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MODEL SUBJECT NO. 46: Kyosei's Sound of the Raindrops

+ Prefatory remarks by Shaw:

Kyosei Dofu (868-937) was a Zen monk who lived at the temple of Kyōsei in the province of Chekiang. He was a fellow student of Ummon (Model Subject No. 6) and a disciple of Seppō Gizen.

+ Introductory Word by Engo:

To accomplish, at one beat of the wooden-clappers, the transcending of both the ordinary and the 'holy'; with one word and half a verse to rid oneself of every attachment and obstruction; to walk over thin ice or run along the sharp edge of a sword; to sit amongst the noise and show of the busy market-place, and let it all pass over one's head without being enticed - to have such an unrestricted secret (power), of this I do not speak here, I am not talking of the long 'kalpa'¹ time of the beat of the wooden-clappers, but of the 'ksana'¹ instant in which ordinary and 'holy' are transcended. How about that? Here is a test. Ponder it.

Main Subject by Setcho presented by Suzuki-roshi:

Attention! Kyosei asked a monk, "What is the sound outside the door?" The monk said, "It is the sound of raindrops." Kyosei said, "All sentient beings are deluded by the idea of self and by the idea of the world."²

¹ 'Kalpa' and 'Ksana'. The Ksana was supposed to be the 65th of the 'flip of a finger', i.e., the shortest measure of time conceivable. On the other hand, the kalpa is the longest conceivable period of time. Used here hyperbolically.

² (sound)

'The Voice of the Raindrops' / In this subject the connection of ideas between the 'voice' or sound of the raindrops and Kyosei's words 'all living creatures are upside down, deluded about themselves, pursuing objects' is probably to be found by reference to a Scripture published in the Tang era and called in Japanese Shu-ryo-gon. In that work there are statements about the relation of sound (objective) and the sense of hearing (subjective). These cannot be easily separated and men soon find themselves mistaken as to which is which. They are turned 'upside down'. So. . . in this subject we. . . see reference to the Buddhist theory of knowledge concerning the sense of hearing. - pg. 159, Ibid. Shaw

The monk said, "How about yourself?" Kyosei said, "I am almost not deluded by myself."

The monk said, "What do you mean by: you are almost not deluded by yourself?"

Kyosei said, "Even though it is not difficult to be free from the objective world it is difficult to express reality fully on each occasion!"

Commentary by Suzuki-roshi:

The monk answered that the sound outside the door was the sound of raindrops. Kyosei said, "All sentient beings are deluded by the idea of self and by the idea of the world" (subjective and objective, as permanent). Kyosei has seen through the monk, who thinks he is not caught by the "objective" sound of the raindrops, but 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? Kyosei said, I am almost not deluded by myself. What Kyosei means is that he does not exclude the monk from the sound of raindrops. He is just listening to the raindrops but at the same time listening to the monk (you).

The monk said, "What do you mean you are almost not deluded by yourself?"

Kyosei 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.!

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! ! Difficult. To. Express. Reality. Fully. On. Each.

Occasion. ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

(Suzuki-roshi: No more question!)

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

Appreciatory Word by Setcho interpreted by Suzuki-roshi:

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.

*Appreciatory Word by Setcho:

To the voice of those raindrops outside in the emptiness, even an expert will find it difficult to give an answer. If he says the sound has now "entered the current"(ie. been perceived by the sense of hearing) then there will be no understanding. Or will there be no understanding? In the Southern and Northern mountains the rain is far more terrible.