

**SUMMER *SESSHIN***  
**THIRD NIGHT LECTURE**  
**Tassajara**  
**September 1969**

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 Dōgen-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 *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*: *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.<sup>1</sup> 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 sūtra also you need some power here. That is how we recite sūtra. You know, this is, maybe, the difference between our reciting sūtra 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-rōshi:** Huh?

**Student:** Vocal cords.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** 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 sūtra, we recite sūtra: *KAN-JI-ZAI-BO* [chanted slowly and deliberately]—big sound with some strength here.

So reciting sūtra, 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*.<sup>2</sup> *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

<sup>1</sup> Possibly referring to the *hara*.

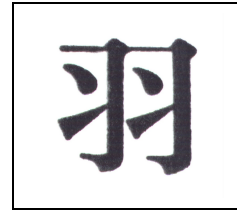
<sup>2</sup> *manabu* (Jap.): to learn; to study. *maneru* or *mane suru* (Jap.): to imitate; to mimic. *mane* (Jap.): imitation; mimicry.

imitate." "To imitate" means to be completely involved in something without self.

*Shū*<sup>3</sup>—another character is *shū*. *Shū* is, you know—the character of *shū* 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.



["SHŪ"]



["WING"]

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*,<sup>4</sup> or *gobō*<sup>5</sup>—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 *shōyu* sauce<sup>6</sup>—we use, most of the time, *shōyu* sauce in some special container. *Goma-shio*<sup>7</sup> is here, and *shōyu* 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*,<sup>8</sup> in which we usually put

<sup>3</sup> *shū*: to learn, to be taught, to take lessons.

<sup>4</sup> *daikon*: large white winter radish.

<sup>5</sup> *gobō*: burdock root.

<sup>6</sup> *shōyu*: soy.

<sup>7</sup> *goma-shio*: A table seasoning of ground roasted sesame seeds (*goma*) and salt (*shio*).

<sup>8</sup> *tsubo*: jar, pot, or urn. The prefix *o-* is honorific.

something like bean—boiled bean, or sesame *tōfu*.<sup>9</sup> 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 *shōyu* 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<sup>10</sup> I talked about Dōgen-zenji's saying:<sup>11</sup> "Those who fall on

<sup>9</sup> *tōfu*: soybean curd.

<sup>10</sup> SR-09-00-B.

<sup>11</sup> Quoting Dōgen in *Shōbōgenzō* "Inmo," who in turn quoted the fourth Indian patriarch Upagupta in *Keitoku Dentōroku* (*Keitoku Era Record of the*

the ground should stand up by ground," you know. And his interp-[partial word]—another version of Dōgen-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-kōroku*, 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

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*Transmission of the Light*), Chapter 1.

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 sūtra, 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<sup>12</sup> when the Sixth Patriarch<sup>13</sup> visited one big monastery after he received transmission from Kōnin, the Fifth Patriarch.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> When the Seventeenth, I think, Seventeenth [Indian] Patriarch—oh, Eighteenth<sup>16</sup>—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:

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<sup>12</sup> *Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan, Gateless Gate)*, Case 29: "The Sixth Patriarch's 'Your Mind Moves.'" Suzuki-rōshi told this story in SR-69-08-18.

<sup>13</sup> Daijan Huineng (Jap. Daikan Enō): 638-713. Sixth Chinese Patriarch.

<sup>14</sup> Daman Hongren (Jap. Daiman Gunin or Daiman Kōnin): 601-674. Fifth Chinese Patriarch.

<sup>15</sup> *Denkoroku*, Chapter 19.

<sup>16</sup> The Seventeenth Indian Patriarch was Samghanandi (Jap. Sōgyanandai) (d. 74 B.C.E.). The Eighteenth Indian Patriarch was Samghayāthata (Jap. Kayāshata or Jayāshata).

"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<sup>17</sup> gave [me] a big calligraphy, you know, three characters, *gugyakujo*: "Both are in complete calmness."

*[Sentence finished. Tape turned over.]*

You may see the big character, *gugyakujo*, and my teacher's sign. *Gugyakujo* 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 zendō is not calm [laughs]—not this kind of calmness. It means that Tassajara is in complete calmness, and city zendō [is] in complete calmness. But you may say city zendō is noisy, and Tassajara zendō is calm. But we don't mean this kind of calmness when we say "complete calmness." Calmness of Tassajara zendō include, you know—covers everything. Calmness in cosmic scale [laughs]. The San Francisco zendō also, its calmness covers whole universe. Then, you know, San Francisco zendō, when it covers everything, it is independent. And Tassajara zendō, 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

<sup>17</sup> Probably Kishizawa Ian-zenji.

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-rōshi,"<sup>18</sup> 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?

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<sup>18</sup> Hashimoto Eko-rōshi: 1890-c. 1965. Japanese Sōtō Zen master.



**Student A:** Rōshi?

**Suzuki rōshi:** *Hai.*

**Student A:** We have some children here now. We've had some children here all summer.

**Suzuki rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** But we ask them to imitate us—

**Suzuki rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** —we ask them to eat our food—

**Suzuki rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** —we ask them to keep silence—

**Suzuki rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** —and—how do you explain that?

**Suzuki rōshi:** 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-rōshi:** 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.

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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).