

## CONCLUDING LECTURE OF 1966 ANNUAL WEEK SESSHIN, FRIDAY EVENING

*given by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi*

I think that we already have a pretty good understanding of our practice because we have studied it from the *Blue Cliff Records*.<sup>1</sup> I think you can easily understand this subject.

Main Subject: Attention! A monk asked Jo-shu: "All the dharmas lead up to the One, but what does the One lead up to?"

Jo-shu said: "I was in the province of Sei. I made a hempen robe. It weighed seven pounds."

This is a very famous story. A monk asked Jo-shu, "All the dharmas—all the teachings—lead up to the One. What does the One lead up to?" And Jo-shu replied, "I have been in the province of Sei. I made a hempen robe. It weighed seven pounds." That was his answer. Jo-shu is the famous Chinese Zen Master who joined our order at the age of sixty. He studied our practice, zazen, for twenty years under Nan-sen. He became a temple master which he remained until his death at the age of 120. Historically this is said to be his correct age. His way was so simple. And his life was so bare—bare enough to just support himself. He always sat in a broken chair. One of the four legs of his chair was always mended by a rope. He was a unique powerful Zen Master.

Someone asked him, "If all things end up in One, then in what does the One end up?" This is the story. This is the question. Of course this is the familiar philosophical problem of the One and the many. The materialistic or mechanical understanding of this problem is that, with time, many lead to One—it takes time by mechanical understanding. But in Buddha's understanding, One and many exist simultaneously. Many and One are the same thing. If you count all the students there may be fifty or more. That's many. But all are one group. One and many are not different. Because you count one

by one there are many. But if you don't count, this is one group. One and many are simultaneous beings.

And when we say one, you know, many is understood already. If you lack one thing, then nothing exists. So one is always necessary. And if there is one thing, many are understood. One is all and all one. But one cannot always remain as one because everyone and everything is changing.

For us, the dualistic pair of one and many is itself the unit of existence. It is the same with man and woman and with other pairs of duality. Here I am the speaker and you are the audience. In this case, speaker and audience make up the relationship, the duality. Because of this duality there is some activity going on now. If there is no duality, nothing will happen! Where there is a problem, there is something to do. If there is no problem, we cannot work on anything. We will all be dead.

It is only because of the mechanical understanding of life that we have this problem of One and many. If many teleologically become one, then what is the purpose of the One? Where does it go? Such a question is based just on a mechanical understanding.

But from our viewpoint, One and many are simultaneous beings. Our life is a succession of events. Each event happens in a dualistic way - each event is a duality. This is what makes the succession of events possible. One event ensues from another. But at the same time, there is no continuity. One is one and the other is the other— A is A and B is B. This is the more appropriate understanding for us. But because of a mechanical understanding of our practice, sometimes we become proud of our past achievement, or we become discouraged by what we did. But anyway, you cannot make the same mistake again. What you have done is already over, and you are doing something quite new. So there is no reason why you should be discouraged. And if what you have done is already over, why are you proud of what you have done? If you have this kind of understanding, your mind is always

wide open like a mirror. Then you always have composure without being disturbed by anyone or by the past or future. This is our understanding.

Jo-shu's answer is very interesting. He does not care what he says, you know! It is out of the question. The monk's understanding of our life was just mechanical. But our life does not go in that way. In actuality our life is going quite a different way— from form to formlessness. Something which was formed is already finished, and we have to form something else, you know—relate with something else. The former dualistic life is over already. And we attained oneness. After we attain oneness, our mind is ready for some duality. You will have some new event with something else. This is Jo-shu's understanding of life.

For him One does not become many, nor many become One. But he is asked, if many become One, then where does the One go? So he says, "Bamboo is growing. Bamboo is tall. Pine tree is short." Whatever you say is the answer. "I bought a very good piece of material in Sei province, and I made a heavy robe with it. It weighs seven pounds." That is the way things go, you know. Things are going in this way. There is no need to answer such a question.

Just see what is going on. Look closely at what is going on, then you will understand what it is. *One* is many, many are one. And one after another, things, events take place for everyone. That's all. This is Jo-shu's understanding. But it does not mean that he ignores his practice according to the rules, but those rules do not control things in time order or in space order. Things themselves have their own function and quality. Each thing goes according to its own function and its own quality.

The nature of things is their way of going. Thus, things determine themselves. Things themselves know the answer to the question, 'Where does it go?'. Everything goes in due course, that is our understanding. So something which you should put in a higher place you should put in a higher place. And something which

should be put in a lower place, should be put in a lower place. That is our way. If it is heavy fine material, you can make a beautiful robe. If it is not so good, you can scrub your floors with it, that's all. If it is good heavy hemp, the robe you make will weigh seven pounds. That is our reaching.

But this monk asked, "Where does it go?" 'Where does it go?' is itself the answer, you know. It goes 'where'. What place does it go? It goes 'what place'. 'What place' is anywhere you like. It will go whatever place it likes. So 'what place' is the answer. And 'what place' means dynamic change - dynamic stream of change. This is the key point of Buddhism. Wherever you go there is the dynamic stream of change. So 'where does it go?' is itself the answer.

It is the same with traditional physics too. Mechanically speaking, we say one and many, but one is acting on many and many on one. Our world is counteracting. And where counteracting takes place, nothing can remain in the same state. Everything will change in the world of counteraction and counter-reaction. Thus this world of counteraction is called the world of transiency. It is the world of transiency because in the world of counteraction things always change. So where does it go? It goes into the world of counteraction.

In that world of counteraction many things happen. Jo-shu bought some fine material at a place in China. In some other place, if someone is very thirsty, he will pay a lot of money for even a cup of water. Many things happen. So we say, when someone is striking a drum in the southern country, in the northern country someone will dance! Many things happen in the world of counteraction; many things become possible, it becomes possible to work or to act. And whatever we do, when we realize that we are working in the world of counteraction, our life is creative and the unfolding of our inmost desire.

You may say that our life is an expression of our inmost desire. As expression, it is creative. In this unfolding of our inmost desire there

are some rules and there is some goal. We know where to go because of our inmost desire. It knows intuitively where we should go. So our life is both creative and at the same time controlled by some rules. Where there are no rules, there is no creativity. We cannot ignore rules.

"Where does it go?" is a very interesting question. And Jo-shu's answer was 'where does it go?'. Space gives us some meaning. Time gives us some meaning. Usually we strive to ignore our time-bound and space-bound restrictions. That is the usual idea of liberty which people strive for. They just want liberty. But that is not possible. They say liberty, but their idea of liberty is based upon a mechanical understanding. We are not mechanical. We are human beings and we should understand what that means.

This is nearly the same question as Dai-zui was asked, you know. "When this world is devoured by karmic fire, where does our true mind, our true self go?"<sup>2</sup> As was discussed in an earlier lecture, sometimes he says it will perish, sometimes he says it won't perish. There are many of these stories in the *Blue Cliff Records*. In Japanese, this book is called the *Hekigan-Roku*, and almost all Buddhists know its name. It is supposed to be a very difficult book to understand, even for teachers. Do you know why? It is because our thinking is always based on mechanical understanding, or idealistic understanding, or sometimes intellectual understanding. But when we see things as they are, then the book is not difficult to understand.

Here is another similar story. Main subject:<sup>3</sup> Attention! A monk asked To-san: "Cold and heat come upon us. Oh, it is very cold! How should we avoid this cold?"

To-san said: "Why don't you go where there is no cold and no heat?"

This is quite mechanical understanding. If you go to Alaska, it is very cold, but if you go to Southern California it is very warm. Why

don't you go to San Francisco? This was his answer! This is a very mechanical question and answer. To-san said, "Why don't you go where there is no cold and no heat?" But this is impossible, you know. Wherever you go we have cold and heat. The reason we say it is cold, is because we are so accustomed to warm weather— that is why it is cold. Cold itself always makes a pair of opposites with warm. There is no climate which is just cold or just warm. There is no feeling of cold, nor one of hot without the other side of the pair. So cold and hot are coexistent. It is not that cold comes after hot. Cold and hot are actually simultaneous feelings. Because you know how cold it is in winter, in summer you say, "Oh, it is hot!" Even though you think you are not comparing, your skin, your feeling is comparing. So the duality of the opposites cold and hot is always involved. Cold and hot are coexistent, thus there is nowhere to go, you know.

But To-san said, "Why don't you go somewhere where there is no cold and no heat?" 'No cold and no heat' is the real answer, the perfect answer—no heat, no cold. When cold and heat are simultaneously understood in terms of awareness, then you have understood what is the problem of mind. When you understand this problem and overcome this problem, you are already where there is no cold or no heat.

But the monk went on to ask, "Is there such a place without cold and heat?" Through and through, from beginning to end, his question is just materialistic. And To-san answered, "When cold, be thoroughly cold; when hot be hot through and through." That is right. The feeling of cold and of heat is one. Sometimes our mind will go from heat to cold, sometimes from cold to heat. Actually they are one, because they are so closely related that they are understood as a one. So when we say, 'Oh, it is cold!' it means it is hot! What you say differs, but the actual understanding of reality is the same. Without using your head, without working your brain your mind, you judge things in the right way—you know things already.

So if it is cold, you may say it is cold. If it is hot, you may say it is hot. That must be done.

I think it is strange enough to find out that Hegel and Dogen had these similar ideas. Hegel came later than Dogen, but this kind of deeper understanding was understood by many ancient thinkers. More than 700 years ago, Dogen observed things in this way, but it is also, surprisingly enough, the traditional way of Buddhism.

If you go to Eiheiji Monastery, you know, you will be bored! This is because you repeat the same thing over and over again every day. Fortunately Phillip and Grahame<sup>4</sup> couldn't speak Japanese! They had something to study there. To them the language difficulty was a big problem, but I think it was very good that they couldn't understand or speak Japanese. It is only because our understanding of life is usually and habitually so firmly based on mechanical understanding, that we think that our everyday life is a repetition of the same thing. But it is not so. No one can repeat the same thing over. Whatever you do, it will be different from what you do in the next moment. That is why we should not waste our time.

I was told when I was quite young by my master, "You should not waste your time." I thought it meant to work hard all day long and all night long, or since we cannot work at night—at least to behave all night long! That was what I thought he meant. But it was not so. Sometime later he said, "To understand what Buddhism is, is not to waste your time. If you do not understand Buddhism, you are wasting your time." I thought this was a very good way to encourage us, but I was not so encouraged! It seemed too convenient a logic for him to use. But now I understand what he meant.

Not to waste your time is not to waste even a grain of rice. It is to do something appropriately, to do something when you should do it. It should not be too late nor too early. In Eiheiji if you get up ten or fifteen minutes earlier than the others you will be scolded. That is selfish practice. You should get up just when everyone else does—

that is enough. You should not be an especially good student. And we have no answer to this scolding. We feel like we swallowed a straight stick. No answer—we cannot move. "Umph!"—that's all we can say.

You may think our teaching is very strict. But our teaching is always near at hand—not easy, not difficult to observe. At the same time, however, it *is* very strict—and very delicate. Our mind should always be subtle enough to adjust our conduct to our surroundings.

I think I have told you this story many times, but for some of you it may be quite a new story about me. When at Eihei-ji, I was told to serve Kishizawa Ian Roshi, who later became my life-long teacher. Once when I was serving him, I opened the sliding door on the right as usual. He said, "Don't open that side." So I closed the door and opened the other side. That was all right. The next morning, I again opened the left side. But he said, "Don't open that side!" I couldn't understand at all. First he said to open the left side, and now he was telling me not to. But I obeyed and opened the right side again. And that was all right, but it was not all right with me! I thought about it over and over, but it was not at all all right!

Now the reason he had first said, "Don't open the right side," was because there was a visitor there. Before I opened the door, I should have known on which side the guest was—on which side he was talking. It was because I opened the side where the guest was, that I was wrong.

The same thing happened to me when I served the tea. The first time I had served tea to my teacher, he said, "This is not enough." So I had poured more and he drank it. The next day, however, when a guest came, I filled a cup perhaps 80 or 90% with hot tea and served it to him. My master said, "Don't fill the tea cup so much!" My master liked a cup filled with plenty of hot water, but most people do not like a cup so full of bitter hot tea. So in one case a filled cup is all right, but when serving guests, we shouldn't fill it so much.

Thus the answer always must be 'where' or 'when'. And 'where' and 'when' are indications of a dynamic world. In the world's dynamic change various problems will be resolved. We call it a progressive solution—progressive result. When our understanding is naive and poor—before we have the idea of 'when' and 'where', which is dynamic change, we have various problems. These problems should be solved by the understanding of dynamic change. If you say everything is changing, that truth will solve various problems that you have. That is, you know, eternal truth. And our practice is based on this truth, thus it is always true.

As you know, I have to go to Japan, so this is perhaps the last lecture to you for awhile. Since I came to America, I have studied many things. Much of what I came to study was caused by the very language difficulties I had. In Buddhism, we have many convenient technical terms. That is to say, I have many fancy sharp tools. But sometimes we have abused these tools. When we should have used the chisel, I think we must have used the plane. That was, I think, what I had been doing. But because of the language difficulty, I have to think and think and think to express myself. This thinking helped me a lot, and I am very grateful for the difficulty I have in this country with you.

And I think that it is the same thing with you. You must have great difficulty in understanding my talk. What is he saying?! At least I give you the chance to think! And I think that this has helped you a lot. I hope so. It was not a waste of time for you, and it was not a waste of time for me either. Anyway, we should be grateful for every problem we have every day. It is not a repetition of the same thing. We are making progress every day. Even in this five-day sesshin, you made great progress—a lot of progress. Thank you very much for your attendance and sincere help.

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<sup>1</sup> In Japanese called the *Hekigan Roku*, this is a famous collection of 100 zen koan stories. The one Suzuki Roshi discusses here is Model Subject No. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Blue Cliff Records*, Model Subject No. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Blue Cliff Records*, Model Subject No. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Phillip Wilson and Graham Petchey are two Zen Center members who spent some months training at Eiheiji Monastery.

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