

SUMMER *SESSHIN*
SECOND NIGHT LECTURE
September 1969
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 Dōgen-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—

¹ Suzuki-rōshi is commenting on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* "Inmo" (also spelled "Immo").

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 Dōgen-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-rōshi: Hmm?

Student: Fall on the ground?

Suzuki-rōshi: 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,

² Quoting Dōgen in *Shōbōgenzō* "Inmo," who in turn quoted the fourth Indian patriarch Upagupta in *Keitoku Dentōroku* (*Keitoku Era Record of the Transmission of the Light*), Chapter 1.

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

³ Suzuki-rōshi defined *ji* in a later *Sandōkai* 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).

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 Sōtō [laughs]—Sōtō—I belong to Sōtō, if I say so: "Oh, he," you know, "deny enlightenment experience." [Laughs.] It is not so. We Sōtō student do not stick to one thing. We don't stick to anything. We should have always freedom. In Japanese we say *shusshin—shusshin-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 Sōtō way or Rinzai way. Sometime Sōtō 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

⁴ *shusshin-no-katsuro* (Jap.): Literally, "the absolute way beyond enlightenment itself."

⁵ Suzuki-rōshi is referring to Bhadrupala's reply to Shākyamuni Buddha's question in the *Shūrangama Sūtra*. Shākyamuni: "Through which expedient

[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 Sōtō 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-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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

did you enter *samādhi*?" Bhadrāpala: "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).

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: Rōshi, I'm walking along, and everything's intact [laughter], and then I—

Suzuki-rōshi: 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-rōshi: [Laughing.] Rock is so big?

Student B: Yeah. It's stuck in the ground and I can't pick it up.

Suzuki-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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—Nukariya⁶—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.

⁶ Kaiten Nukariya: president of Komazawa University, Tōkyō. He was Suzuki-rōshi's academic and thesis advisor at Komazawa. Nukariya's controversial book on Buddhism for laypeople, *Shoshin Mondō (Questions and Answers about True Faith)*, was released in 1926, the same year that Suzuki-rōshi came to Komazawa. While abroad, Nukariya wrote the first popular book on Zen in English, *The Religion of the Samurai* (1913).

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-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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's⁷ question and Bill's⁸ question.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah.

Student D: It becomes a habit—a new habit. And you don't think about your habits.

Suzuki-rōshi: 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

⁷ Possibly Meg Gawler.

⁸ Definitely Bill Shurtleff (confirmed by voice).

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-rōshi: 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-rōshi: 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-rōshi's citation of Bhadrapala.