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Afternoon *Sesshin* Lecture
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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.

Dōgen-zenji explained this mind in his *Tenzo Kyōkun*.¹ *Tenzo Kyōkun* 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, Dōgen-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, Dōgen-zenji count the big mind: the mind as great as

¹ Eihei Dōgen, *Instructions for the Tenzo*, 1237. The *tenzo* is the head cook in a Zen monastery.

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 mind² is the first, and old ladies' mind³ 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 Dōgen-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, Dōgen-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

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.

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 Dōgen-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 Dōgen: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

⁵ The three minds are mentioned in *Tenzo Kyōkun*, but Suzuki-rōshi's translation or commentary does not follow the available translations of *Tenzo Kyōkun* currently available in English.

experience the spiritual joy and realize that the world of birth and death is the world of nirvāna.

The joyful mind is volitional aspect of the Zen mind—volitional aspect of Zen mind or mentality.

Seven⁶—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.

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⁶ The traditional list includes eight hardships of human existence (as listed by Suzuki-rōshi 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 *Garbhāvākṛānti-sūtra* in H. V. Guenther, trans., *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, Rider & Co., 1959, pp. 63-69.)

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 Dōgen-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).