wind. "There is not" means there is no wind. "There is no sound" means, you know, you don't hear anything-that is, there is no sound. But actually, when you hear sound you do not feel of actual feeling of no sound. It is paradoxical, you may say, but that is much more true than your, you know, usual understanding of "there is" or "there is not." Much more true. Kaze yande hana mae otsu. Kaze [Tori] naitei yama sarani yunari. You cannot, you know-this is-you cannot say this is just poem. This is actual reality.

When you, you know, have various things you eat, you become more hungry [laughs]. That is also true. "There is," for us, there is not. "There is not," for us, actually means there is. When there-there is not much food, whatever you eat you will be satisfied with what you eat. Actually, you know, you feel satisfaction of the things you have, when there is not so much. "There is not" is for us "there is," and "there is" for us "there is not much" [laughs] often.

That is very true for us. When that is very true for us, our thinking mind goes [in] another direction. That is why our practice is always confused [laughs]. On one hand, you know, your-your feeling is very realistic and actual; on the other hand, your feeling is just logical. And it is ignoring actual feeling you have in our everyday life. No one knows which it is true. Both is true. There is something we should think about, right here.

Ummon[2] one day asked our students: "I don't ask about-I don't ask about fifteen days before. But how about fifteen days ahead?" That was his question. I don't ask you what has happened, you know, what has happened, actually, fifteen days before, or what has been-what has happened for fifteen days, but I am asking you what will happen from now? That was Ummon's question. No one could answer for that-for that question.

So Ummon said: "Every day is good day" [laughs]. That was his answer. Every day is a good day. Fifteen days, you know, it has been good days-we have had good days for fifteen days, and we will have good days from now on. Every day is good day. That was Ummon's answer.

And that-what he means is-"Every day good day" means every day-actual-his life of every day include "is not"-include both "there is" and "there is not." And he is satisfied with the idea of "there is" and the idea of "there is not." "There is something" is good; "there is no-nothing" is also good. But "there is," at the same time, does not mean there is noth- [partial word]-actually there is something. But even though there is nothing for him, that is "there is." Even though "there is," you know, for him that is-"there is not" sometime.

Anyway, every day is good day for him. "There is" or "there is not," he doesn't care. "There is"-good. "There is" is good. And "there is not"-also good. Every day is good day. When you, you know, understand exactly what is "there is" and what is "there is not," then you have complete freedom from everything, and you can appreciate things in its true sense.

When there is no wind, still something-some flower like camellia falls. In the deep mountain, when you hear a bird, then you feel, all of a sudden, you feel, "Oh, how quiet mountain it is." Every day is a good day. Whatever happen to him, it is not just happening of something, or it is not just nothing happened. "Nothing happened," you say, but many

things is happening. When something happens, you feel nothing. The feeling of nothing is happening in the great universe, including sun and the moon and bright stars you see in Tassajara valley. That you see many stars-actually when you see many stars, you will feel the vast emptiness of the sky. You are not just watching stars, but you are-you are feeling, actually, you feel the vastness of the sky.

In short, if you are always involved in the life of "there is" or "there is not," or enough or not enough, good or bad, right or wrong, you don't feel anything in its true sense. But when your mind is very calm, calm enough to see things which you do not actually see, when your mind is calmness, even though you see many things, you see-you can appreciate the vastness of the being covered by something you see. Then you can appreciate things as it is. That is Ummon's "Every day is good day." "Every day is good day."

I put more emphasis on intellectual, you know, interpretation of our-intellectual interpretation of our framework of Buddhist teaching, but more important thing is to have real feeling of practice.

Every day we practice zazen. In-in summer, morning zazen is good, very good, but evening zazen is also good. It is little bit hot, but after, you know, sitting, when you feel cool wind from outside, you may feel indescribable, you know, feeling of practice. Night zazen in this time of the year is supposed to be very hot because it is hot. But actual feeling you have in zazen in such a warm days-hot days-you have indescribable good feeling, which you cannot appreciate in spring or autumn. Coolness of the-feeling of the coolness is something more than you think about. Even though you know how good evening zazen is, but each time you sit you will feel, "Oh, good." [Laughs.] Every time you sit, your feeling will be refreshed because, I think, because it is hot. "It is hot" is not "it is hot," actually.

In monastery we do not have so good food [laughs] usually, and at Tassajara, as food is pretty strong and good, but not so, you know, not so tasty or it is very plain, I think of [?]. If you chew it-when you chew it-when you eat, you will feel real taste of the vegetables. If you cook by sugar and with many-too much spices [laughs], you cannot appreciate real taste of the food.

If the way of accepting things is simple, you can appreciate the things more. So we say:

Jiki ni oite to naru mono wa,

ho ni oitemo mata to nari.[3]

Jiki-jiki is food.

If you-if you can appreciate food,  
you can appreciate dharma.

Jiki ni oite to naru. To-do you know? To means "absolute." Jiki ni oite to naru mono wa.

If you appreciate the real value of the absolute in food, you can appreciate dharma food: Jiki ni oite to naru mono wa, ho ni oitemo mata to nari. When your practice come to this stage, you are said to be a good monk or a good student [laughs]. We say:

Chojo wa chohosshin;

tanjo wa tanhosshin.[4]

Someone like Chuck is-is long buddha [laughs]. Someone like me is short buddha. Chojo wa chohosshin, tanjo wa tanhosshin. Short or long, good or bad, we say, we can appreciate things as it is, and we appreciate the value of each being [thing?]. That is something what I referred to in last-last lecture.[5]

But so far, at Tassajara, we have been discussing, we have had discussion after discussion [laughs]: discussing about, you know, food, or rules, or many things-position. But why we did so is we cannot ignore idea of good and bad, long and short, but more and more as our students grew up, we can-we must be able to appreciate things as they are. Bamboo is good, pine tree is good, oak tree is good, grass is good, darkness at night is good [laughs], frog is good. Everything should be good. That is "Every day is good day." And nothing is good-bare field [?] is good. Dark vast sky is good. That is, you know, our actual feeling we should reach [teach?].

Maybe next have question and answer if you have-for fifteen minutes or so. Do you have some question? [Asides; laughter.] No question?

Student A (Dan Welch?): Roshi, sometimes it seems easy to accept your words. But you often tell us that words are pointing at the moon [?]. How [3-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: What I say-

Student A: Sometimes it seems that we can accept quite easily what you say. But maybe you don't live that long [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Yeah. Maybe so. [Laughs, laughter.]

Student A: But seriously, I don't know what to say-

Suzuki-roshi: That is why I could [laughs, laughter]. Yeah-because I say



so, you accept it. When you say so, you die [?], you know. It means that if you really, you know, if you really have that kind of feeling, you know, it is al- [partial word: "always"?]- what I say is always true. But because-actual practice-your actual practice is not always in-in that way. Maybe it takes time, you know, to understand what I am saying.

But if my talk is end up in a kind of discussion, it doesn't make sense. We can have discussion any time-but-discussion is good, but discussion will not solve the problem completely. What I am talking right now is something you cannot reach by your mind, thinking mind, but something-it is something you can feel through practice-through real practice.

What is real practice and what is not? The point is, when you forget-when you can forget yourself, then you have real practice. When your mind is always occupied by your small thinking mind or emotional mind or feeling or concepts, you cannot have real practice. Do you have some question-some more question? Hai.

Student B: [1-2 words] situation [2-3 words]. Today I was working [3-4 words], and a big fly was landing on my face. A fly. Sometimes I brushed it off. And today I got angry [3-4 words]. And so I [12-16 words] ... so I didn't feel bad. It was a good day, but it wasn't [4-6 words]. In that kind of situation, maybe you have-give me some advice on what I could [10-14 words] sometimes [4-6 words] at other times [4-6 words]. Sometimes if I [4-6 words] it turns warm-very hot.

Suzuki-roshi: When you are not patient, you know, when you become impatient, as you feel [reply from student; laughs], you don't feel so good. No-not always so. When you become impatient [laughs], of course you may make face. How about, you know, painting? Drawing-make some drawing of your impatient face on a paper, you know, when you have time. [Laughs, laughter.] [Student probably makes a face or draws one. SR is reacting to something with laughter.] Pretty good. May be very good Zen-Zen picture-Zen painting-if you-if you do it-if you are able to do it. And if you cannot do it, maybe Dan [Welch?] will do it [laughs]. Pretty good-not so bad.

But that you-you do not like your impatient face, that was not so good. If you are patient enough, you know, to work in the garden, then why don't you do more-little bit more patient-a little bit. It is too soon to say this is good or bad. This is "My practice is good or bad." You cannot say so easily because your practice will continue, you know.

Student C: Getting upset with yourself-getting annoyed with yourself- [1-2 words] if anything happens-

Suzuki-roshi: Dualistic.

Student C: Its true it's dualistic, but if I face it I [2-3 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, and because you say "dualistic," that is not so, actually. When it is happening it is not so. After you, yeah, think about it, you feel dualistic.

Student C: [1-2 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: After. Yeah, that is not so good [laughs]. That is not so good. Your practice should continue and develop, you know, moment after moment. Your firewood does not become ash. Ash is ash, and firewood is firewood. And that you-hot-that you work in the garden, even though there are many flies, even though sun is strong, that is your practice at that time, and that practice actually extended to the practice of this evening: our practice of shikantaza. That is why you have good feeling when you appear in zendo with white tabi, with people, and recite, you know, sutra and make bow. You see? Your practice is going on and on and on.

Student C: When I started in the garden [?] this spring I thought-if-if-if my understanding-I think I understand what you're saying. However, for some reason my mind is blank about what the ... of what happened. Sometimes it-sometimes I feel bad about what happened. But because I feel bad about what happened, I may be tongue-tied [?] and [1 word]-not to do bad, whatever that is.

Suzuki-roshi: That is, you know, another practice, you know. To reflect on what you do is quite different practice [than] you had before in-in the garden. Refreshed practice. There is-of course there is some connection, but you are not actually continuing same practice. Same practice but, you know, renewed practice. Not same-not same but not different, we say. So you should understand in that way.

You should think about it, but you shouldn't stick to it. Why you shouldn't stick to it is it is renewed practice already, and that you feel bad is good. Who feels bad about it? Not your small mind, which was disturbed by flies, but it is by big mind-big mind thinks that was not good. So you have your practice at that time, you know: practice of big mind. When you are annoyed by, you know, by flies, that was small-minded practice, but ... [Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]

We say, if you fell down by [on] the ground, you will stand up, you know, by the ground. Do you understand? If you fell-if you, you know, lose your practice because of the annoyance you have with flies, you will stand up [by the] same annoyance. Because when you say "I was annoyed by flies and that was not good practice," then already you stand-stood up, because you have big mind already. Do you understand?

So it is okay, even [laughs] you don't have to be concerned about it so much-about your bad practice so much. But to-to be concerned about it

is good, because it is a practice of big mind. So [loud mike noise] those who-you cannot say this has [6-8 words unclear]. If you fell on the ground you will stand up by the same old ground. If you say "My practice is not good," [5-6 words], you are not standing already like this. So that-because of this, you know, same old problem, you can stand up.

So if you enlighten with delusion-about delusion, you are enlightened person, you know. If you are deluded as your enlightened mind, that is delusion. Do you understand? If you say "My practice was not good," then that is enlightenment. It is not problem of what you did is good or bad, but problem of actual practice you have right now-actual mind you have right now. If the actual mind you have right now is big mind, that is enlightenment. Okay? You-you don't have to [be] concerned about what you did before, but you have to [laughs] because you have to stand up. But when you think that was wrong, that is already cleared up. You could cut off the delusion you have. You have not delusion any more. You are not deluded any more. Ahhh. Does it make sense? Okay? Hai.

Student D: If you're being bitten-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: If you're being bitten, say, by a fly or whatever it is, and you smack that fly you just think that-you don't think about it-the fly is on the ground dead [laughter]. [2 words] the way you are.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student D: Don't think about it. Go right on with whatever you're doing. You don't inflict upon it the anguish of something [?]. [4-5 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Different?

Student D: You don't think about it any way at all.

Suzuki-roshi: You will think-you will feel [in] some way, you know. It is not possible not to feel-not to have any feeling about it. But what kind of feeling you have is the point.

Student D: Well, when I-when I did this I didn't-[3-4 words]-whatever it was just died, and afterwards I thought, well maybe it just died that way [1-2 words] [laughter, comments by other students].

Suzuki-roshi: Is it true with almost everyone? Do you agree [laughs] with his way [?]?

Student E: Let's kill Alan.[6] [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student F: Suzuki-roshi, what if we smack him and then stomp on him?  
[7] [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: What kind of reaction do you have? [Laughter.]

Student F: Like a blade of grass to become a buddha.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student F: Grass-blade of grass to become a buddha.

Suzuki-roshi: Ohh. [Laughs.] Even though, you know, at last- This is famous statement of Dogen: Even though you do not like grass, grass will grow quite easily. Even though you like flower, life will-flower will fall [laughs]. That is actual reality. Even though it is so, if-if some-you are stinged by-by mosquito or horse-horsefly, you know, you will do this [gesturing?] [laughs]. You will do this, maybe. But when you are involved in very serious practice, you wouldn't, you know. Even though mosquito comes, you will be sitting, and until you-you may have many mosquitoes, you know, like small [1-2 words] [laughs]-big [1-2 words]. They, you know, they will [3-4 words] sting us, but not only sting, but also they suck blood, you know, from us. More and more they will become like small, you know, fruits or something [laughs, laughter]. They cannot fly any more [laughs, laughter-maybe gesturing]. But you will still-you will be still sitting. And then you have to be careful when you-you stand up, not-not to step on mosquitoes [laughs].

So you feel calm to [1 word]. "Oh, he came." And as soon as he came with his legs [1 word] and his-what do you call it-his pipe or something [laughs, laughter]-needle [laughs]-

Student: Straw.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student: Straw.

Suzuki-roshi: Straw. [Laughs, laughter.] -you-you feel his straw, you know, coming. Straw. Mouth. Straw. First, you know, legs; next straw; and straw, you know, [laughs] come in and come out like this [probably gestures], and while they are continue this for several moments, they stop and start to suck, until they become like this [probably gestures]. And they cannot fly because they are so heavy.

So you don't-when your practice is completely involved in bad [?]-big mind, you don't care. But, you know, but usually, for an instance, when a bug or big horsefly come [slaps self], I will-I will do [?] like this. But what I feel is different. But whatever feeling I have, if something has

happened already, you know, you cannot do anything. Even though it was bad-it is not okay, but [laughs] we cannot do anything about it, so you have to think on it [?]-you have-you were-how do you say?-you have to make reflection.

How you feel is the point. If you feel bad, that is good. And it is not always possible-it is not impossible not to feel good or bad if you-unless you make some excuse. But to-to make some excuse is very small mind. So don't make any excuse. Don't try to make any excuse [for] what you have done. If it is wrong, "I am sorry." If it is good, then you will say "maybe so," but you shouldn't feel completely satisfied with your practice. You should go on and on. Hai.

Student G: What about if you know it's wrong and you do it anyway?

Suzuki-roshi: Huh?

Student G: What about if you know it's wrong and you do it anyway?

Suzuki-roshi: When you do it anyway?

Student G: Yeah. You did so in a way that you know it in a minute [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Student G: But you-

Suzuki-roshi: You did it anyway.

Student G: -you do it anyway.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Do you mean you did it because you have to-had to?

Student G: I don't live in [1-2 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Anyway, it is very-very difficult to understand exactly. Without thinking, do you mean? Anyway-

Student G: No, with thinking.

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student G: -with thinking.

Suzuki-roshi: With thinking-

Student G: Yes.

Suzuki-roshi: -and not completely. "Anyway, I will do it." That is not so

serious. That is, I don't think, serious if-not serious now. In your practice, yeah, we shouldn't do things just anyway, you know. "Okay, I will do it anyway." Sometime it is good, you know. Without giving responsibility of doing to some-somebody, taking resp- [partial word]-the responsibility of doing to-for yourself. "I will do it anyway," you know. You don't have to say this way or that way. If it is bad, "that is my, you know, fault"; if it is good, you know, "because you helped me, I did it." "But anyway I did it." This kind of "anyway" is very good [?]. "But I don't know what we should do. Anyway I will do it"-that is not so good [?]. But when you-you are in some situation where you should do something, you know, then you will do it anyway. "Whether it is good or bad, someone must do it. So anyway I will do it." That is also "anyway." "I don't know what will happen to-to us, but anyway I will go and find out." That is also "anyway." There must be many "anyways." [Laughs, laughter.]

As you are mostly young, so I think you-your practice should not be old man's practice. You should be confront with problem-problems you have, you know, for you.

Do you have some questions, some more question? One more please. Hai.

Student H: [6-10 sentences unclear.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm. Actually, you know, that is not-cannot be, you know, serious question [laughs]. You know, you know, the answer already, perhaps, but you don't know what to do. That is why you ask me, isn't that so? You know, you know.

Student H: Well, I know-I know thatI [1-2 sentences unclear], but I [rest of sentence unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: I-I maybe-I have some good answer? [Laughs, laughter.] No, I am sorry I haven't [laughs]. I don't have so good answer for that. But my answer will be, you know, if it's good chance for you to have that kind of problem. You know, because of that kind of problem, we can practice our way. It is good to have some problem. If it, you know-this-this is too much to say, but if we are cats or dog we have no problem, so we don't have to practice [laughs] [1 word]. We are happy in our problem. So that is not problem just for you. Everyone has same problems, actually. So as-as long as you are-you live in this land of Shakyamuni Buddha you have that problem-or [living in the] human world, you have that problem.

In Buddhist traditionally [?], land of-this world is Nansenbushu,[8]

the south side of the Mount Sumeru. On the opposite side there is Hokkuroshu,[9] where there is no problem [laughs]. There is enough water to drink, and no cold and similar things, and enough juice [?] and

various foods you enjoy; there is no problem. People [live] long time-people do not die. If you are born in that kind of place, you know, you have more pleasure, and we have no Buddhism or no practice. That is very, you know- But it suggest some truth.

So your question is based on the idea of understanding of our life. "If our life is full of happiness and joy, that is good life; if our life is full of suffering and problem, that is not good life." That is a very superficial understanding of life. And most people-people's view of life is based on that kind of idea of good or bad, which is not deep enough, which is not real enough.

So when you have that kind of problem, you should think of, you know, why you have-when you have problem [?], you know, when you are able to think about it. When you are angry you cannot think, of course. But when you are not-when your mind is calm, you should think about the foundation of your-of your view of life-understanding of life. And it is good to listen to some teaching like Buddhism. We do not talk about sin, but we talk about suffering and problem of life. And it is not possible to leave-to get out of suffering and to, you know, to have life of no problem, according to our understanding of-of human life.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape by Bill Redican, 9/25/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms, particularly the verses on Pages 1 and 3-4.

[1] Suzuki-roshi is quoting two different (probably originally Chinese) poems, two verses from each poem in each of these two lines. The sound and tone of both poems is similar, which may be why Suzuki-roshi recited both verses together. Line 1: Implied: (when); Kaze (wind); yande (stop); hana (flower); mae (before or already); otsu (dropped). Line 2: Tori (bird); naite (sing); yama (mountain); sarani (more); yunari (calm). In Line 2, Suzuki-roshi inadvertently said "Kaze" instead of "Tori" as the first word of the line. He corrected "Kaze" to "Tori" at the end of the next (fourth) paragraph.

[2] Ummon Bun'en (Yunmen Wenyan): 864-949. Ch'an master. Ummon's statement is from Case 6 of the Pi-yen-lu (Blue Cliff Record).

[3] Jiki (food); ni oite (about); to (absolute or equality); naru (become); mono wa (person), ho (dharma); ni oitemo (about); mata (also); to (absolute or equality); nari (end-of-sentence marker). Suzuki-roshi is referring to Dogen-zenji's "Fushuku-hanpo" ("The Dharma for Taking Food"), from Eihei (Dai)Shingi, Line 1. See T. D. Leighton and S.

Okumura, Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community, Albany: SUNY, 1996, p. 83. [See also SR-70-08-04.]

[4] Cho (long) jo (meditating); wa (is or equals); cho(long) hosshin (buddha or dharmakaya); tan (short) jo (meditating); wa (is or equals); tan (short) hosshin (buddha or dharmakaya). Literally, "Long-sitting is long buddha; short-sitting is short buddha." Figuratively, "Sitting a long or short time, you can realize buddha-mind," or "Sitting is most important, even for a short time."

[5] SR-71-08-13.

[6] Possibly Alan Marlowe, suggesting that Student D was Alan.

[7] Probably referring to the way insects were treated in the student's (largely inaudible) questions.

[8] Nan (Jap.) = "south." Also Nan'enbudai, the "Jumbu (San. Jumbudvipa) continent in the south." According to Hindu/Buddhist cosmology, four continents (shishu) lie at the bottom of the ocean in the four cardinal directions arranged around Mt. Sumeru (Meru), the "world mountain" at the center of the universe. Nansenbushu is the continent lying to the south.

[9] Hoku (Jap.) = "north." Also Uttarakuru (San.). Hokkuru lies to the north of Mt. Sumeru. Its occupants live for 1000 years amidst a variety of pleasures.

## **11 - Sun-Faced Buddha, Moon-Faced Buddha**

Tuesday, August 17, 1971

Sun-Faced Buddha, Moon-Faced Buddha  
Zen Mountain Center

In-in my lecture, sometime I say everyone has buddha-nature, and whatever you do, that is, you know, Buddha's activity, I say. But on the other hand, I say you must follow the rule, and when you practice zazen you should practice in some certain way: Keep your spine straight, cross your legs, and pull your neck as if you are supporting something. And pull in your chin. There are many, you know, instructions.

So you will be confused when I say, you know-it looks like contradiction to say to rule-to put emphasis on rules and to follow our schedule. If it is-if whatever you do that is, you know, Buddha's activity, then why we must have rule? This kind of, you know, question you may have.

The other-the other day, I said long bamboo is Buddha-long Buddha. Short bamboo is short Buddha [laughs]. And my statement discouraged [laughs] some sincere students, didn't it? As if I am talking about something-as if I am encouraging some, you know, easy way. And-for



an instance, you know the Sun-Faced Buddha and the Moon-Faced Buddha. When he is sick, he is Moon-Faced Buddha. When he is healthy he is the Sun-Faced Buddha. And when it is hot, we are hot-we should be hot Buddha. When it is cold, we should be cold Buddha. This kind of statement invite many misunderstanding.

When we talk like this, you know, "Sun-Faced Buddha," "the Moon-Faced Buddha," or "everyday is good day," or "everyone has buddha-nature," or "in our great activity, whatever we do, that is our great activity," or "nothing is too long or nothing is too short" [laughs]. Even though you recite, you know, sutra with long, long voice [laughs]-it cannot be too long. It is-even though we say something, we hope it is not too short. If you say so, maybe someone who is practicing have to hit mokugyo-how to hit bell-will be discouraged. "Oh, Suzuki-roshi doesn't care [laughs] how we hit mokugyo. Even though we hit it fast, he doesn't care." But it-it is not so.

From viewpoint-there is two completely different viewpoint. One is, you know, when we say everyone-everything has buddha-nature, nothing is great or nothing is small-too small. To lift up a [speck of] dust means to lift up whole universe. When we say in that way, it means that we-we are talking about our original nature from standpoint of the first principle. When we, you know, put emphasis on strict rule, at that time we put emphasis on actual practice. Practice is the way to attain to have direct experience of the first principle. Only when you prac- [partial word]-you put emphasis on your practice you will, you know, experience-you will have the direct experience of the first principle. But when, you know, we talk about by words, we cannot say both sides at once. When we talk about, you know, the first principle, we-everything has buddha-nature period [laughs]. No words follow "Everything has buddha-nature."

But when you hear that, you know, you will understand-when-if everything has buddha-nature, "then" or "but"- "but" or "then" does not follow when we talk about the first principle. When you say "then" or "but," therefore your understanding of the first-the first principle is not anymore the first principle. If that is the first principle [then it is correct to say], "Everything has buddha-nature." Period.

Do-do you know the difference? You cannot say "therefore." If you say "therefore," that is not-it is, you know, the condition-"therefore"-a reason or excuse, you know, or something-for your lazy [laughs] practice. So it is not first principle any more. Everything has buddha-nature, period. No idea follows. No[t] any kind of idea comes up by that statement. So, "Everything has buddha-nature," someone say [thumps table]. Yes! When-only when you could say so, that is the first principle. You-you shouldn't say "therefore" [or] "but." That is the first principle.

But when we talk about actual practice you can say "therefore," [or] "that is why," you know, "even it is so," you can say so. That is the

difference between first principle and the second principle. And if you confuse the first principle and second principle, you don't understand anything. You are always going, you know, round and round: no end [to] your confusion. You will be always confused. So when you practice you should be strictly involved in the rules. There there is the first principle, actually. Moment after moment there is first principle.

So even so, you know-I explained the other night, if we, you know, if we realize that our practice is lazy practice, then you-you may feel it-feel-you don't feel good. And this kind of mistake is happening every day, and we-we cannot enjoy our practice. What should we do? And what I said was that you realize your practice is not good. What mind, you know, found out your lazy practice? Your big mind found out your mistake. So if you find out the big mind which is working on your lazy practice-small-minded practice-then, at that point, at least your practice is good. So before you make some complaint, you should appreciate the big mind which appear in your mind. That was, you know, my answer.

It looks like [I said], "Whatever you do it is okay," but I don't mean that. Important point is, you know, only when big mind appear, the small mind, you know, will vanish-should vanish. You should not compare a big mind to a small mind. What I'm-what I mean is don't worry about your small mind when you have big mind.

How to continue your true practice based on the big mind is the point. That is the point. But I didn't-I did not mean even though you have lazy practice it is okay. That is big misunderstanding. It is not okay. But if I say so, it is not okay. You will be discouraged if it is not-if I say it is not okay, so [laughs] your practice of-will be the continuous, you know, practice of "not okay." One after another, "not okay practice" will continue [laughs]. You feel in that way, but if you carefully, you know, think about it, the continuous, you know, practice of wrong practice is big-minded practice-continuous activity of big mind. If you understand in that way, that is, you know, true understanding of your practice.

In your big mind, small mind has some position-some place. Good and bad also has some place, some seat. We cannot ignore the small mind of wrong practice completely. There is some seat. That is big mind. The small mind-even though the mind is good, small mind does not allow for-for wrong mind or small mind to sit together. Even though it is good, you know, good practice, but small-minded good practice is not real practice. Big-minded good practice is really, really good practice. And it gives a seat for the good practice and bad practice. And you don't feel so bad about your bad practice. And you will not be arrogant with your good practice.

You don't like mostly sermon or lecture. Why you don't like is-when you-when someone give lecture, you know, someone will convince [you of] something, you know-convince you [of] something-something special. But Buddhist lecture do not, you know, force anything on you. What we

want is to have, you know, big mind-to acknowledge things as they are, to clear your mind from various one-sided wrong understanding of things. That is, you know, the purpose of lecture.

Sometime, you know, we slap you or are angry with you. Someone may talk, but why they-someone become angry is to correct-to cut off your delusion, or to empty your mind. If someone stick to some one-sided view, it is pretty difficult to get rid of it for humans and for the creature [s] too. So [laughs] there must be, you know-we try various way. The purpose of why, you know, we do so is because we want to get rid of the wrong concrete idea in your mind-that's all. Do you understand? That is what I wanted to tell you tonight specially.

After making many lectures, almost every evening, I found out that you didn't-some of you didn't understand what I meant. Most people like Zen because Zen has no idea of things or no idea of good or bad, you know. That is why people like it [laughs]. But we are pretty strict with our practice-maybe very strict. Even though, you know, we are very strict, we do not seriously cope [?] with the problem in our practice-actual practice, which-we have always smile, you know, even though the way we practice is hard. You know that that is the second principle. It is something to help us. Even though, you know, your teacher is angry, you do not take it so seriously [laughing]. That is trouble [speaking more quietly] [laughter]. You know that that is the second principle, not first principle. So when I say something, mostly about rules, I say it with smiling, so you don't take it so seriously [laughs].

Do you have some questions? There must be many questions. Hai.

Student A: Roshi, I thought that our eyes are focused [2-4 words unclear].

Suzuki-roshi: I-I am sorry I couldn't follow it.

Student A: Shotaku [?] said our eyes should focus.

Suzuki-roshi: Eyes? Close?

Student B: Shotaku [?] said that we focus.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh, focus. Not [1 word unclear], you know, you are not gazing at anything. "Focus," we say, but it is-not to gaze but to, you know-focus some, maybe four feet ahead. At first it is difficult just to, you know, put focus on some area. Unless you see something, some beginner may put something four-three-four feet ahead. If there is nothing, they pick up, you know [laughs], edge of the tatami. That is easy, maybe, but that is not the best way. If you have something to watch it is easy, you know, to be concentrated, but you are-you should be-should be able to have [half?] focus, you know. Best for-maybe for you four feet or more feet ahead. Do you understand? Hai.

Student B: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student B: When you-can you say something about-about [1 word] or for us to [2-3 words] in our practice? How we can help each other?

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Hmm. Best way to help others is, you know, to have good practice. If you have good practice, that is the best way to help others. That is very true. To help others is not different from to help themselves. But original, you know, this is again-again, you know, the first principle. There is no-you and others is not two. One. You see? That is the first principle. You should-even intellectually, this is the reality we should accept-ultimate reality.

You cannot-this kind of-the first principle is something which you cannot, you know, ignore. It is very true. But [laughs] it is true, but if I talk about for students who listen to me, looks like I am talking about something, you know, which you-something [that has] nothing to do with you. You may feel in that way.

Everything is one, you know. Even though I say so, it doesn't help you [laughs]. Even though I talk about Buddhist philosophy, it doesn't help. Your actual problem is always with you, and just philosophy-philosophical understanding of Buddhism doesn't help. But the philosophy-Buddhist philosophy is so true that you cannot deny it. And it is so, you know, universal and so common, so it is not so interesting either. Maybe when you discuss something, when you have argument with some other people, it may be interesting [?], you know, because your philosophy is graceful [?]-graceful [?] philosophy. So you will win anyway. So it maybe graceful [?] [laughing].

But it-it doesn't help you at all. So-but you cannot deny it, that's all. If that is so true, if that is the ultimate truth, why you have problem, you know? The actual questions start from that point. If we are Buddha-all Buddha-then why we hate each other? Why we have to kill animals? Real problem will start from that point.

So Buddhism, on the other hand, is the teaching of or about human-human nature. What is human being is Buddhist teaching. In comparison to, you know-when we have buddha-nature, why human being is like this is the first, you know, problem or question you will have. So to study Buddhism is to study ourselves. To study ourselves is to forget ourselves, like Dogen-zenji says. To study Buddhism is-or to study the first principle is to study the second principle. To study the second principle is to-to practice second principle until you forget all about it, until you don't feel you have, you know, rules.

How you help others is-there is no special way to help others. Let them

know our human nature, and let them know how we have problem. And to-to encourage people by your own practice, that is the best way to help people. You know, learning will not help. Almsgiving will not help. But when you follow, when you understand what is human being and what is the way for human beings to follow Buddhist way is, you know, how to help people. We should be concentrated on that point, and we shouldn't try to help people by giving something or by some special way. Okay? [Laughs.] Some question?

Student C: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student C: What does the woodworking mean above your door? "The Mahabodhisattva Zendo"?[1]

Suzuki-roshi: Mahabodhisattva Zendo?

Student C: The calligraphy above the-above the door?

Suzuki-roshi: Oh. Did you see it? Oh. Mahabodhisattva Zendo. Bodhisattva is the, you know-bodhisattva-you know "bodhisattva."

Student C: I mean the-the calligraphy above your door-your apartment door-

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: -the framed calligraphy there?

Suzuki-roshi: No, not [1-2 words]. Mahabodhisattva. I asked, you know, I send it to Japan-

Student C: No. I mean the-above your door.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh!

Student C: Above the door.

Suzuki-roshi: Above the door.[2] Oh, that is not "Mahabodhisattva Zendo." [Laughter.] That is-I am sorry-that is two characters, which is Jo un-"to glide cloud" or "to ride on cloud." Jo un, you know, is-it comes-it-Dogen-zenji-in Dogen-zenji's "Sansui-kyo"- "Sutra of Mountain and River"-he says the water has life of riding cloud [laughs].[3] Jo un no kudoku ari.[4]

People thinks water is running, you know, flowing in the stream, but "Water has also," you know, "the merit of driving cloud." Cloud itself, it may be water [laughs]. It is-that is again his-when he says so it means also the first principle.

So if you-if you understand what is first principle, that will be a good help, you know, to release your body in our life. Even though we are like a water, always running in-only in valley or stream, but we should not complain. Water has also the virtue of being cloud, and water is everywhere. But when we are in the stream, when they in the stream, water may feel, you know, "Why you are running such a, you know-go by our stream? I wish I could be like a cloud." That is, you know, our complaint. But actually, water can be a cloud. If we don't limit our power, our power is [1-2 words unclear; said in a whisper]. So, that will be the [1 word].

Do you know Lotus Sutra-how Lotus Sutra started, do you know? Lotus Sutra was recited by many people. We don't know exactly-no one knows exactly who compiled the sutra, but while people, Buddhists, were reciting the sutra, the sutra became more and more famous. And they get together and recited that sutra. At that time, temples were, you know, some place for the priests [to] practice their way-for the priests to study Buddhism. But for layman there is not much good place to have meeting. And people get together in cemetery, or in the temple yard they recited the sutra.

The group of the people [were] making pilgrimage through-all through Indian villages. Once in a while, I don't know how many times a year, they visited some certain place, but they were-people were waiting for the group who recite sutra to come. In that way Lotus Sutra became very popular. That is-and that sutra encouraged people ... [Sentence was probably finished. First tape (of two) turned over here.]

The more you know about human nature, the more you will be interested in the first principle. In this way you can, you know, encourage your practice. But if you confuse the first principle with the second principle, then-or if you rely on our teaching, you know, it doesn't help you so much. Hai.

Student D: Roshi, what does it mean in practice when [6-10 words]?

Suzuki-roshi: Include what?

Student D: That sometimes we include both [2-4 words] in practice [2-3 words] between thought and [1-2 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Practice-zazen practice, first of all-zazen practice for us-what is the purpose of zazen practice? That is something I am talking about so many times. Perhaps, you know, why it is difficult for you to improve your understanding is you listen to our lecture day by day without learning-remembering what I said before, you know, without accepting clearly what I mean. So mind is always, you know-and moreover, I [laughs]-you don't have to remember what I say. It means [1-3 words]. But what I mean is, you know, if you, you know, when you

listen to my lecture, and when you say "yes," that is the point. When you say yes, you accept it-"That's okay." And it means that your mind is open and your ears are open. Then, more and more, you will be able to understand the teaching. But you are much better than usual, you know, Japanese people. Japanese people, you know, when some teacher come and give lecture, he may say-they may say, "Oh, he is very good," you know, "he is very good lecturer. His sermon is so interesting." [Laughs.] So someone like me has very difficult time [laughs], because I cannot give any interesting lecture [laughs, laughter]. [Someone boos from audience. S.R. laughs.] Hai.

Student E: Roshi, in the last lecture you talked about communication, and how it creates a better image for those people. Could you talk some more about how we create a better image of ourselves?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm.

Student E: In part to let it go.

Suzuki-roshi: Communication is-start by understanding-your own understanding about people. Even though you want them to understand you, you know, it is-unless you understand people, it is almost impossible. Don't you think so? Only when you understand people, they may understand you. So even though you do not say anything, if you understand people there is some communication. Winks [Blinks?] of your eyes-it is [laughing, laughter]. It is very difficult for me to do this. You-you see? That is, maybe, perfect communication.

Student E: I was asking-what I wanted to ask is how can we communicate better with ourselves? Not with other people.

Suzuki-roshi: Oh.

Student E: Sometimes we have difficulty defeating problems in ourselves, and we know that [4-6].

Suzuki-roshi: Mm-hmm. Oh, okay.

Student E: And-and the question is how we, you know, we cultivate these bad feelings-not to push them aside, but sort of cultivate them like, you know, [2-4 words] to other people-like we cultivate that relationship with people. But it seems that zazen is-I'm having the feeling that it helps somehow if I have bad feelings about myself [?].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is because of your hasty, you know-or, you know, you are not patient enough, you know. Anyway, it is impossible to have perfect understanding, to feel good about yourself. Whether you feel good or bad, you know, that is the communication. That is you. We cannot improve, you know, improve you instantaneously. Even though you stay at Tassajara three-four years, you will-it is difficult to accept

your practice here. And it should be so. And if you try to accept yourself so easily, then there is something wrong with-with your practice.

In such case, you should, you know, think about the first principle. It is you that-you-it is you who feels bad, but you yourself is not bad, and your practice is not bad. But because you have to-because of your desire you feel bad-that's all [?]. Desire means, you know, to expect something which you cannot [have]-that is desire, the terminology of desire.

You have that kind of desire. As long as we know completely about this kind of desire-about this kind of desire, you cannot be patient enough to accept-your mind cannot be wide enough to accept your bad practice. I feel as if, you know, as if you are always trying to feel good, you know [laughs], always. But I am not, you know. I rather feel better when I don't feel good [laughter, laughs]. If I feel good, I-I think, "Oh, I must be careful." [Laughs, laughter.] "I shouldn't feel so good. It is a kind of idea-some selfish," you know, "selfishness in me," you know. "Oh no." You feel more-much more stable when you are not so happy [laughs].

Student F: [1 word] in another lecture you said we should try and be happy.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh. Happy, you know, happy, but, you know, happiness is not, you know, that kind of happiness. My happiness is to suffer with people or to enjoy with people. Maybe to suffer more than people and to enjoy less than people is real happiness. Even though we-I feel in that way, you know, as we are very selfish, you know, actually, maybe if I hope-if I try-if I am trying to feel less happy, then maybe they are equal.

If I, you know, if I think I divided watermelon-just I cut watermelon just, you know, quarters, you know-it is very difficult to be fair. And even though I think I took-I didn't take best one, maybe I-I have best one in my hand [laughs]. That is human nature. So only when we try, you know, not to take best one, maybe you can-you will be pretty fair with people.

So to know our human nature is very important. Without knowing what is hunger, what is selfishness, it is almost impossible to help others. When you know what is hunger, you know, what is thirst, what is love, how difficult it is to love some people, then, you know, you can help people. That is how we study the first principle. That is approach to the first principle. Even though you can explain about the first principle, like the great philosophers [laughs], you cannot help people. You will be a scholar, but you cannot help people.

Student G [Niels Holm]: Roshi?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?



Niels Holm: What do you mean when you say "help people"? What kind of help do you mean? Define the word.

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. That is, maybe, good question. If you know what is help, then you will know how you will help people. It is rather difficult to explain. But you may-you may understand, you know, how do you feel when you're helped by people. "Help people," I say, but strictly speaking to-or we say, "to save sentient beings, to save others." "To save" means to give perfect understanding of the problem of birth and death, or true meaning of our life, is, you know, how you help people. After knowing many things, you know, you will come to difficult things [?]. So unless you don't have good understanding or good experience of our human life, meaning of life, you cannot help people. I say "help people," but "save people." Why we say "save people" is they are suffering; they are amidst [?] of the problem. That is true. Some other question? Could you say? Hai.

Student H: Roshi, is the meaning of Buddhist practice to continually develop [?] our small mind? [4-6 words] the big mind continues in small mind.

Suzuki-roshi: You can say so. It is possible to say so when-because we are always involved in small mind. But big mind-without knowing what is big mind, it is suffering, you know. But if you know what is big mind, then even though your life is continuous practice of-continuous small-minded practice, and you feel in that way, but it will be-it will be quite different from usual suffering you may have. But right now, when-right now you understood what I am saying, you know. Maybe for the first time I-I used this kind of statement, you know, "continuous [laughs] practice-continuous small-minded practice." So it looks like in our practice there is no true joy or something like that. But if you know what is big mind-yesterday was it yesterday or Sunday?[5]-yeah-when you hear the bird, you know, you-you will find the mountain calmer than before. That kind of feeling. Continuous hearing of the bird is big mind-is our practice. If you understand what I mean, background is calmness of the deep, deep mountain. And you hear the bird, you know, and for the deep remoted mountain, bird is not-bird cannot disturb the mountain. But we hear the bird. Before, you feel as if bird is disturbing the calmness of the mountain. That is usual feeling we have. If small problem happen to your life, you will be very much, you know, discouraged or disturbed, but if you know the vastness of the big mind or buddha-mind, you know, that kind of problem is not problem. But we see the problem. There is big difference. Feeling your skin [?] accept the problem. Do you understand?

So anyway, you must have some feeling about-if possible you must have even a branch of the big mind. And on the-on the other hand you should be faithful to things happens in your life. Then you will not disturbed by the problem you have, and you will be encouraged-your

practice will be encouraged-practice to appreciate the big mind will be encouraged. Okay?

Some questions? [2-3 words] is too late. [Laughter, laughs.] No question? Hai.

Student I: Roshi, cutting apples in the kitchen is [4-6 words] or particularly zazen is that sometimes it's hard to [1-2 words] to acknowledge that a [2-4 words] isn't really bad, but they're really [1 word] a lot. Or-or-I can't understand what-what-what the practice means. I [3-4 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? [Laughs.] Pleasure is-pleasure is [1-2 words]- Will you please say it again?

Student I: If I'm cutting apples in the kitchen and eating-if I eat them, is-is that bad dharma? I mean, I think I ate [3-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, you did. [1 words] bad. [Laughs.] Again, you know, when you realize it-as-as Buddha said, "I found out the carpenter who is making the house." [Laughs.] Do you understand what does it mean? I will find out the carpenter who is making the house-who found out-the carpenter who is making the house-who found out someone picking up, you know, small piece of apple-who found out someone eating apples. [Laughs.] Buddha found out a carpenter who is building your house. Did you understand?

Student I: [She may have responded, but it was not audible.]

Suzuki-roshi: To feel in that way is good, but I cannot say to-to eat, you know, apples while you are cutting is good, but I agree with you. But, you know, on the other hand, you should know that who found out. Big mind found out. Buddha found out. [Laughs.] That-oh!-you are [4-6 words as S.R. thumps on or with microphone]. Buddha is still alive in [laughs]-in your mind. He will help you. He will always help you.

So that is-I cannot say bad practice, but I am not-again, you know, I am not encouraging you to eat apples in the kitchen. This is the point, you know-some-something I want you to be very careful when you listen to my lecture. I may say "that is good," you know-that you have, you know, big mind always to see your self, basically, but sometime I-I just say, "That is good; that is not bad practice," I may say briefly instead of explaining, you know, carefully in that way. So you may think it is okay for us to eat, you know, in the kitchen while we are cooking, as many people do. It is okay, you know. "Before he said it is not okay, but this time he said okay." [Laughs.] So I want you to be very careful because it-it takes time if I explain, you know, things in such way. Hai.

Student I: [4-6 words] about if the Buddha knows [4-6 words] if the Buddha knew that one of the people did something wrong, but is it

really something wrong? Is it-I mean, is it a true confession of something being wrong, or is it just something imposed by Buddha where we have [1-2 words] a rule. If the rule was you should eat in the kitchen while we're cooking, then we would feel bad if we didn't eat while we were cooking. [Laughter.] And is the-

Suzuki-roshi: [Talks over student, who continues asking question.] That is just, you know, argument [laughs, laughter]. It doesn't make sense.

Student I: What doesn't make sense?

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm? No-there could be any rules like that, you know. [Laughs.] You can create, for one or two days you can, you know, [1-2 words]. "If you work in kitchen you should eat." It will-that will last one hour or two hours. But that is not-cannot be rule, you know.

Student I: The reason I'm asking and what I don't understand to some extent is in this procession of rules [8-10 words] we have this idea of rules. If we didn't have an idea of rules-a rule about not eating-

Suzuki-roshi: [Speaks over student.] You know, when you say so, that is already, you know, idea of absolute. In realm of absolute there is no rules. There could-not be any rules. You see? There is confusion: You confuse absolute and second [principle?]-second. Do you understand?

Student I: No.

Suzuki-roshi: No [as if he is echoing student].

Student I: I can understand why there is a rule about food, but-

Suzuki-roshi: You see-

Student I: -I don't understand how you separate-

Suzuki-roshi: No.

Student I: -[4-6 words].

Suzuki-roshi: The-when we talk about things-as-it is, you know, like a scientist, that is the rule which belongs to-it is observation of the first principle. And when we accept our human nature and how to apply, how to have more organized life as a human being, you know, that rules is for-just for human being, not for trees or water or, you know, some chemical happening, but just for human being, which is so selfish. That is secondary rule-the rules for human being. So you shouldn't co-[partial word: compare?]-you shouldn't like-you shouldn't talk like you are like a cat or dog. You are worse than cat or dog. [Laughter.] Do you understand? [Laughs.] No.

Student I: [2-3 sentences.]

Suzuki-roshi: For an instance, in the city, you know?

Student I: You know, some place other than here, yes. [6-10 words.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah, that kind of life will not last. That is just bubbles [laughs]-you know, tentative bubble which cannot last. When our rules, our way of life is not based on our human nature, it doesn't last, you know. As long as you are young it is maybe okay, but everyone is growing, you know, and world is changing day by day, and we cannot exist unless we know our human nature. I am not, you know-I have no special, you know, superimposed idea. That is what I am talking [about?], you know. I am not forcing you-on you anything. Just to understand what is human being, what is things-as-it-is. You see? That is the point of my talk. If we do not have so many students at Tassajara, we don't have to rules-have to have rules like this. As we must, you know, practice our way with many people here, so we must have some rules. Okay?

Rules is not something which we create, which someone-some special person create for sake of Buddhism or for sake of Zen or for sake of the leader to have, but something which we need. That is rule. So we can-we can change if it is not right, so we are improving our rules. Maybe we are spending too much time, you know, in discussion about our rules, you know. I feel in that way. But still, I appreciate your effort to establish some rules for us. You try to be very fair to everyone. So, on the other hand, our rules become more and more strict, you know, because we spent so much time in establishing your rules. After establishing some rules, you cannot [laughs]-cannot, you know, change it so soon. That is the nature of, you know, nature of precepts. Buddha didn't establish precepts. Disciples established precepts, in some [3-4 words] monastery [unclear]. Buddha said you shouldn't run away from the temple [1 word] when you are listening lecture. That is one precept. [Laughs, laughter.] For very good students there is no rule. Rule is necessary, but students make so many rules. That is, you know, projected, you know, rules, projected human nature. We need it, you know, not buddhas, or not universe, or not [1 word]. Whether this earth vanish from the universe, it is not big problem [laughs]. It is okay for the universe. If we want to protect this earth, maybe we should study more about how flying [?] planes [?] are going [laughs]. Then, you know, maybe our planet is just one of them. That kind of study is, you know, our study.

Before, I don't know why, you-you do not like rules, you know. There must be some good reason why you don't like it. But here I don't think so, because it is you who are creating rules, not me. Buddhist rules is not like that.

So that is why you have to have good understanding of the first

principle compared-comparing to the second principle or human principle-human rules. Then-then, you know, you will find out why you have to have this kind of practice-the meaning of practice. Okay? Okay. Five more minutes. Hai.

Student J: [3-4 sentences.] Or tentatively, what can we rely on in ourselves-anything?

Suzuki-roshi: You-you should rely on your spirit of practice, you know. Before you rules-break rules, why don't you follow the rules? That is the point. After breaking rules, it is too late to discuss about that. It belongs to the past. So it can't be helped. Why don't you try not [to] break rules again? That is the point, you know. So to reflect upon what you have done is not so good way-not so good idea. I-even to think about what you are doing right now is not so good too. [Sentence probably finished. Tape changed to second tape.]

... Mm-hmm.

Student K: You say that creating some kind of rule or schedule for yourself or some [4-6 words] will not work. I'm asking you essentially how-how do you find out [3-4 words] adopt rules that we live with at Tassajara, or do we rely more on our good feeling about things?

Suzuki-roshi: You are still relying on rules, you know. When I came to San Francisco I had no rules for you to observe. I-I sit and practice zazen and recite sutra when I wanted to, you know. People came. That's all. One after another they come, and [laughs] as you are so many-we have so many people now, and, you know, I must have rules. That's all. So it is too soon to worry about it [laughs]. Buddha will take care of everything. And if Buddhist rule is good, it will help, you know. This is why I became angry, you know [laughs], you know, to see someone who talk about Japanese way or Buddhist way or, you know- Actually, if you don't want Buddhist way, you know, why don't you have some other rules? You know, I think Buddhist way is pretty good, because they- from-if-after Buddha's time, Buddha-idea of Buddha's precepts is way of life, and the rules belongs to human being, not Buddha. Buddha has the first principle, but human being has second principle for themselves. So this kind of understanding is, you know, very suitable idea of rules.

So I want you to be very sincere, you know, with yourself, about your future too. You shouldn't depend on anything. Only thing you depend on is your zazen practice. Without saying anything, if you practice every day, then you will have students, you will have friends. That you may need some rules. "What time do you start zazen?" or something like that. That is enough. You don't have to worry about so many rules which we need at Tassajara. Okay?

So each-I want each student to practice our zazen wherever you are. That is-will be the best help for the people. And some more things

happens, then case by case you should think about it, that's all. You will find out how to help-help people, especially when you have experience of practice at Tassajara. It will be a great, great help for you when you have your self. You shouldn't depend on Tassajara too much. All the, you know, confusion comes from that point, because you depend on Tassajara too much. Buddha said, you know, without depending on yourself, you know, how is it possible to depend [on] something else-or only thing you can depend on is you yourself. That is very true. Only when you can depend on yourself you will be very kind. Something flowing over, you know, from you will help people, without trying to help people. If you depend on something special, then nothing will come out from you. If people ask question, "Read [3-4 words]," and if someone ask you what to do, "Oh, we have rules here, so why don't you read." In that way you cannot-you will not have any friends [laughter]. To me, you are trying to do so [laughs], you know, always trying to do so whenever you ask me question. I feel that you may be trying to establish something like Tassajara [laughs]. I have no idea of such, you know, estab- [partial word]-I have no such idea for you to establish anything like this. If Tassajara practice is good enough to be a good example of other group, maybe they may follow us, but we should not have any idea of to be a good example of others. Anyway we should make our best, that's all, you know. It cannot be more than that. If it is more than that, Tassajara is involved in wrong practice. It is not Buddhist practice.

[Sighs.] Tomorrow? What time? [Laughs.] [1 word] person? Not one person [?], right?

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (9/26/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

[1] In the early years of San Francisco Zen Center, the zendo itself was informally known as the "Mahabodhisattva Zendo."

[2] The framed calligraphy of two Japanese characters hanging over the door to Suzuki-roshi's former rooms on the second floor of City Center, San Francisco.

[3] "When human beings look at water, the only way we see it is as flowing ceaselessly. The flowing takes many forms ... ." Water "rises up to form clouds, and it comes down to form pools" (Eihei Dogen, "Sansui-kyo," Shobogenzo; Nishijima and Cross, trans., Book 1, p. 174).

[4] Jo (ride); un (cloud); no (as-indicating that jo un and kudoku are the same); kudoku (merit); ari (there is). This is not an exact quote from the Shobogenzo; Suzuki-roshi may be interpreting or simplifying the phrase.

[5] It was Sunday: SR-71-08-15.

## **12 - Stones**

Saturday, August 21, 1971

Stones  
San Francisco

Excuse me. [Laughs.] I feel rather stiff. Maybe I worked too hard.

Since we have Tassajara and the city zendo, we are-our practice is rather concentrated on city practice or Tassajara practice. But the most important point is to know what is Zen practice, which is not only city practice, but also Tassajara practice, and city zendo practice. Wherever you are, we have Zen way of practice. No matter where you are, you must have proper understanding of our practice.

In Shobogenzo "Genjo-koan," Dogen-zenji says, referring to this point:

"When all things are Buddhism, there are birth and death-there are defilement, practice, birth and death, buddhas, and sentient beings. When all things has no self, there is no delusion, no buddha, no sentient beings, no birth, no death. Buddhism originally is beyond the all positive or neg- [partial word]-positivity or negativity, so there are birth and death, defilement and enlightenment, and sentient beings and buddha."

There, you know, our-this is our fundamental practice. It is better now, I think, for us to follow more original way of Zen practice, which is go beyond Tassajara practice, or city zendo practice, or practice in-in city life. Wherever you are, this is the fundamental way of practice for us or else we will be too much, you know, involved in city practice or monastic practice and we will lose the point of practice, I am afraid.

"When all things are Buddhism-all things are Buddhism, there are defilement, practice-defilement, practice, birth and death, buddhas and sentient beings." The point is they are-they are. All things are Buddhism. Whatever you do, that is Buddhism. But there is some danger in your understanding of this kind of words-statement.

"Whatever you do, that is Buddhism." You know, whatever you do in Tassajara, or in city zendo, or in city life, that is Buddhism. It looks like-it sound like this: "Whatever we do, it doesn't matter. Anyway [laughs], that is a practice of Buddhism." If it is so, there is-it is not necessary for you to study Buddhism, whatever-if whatever you do, that is Buddhism.

But actually, what Dogen-zenji meant is not-is not like that. So there-

there is, maybe, in-in-when you understand this statement, "Whatever you do, that is," you know, "Buddhism." There may be two ways of understanding it. One is, whatever you do [laughs], you know, if you understand-you take this statement literally, from your non-Buddhist-non-Buddhistic understanding. That is one, you know.

There is-another is real Buddhist understanding of this statement. Like, you know, in Lotus Sutra we say "shoho-jisso." Shoho means things we see; jisso is truth, true way it exist-way they exist-real way things exist. So everything exist in the way they exist.

So usually when we understand, "Whatever you do, that is Buddhism," means even though you do not behave [laughs], even though you do not, you know, live the way you should live, it is Buddhism. You know, there is big difference [laughs].

"Way things exist." Here is, maybe, the problem of "to be" and "should be." "To be" and "should be." You know, recently people may not-do not like the words "should be" [laughs]-"should be"-and you like "to be," maybe. "Should be" is-looks some rules, and "to be" is, you know, freedom: Whatever you do, that is good-that is "to be."

But-but it is-it will be the opposite. "Should be" is "to be" [laughs], and "should be" is "to be." You know, when you behave according to the circumstances, appropriately, then that is "should be" and that is "to be." "To be" and "should be" is same. But when your selfish, you know, idea arise and rejects "should be," reject the way you exist, then that is-that is not way "to be." You are involved in delusion-delusion of self.

And in its strict sense, you cannot survive in that way. You think you can, but actually you cannot. Or you-you want to be in that-you want to survive in that way, but actually it is not possible. If you want to go to Los Angeles, you should take Freeway 101 [laughs]. You cannot go that way, even though you-you want to go opposite way. "Many people are going that way, take 101, so I will go to the opposite way." Eventually you will go to-reach to Los Angeles [laughs, laughter]. But that is a kind of-the way you choose.

So to think it is-about-about it-about a kind of freedom is good, but actually that is not possible. So knowing that that is not possible, to think about it is another matter, you know. But if you sit seriously-try to do whatever you want to do, that is delusion. You-it is-it means that you are completely involved in delusion. It is not actual. It is not possible to survive in that way. So "should be" and "to be" is-is not different.

So real freedom is in "should be" and in-in its true sense "to be." That "should be" is for-the way for beginners, and that "to be" which is one with "should be" is the advanced student. So first stage should [laughs]-should be "should be." [Laughs, laughter.] And "should be," "should be," "should be" [laughs]-an endless, you know, continuous practice of



"should be" [laughs]. You have no, you know, chance to get out of "should be" [laughs]. That is okay, you know. Pretty soon "should be" will be "to be." "Should be" or "to be"-you don't care. "Should be" is okay. "To be" is okay, for you. That is the goal of practice, you know.

So Dogen-zenji says, "Buddhism originally is beyond all positivity and negativity." Buddhism originally is beyond the all "to be" and-or "should be," you know. Real way is not only-only "to be," but also "should be." Or not only "should be," but also "to be." That is real way. That is the stage you will acquire after following teaching.

Ahh. This is rather discouraging [laughs]. Maybe if I say so from the beginning, you will not, you know-you may say, "Oh, I wish I-I wish I didn't start practice Buddhism. [Laughs.] It is too difficult." You may say, but it is-Buddhism is not any special teaching. Actually, Buddhism is our human way.

Here we-we have many things to think about. First of all, we should know how, you know-we should know that this world for human being-for human being, not for birds or cat, you know, but for human being-this world is world of suffering [laughs]. Originally, you know-not originally, but-for human being, as long as we are, you know, human nature, which is very selfish, which care for something which you, you know, you cannot acquire or you cannot expect. That is human nature, you know. We care for something which we cannot reach, you know. Or because you cannot reach you want to-you want it. Because, you know, we do not stay young forever, we want to be, you know, young always [laughs]. Something which we cannot expect is something we like. That is our human nature. So human life is, at the, you know, same time, a life of suffering. That is very true.

We should know many things about our human being. When you know about human nature deep enough, then you will start, you know, Buddhism-you will start to practice Buddhism. It is like operation, you know. When the pain is, you know, strong enough to accept operation, you will go to the doctor [laughs]. But it is almost impossible to, you know, to have your-to have operation when you have no pain. Because you have a great pain, because you know human nature well enough, you start Buddhism like you go to the doctor to have operation. This is nature of Buddhism. That is why you practice zazen.

At first when you sit, many things will come up, you know, many ideas-many wrong ideas and many things you did before. We don't do so much good things in comparison to bad things [laughs]. Most of the things we do is bad [laughs] or things you feel regretful. Something you-when you do, you feel very good, but after you did it, how do you feel? [Laughs.] "Oh. I thought it was very good, but it was not so good." [Laughs.] That is something, you know-feeling you have. And that kind of feeling come up, you know, constantly when your mind is very calm, like a bubble, you know, comes up-comes up from the bottom of the

water. When the water is, you know, rough-not smooth enough, then no bubbles comes out. Even though it comes out, you don't notice it. You have-as soon as your mind become calm, you may realize how much bubbles you have in your bottom of your heart. The real practice, you know, start from that kind of practice.

You may say Zen practice should be calm-to have calmness of your mind is real practice. "I have been practicing zazen for so many years-two years, three years, or more than that. Still I don't have calmness [laughs] of your mind at all. What shall I do?" That will be your question.

In zazen-in zazen practice, we say if something, you know, arise in your mind, let it arise, let it come. Then it-they will not stay so long, so let it go away. In zazen that works pretty well. If you let it come, and if you do not entertain them, they will go away. But in actual life, that-it is not so easy, you know. You may suffer. Then what will you do? When you suffer, what-what you will do? The suffering is very strong. What will you do? Here is, you know, something you should think about.

The one point is, you know, your practice is in the first, you know, stage, and you have next stage and the third stage. In the next stage, you will, you know, like in-like when you have good zazen practice, nothing arise in your mind. Your mind will be, even for a while, in complete calmness, where there is no image or no feeling. Your mind is complete calmness. That is the next stage you will have in your zazen practice. And the third stage will be the stage you come back to the stage-something like the first stage where there is many problems, where there is many weeds, and where there is many flowers. But way you see-see the flowers, the way you weed the weed, is different, but nearly the same stage. Looks like same stage, but big difference.

So you don't have to solve that problem. The point is you should continue that practice of difficulty. That is the point. So you should know that is, you know, only the first stage of your practice. So you-you cannot solve the problem at-only at the first stage. If you struggle at the first stage, you will lose your practice. That is why we say, you know, "Great patience is the best of virtues. [Laughs.] To continue it is most important practice. Without struggling with it, just continue it. Then you will have chance to-to have the second stage or the third stage." It means that. It means-I-I forget where I, you know, found out that statement.

Someone who-who-who fell on the earth-on the earth, maybe by stumbling [on a] stone or something, you know-fell on the earth will stand up [laughs] by the earth-same-by the same earth. Because of the earth you stumble, you fell, you know. Earth is the problem. Because of the problem, you hurt, you know, you hit against the earth. But because [laughing] of the earth, you can support yourself again, and you can stand up.

So you complain-you have complained because you think because of the earth you fell [laughs], but without earth you will not fell. And at the same time, you cannot stand up. So because you have problem, you know, you feel as if because of the problem, you, you know, you fell. A fell or stand up is, you know, a help, you know-great help which was given to you by earth.

So problem itself is your mother, you know. Because of the mother of earth, you can continue your practice. You are practicing, you know, so zendo of the earth-great earth, which is the problems. Problems are actually your zendo. That is very true.

So what is delusion, what is enlightenment? When you, you know, deluded of truth, that is delusion. When you are deluded of-of earth, that is delusion. When you enlightened of the earth, that is enlightenment. When you stand up by the earth, that is enlightenment. When you fell, you know, because of the earth-you feel in that way-that is delusion. So you have chance to attain a great enlightenment when you have problem.

Usually you talk about your surrounding. You talk about Tassajara practice and city practice. That is, I think, very good. [Laughs.] But that is not the point of practice. The point of practice is-the problem you have here or city or Tassajara is the earth. So if Tassajara is monastery, city zendo is monastery, and city is also monastery in its wide sense.

Our way is not to get rid of all the stones from the earth which could be a stumbling [laughs] stone for you. It is good to have many stones on the earth which could be, you know, stumbling stone. It is good. And when you stand up, if you have a high, big stone, it-it may be easier to stand up. But more people will [laughs]-will hit against it. But it is very good for your practice to have big stones everywhere. This is, for an instance, a big stone. If you understand it, that is, you know, enlightenment. If you don't understand it, it is big slap-painful slap. This is a big stone. So if there is not much stone for you to help your practice, we have to bring many stones from Tassajara to city zendo [laughs, laughter]. You are not so interested in this kind of stuff, you know. So if you understand our life, our problem in this way, then will you have-you will get through the first stage.

I don't think I have time to explain the next stage. But you may feel, you know, if you understood our problems of our life in this way, then that is, you know, end of the whole picture, you know. But it is just a first series of the movie. Why it is so is, you know, something we should think about.

The-in the first stage, you are-very interesting stage, so you may want to stay the first stage [laughs] a little bit longer. That is-but again, that is too selfish, you know [laughs]. Buddhism is very strict, you know,

very strict. You may enjoy the first stage very much, actually. In-in the city, in zendo, you know, when you come to zendo, you have, you know, a good Zen practice. When you go to city, you will enjoy city life, you know, with a kind of-what do you?-leisurely mind, you know. You-you have some space or some room to accept the difficulty-difficulties of the city life. Because of the wisdom of understanding of our human nature, you know, we can-we have time, or we have room for accepting the problems, you know. We are ready to accept problems. Like you sit zazen, you know, in zazen, many, many things come: "Okay. [Laughs.] I have enough room here or here or here for you to come. Please come." [Laughs, laughter.] But, you know, it is interesting to-to see how they go away. "Oh, nothing to see, nothing to eat," so they may go out [laughs]. It-it is very interesting.

But, you know, Zen is not something to play, you know, to play with-to play game with-with our prac- [partial word]-we shouldn't play game with it. If you practice zazen because you enjoy your practice, that is not Buddha's practice. He is very strict. Buddha's mercy is so deep, so clear, and so wide. When we selfish human being always want something good to eat, something good to hear, something good to see. So if someone give you something to hear, or something to eat, most human being will stay. Knowing this fact, Buddha became-become more and more strict with us [laughs]. Yeah, it's-it's something, you know, which you must think about. And when you, you know, study or when you want to learn religion, you know, you must learn something more than this. Just to solve our everyday problem is not purpose of studying Buddhism. [Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]

Yesterday I saw Soen Nakagawa-roshi.[1] And he was going to-I-I thought he is going back to Japan, but he was going to-what-the place-Elsahem?-what do you-how you pronounce, you know, when-where Christ was born? Hmm? [Answers from students: "Bethlehem."] Yeah. He was going to that place. Why is he going to there [laughs]? I think that is buddha-mind, you know, something more than this, something more than to enjoy his enlightenment. He is going somewhere else again. He looks like very much interested in helping people. Maybe so. But that is not, you know-helping people-without helping people he may not feel so good, so that is why he is going. But his going is not just to satisfy his personal feeling. He is mo- [partial word]-

You know, at the end of the sesshin [laughs] we bow maybe more than thirty times, calling many buddhas' name. Among the buddhas, they, you know, they call some special names: Nam- [partial word]-Sunshine-Sunshine Buddha, or Moonlight Buddha, or Dead Sea Buddha [laughs]. I don't know-because he-he has his disciple who started zendo at Dead Sea. That is why he bowed-he called the name of Dead Sea Buddha. And Good Practice Buddha. Many buddhas appeared. And [we] bowed and bowed and bowed [laughs]. That is something, you know, which is beyond our understanding. And he also bow-when he bow to all those buddha, the buddha he bowed to is something beyond his own

understanding. Again and again he did it.

And he gave us, you know, macha[2] he made himself, you know, and gave us macha. What he was doing, I don't know, and he doesn't know, maybe [laughs]. Anyway, he did it, and he offered. And he-he didn't-he looks very happy, but that happiness is very different from the happiness we usual people have.

Our practice should go, you know, that level, where there is no human problem, or no buddha problem, where there is nothing. And to have tea, and to have cake, and to make a trip from one place the another-that was his, you know, practice. And he has no idea of helping people. What he is doing, he is helping, but he himself has no idea of helping people. So to solve [?] our human problem is not all the-doesn't cover all our practice-Buddhist practice. Hmm.

We don't know how long it takes for us to make, you know, buddha trip. [Laughs.] We have many trips: work trips, you know, various trips-space trips [laughs]-various trip we must have. Buddha trip is very, you know, very long trip. That is Buddhism.

Thank you very much.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg and B. Fikes. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/15/00).

[1] Soen Nakagawa-roshi (1908-1983): Rinzai master. Dharma successor of Yamamoto Gempo and abbot of Ryutaku-ji Monastery near Mishima. The words "Yesterday I saw Soen Nakagawa" are from a note written on the back of the original tape's case. The passage was not recorded on tape.

[2] Powdered green tea.

## **1971 oktober (1)**

### **1 - Suzuki-Roshi Talking to His Disciples About His Illness**

Saturday, October 09, 1971

Suzuki-Roshi Talking to His Disciples About His Illness

In His Room, City Center, San Francisco

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

Student: Francis sent this-

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

Student: Francis-

Suzuki-roshi: Francis. Yeah.

Student: -sent this to you and a card.

Suzuki-roshi: Lazy master. [Laughter.] I am sorry.

[Scattered exchange among Suzuki-roshi, students, and Okusan-approximately 30 seconds.]

Suzuki-roshi: My arm hurts, you know. Just a moment. [Okusan speaks in Japanese.] Don't be so serious, you know. [Okusan speaks in Japanese.]

My doctor Makura [?]-[Okusan speaks in Japanese.] Hmm? Oh.

Student: He's coming.

Suzuki-roshi: Hai. Good morning.

Okusan: Dozo ....

Suzuki-roshi: I am so sorry to be so lazy monk [laughs], but-because my doctor, Makura, you know, thought I was hepatitis, but for hepatitis it took me, my symptom didn't change in so long time, so he thought it may not be hepatitis, maybe cancer.

So they started to check me, when, what day was it, two, three days ago, and I hospitalized, Mount Zion again, Mount Zion hospital again, and they took basalt [?] pictures of my liver and chest and took some blood from here and every doctor discussed about my illness, and the next day they had vacation, and the day before yesterday Makura came and told me you are cancer, you know. So you can eat whatever you like, you can drink whatever you want to. So he told me exactly what is happening here. So I am telling you. That was what has happened to me the day before yesterday, and yesterday I came back here.

So it was a big, it is big relief to me, that I can eat whatever I like. Before, so that, you know, I can live longer, I have to eat. And there are many-I had a list of things which I cannot eat. But now I have no restriction. So it is very-I myself, selfishly feel good, but on the other hand I am very sorry for you, you know. But I think Buddha will take care of everything, so I shouldn't worry too much.

How long I live I don't know. No one knows actually. I asked him, two years? At most [laughs]-he said-what he said. What he said. I am not

so sure about it. So I want you to be prepared for it, you know. If I live longer, it is better, of course, for me and for you, I think. But if I-I think I can live one more year for sure, I feel in that way. I don't feel so discouraged or so weak.

So, maybe, I want you allow me to be a lazy monk, that's all what I want you-that's all, you know. I shall be very bad example, but [laughing] instead, you should be a good example. Okay? That's all what I want you to do or to know, to be prepared.

Most of things you can decide between you, you know, discussing. If necessary, I can join your discussion. Physically, I get tired quite easily.

Thank you very much for coming.

And do you think [1 word] tape is okay?

Yvonne: I think so. We can take it out and try it.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh-huh.

Yvonne: Let's try it, okay?

[Recording stopped. Gap in tape. Recording resumed.]

Suzuki-roshi: ... and drink here, you know. Cancer is not infectious.

[Laughs.]

Yvonne: We can eat off your plate now. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: Yeah. You take some. [Laughter.]

Yvonne: Better be careful.

Suzuki-roshi: It's quite okay. I do not live so long, you know that.

[Laughs.]

[A brief exchange in Japanese with male visitor.]

Claude, I want you to stay here, even though I have no more. Okay? Please. [Laughs.] Thank you. [Two claps.] [Laughs.] Okay.

I have been doing-I wanted to do, so you shouldn't feel to do, you know, exactly what I did, you know. So you may be free, to do, to develop our way, you know, exactly people want you to do. That is Bodhisattva idea. If they want you to be beggar, you should beg [laughs]. That is the spirit I mean. I want you to-that is the main point. If you do not lose that point, the bodhisattvas, all the bodhisattvas will be with you.

[Question in Japanese from male visitor. Suzuki-roshi answers in English.]

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe, yeah. I didn't ask exactly where it is. Maybe so, you know, not stomach, and gall bladder is no more, so liver, or tumors [1 word unclear] another one here. So. Maybe liver.

Do you have some question, about immediate something, you know, you want to know [1 word unclear] now? [Laughs.]

Silas: Would you like a bed that goes up and down? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-roshi: It may be too-but-

Students: [Question/comment.]

Suzuki-roshi: If you come [laughter-Suzuki-roshi is apparently pantomiming something], if you go out- It's very good, you know.

Yvonne: Instead of learning to drive a car, you learn to drive your bed.

Suzuki-roshi: Uh huh. But I was very lucky you know, to live this much, until I have good confidence in you. Okay. Hai. [Laughs.] Just in time [referring to a drink brought to him?]. Thank you.

Mel: Can we visit you?

Suzuki-roshi: Mmm?

[Gap in tape.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hmm?

[Question from male visitor in Japanese. Suzuki-roshi replied in Japanese.]

Suzuki-roshi: Hai.

-----

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (2/9/01).