

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**Last Lecture of *Sesshin*: PRACTICE TO BE LIKE A STONE**  
**Saturday, February 28, 1970**  
**San Francisco**

Before we sit, six-day *sesshin* was too long. But after we completed, it was too short [laughs, laughter]. I think you feel, you know, quite different feeling. For an instance, when you walk, you know, you have quite different feeling. You feel as if you—your legs have become shorter [laughs, laughter], and your legs stick to floor, you know, and you feel very heavy [laughs] in your walking. It should be, you know, great joy for you, you know, when you completed such a long torch,<sup>1</sup> you know. But, you know, it is strange, you know, not to have so much joy, you know. I think that is because you have more composure in your feeling. And this is, I think, important.

Zen student is not, you know, so expressive, you know. Mostly they keep silent. They do not walk so fast. They don't act so actively, you know. You know, they have some—something, you know—something different, anyway. Especially when you sit for so long time, you yourself feel you changed a lot. You feel, you know, it is difficult even to smile [laughs]—even to say something, you know. That will be the feeling you have. And if you continue your practice, you will be more and more so. And even though you will not change into a strong buddha [laughs, laughter], a great change will happen to you, you know, and you will be someone which you didn't like at all. "I don't want to be like this." [Laughs.] But although this kind of experience is not the experience you wanted to have, but this is the experience anyway you will have through [laughs, laughter] zazen.

But there is—there is no need for you to worry, you know, because this is the way, you know, upwards, and soon you will find out the way downwards, and you will find yourself in the city again as a normal person. So there is nothing to worry, but in *zendō* it is necessary for us to have this kind of experience through practice.

And I think one or two years we must devote ourselves this kind of practice. If you go to Tassajara, you know, even more so. And Tassajara itself will have a kind of feeling of practice center more and more. When you see this kind of practice, you may say—or people may say, "Zen practice is not for us" [laughs]." You know, you may not like it. But by the time you have a Caucasian, you know, old Zen master, you will have found out exactly what is Zen.

So I want you to be patient enough to continue this kind of practice. And it is important for you to take care of this kind of feeling and

<sup>1</sup> Suzuki-rōshi may have meant "torture."

gradually extend this kind of unperturbability [imperturbability] of mind to our everyday life. When you start to work on this point, to establish, you know, to extend our practice to everyday life, you will understand—you will understand the teaching—our teaching. Or you will understand what is meant.

Oh—my voice is not—I am relying on this [the microphone] now [laughs]. Can you hear me? Oh. I am sorry [laughs, laughter]. Excuse me. Is it working?

**Yvonne Rand:** The part of it that makes your voice louder [the amplifier] isn't working.

Mm-hmm.

**Yvonne Rand:** So you have to do it yourself.

So I want you to keep, you know, this kind of practice for more than two years, at least, you know. Be—practice to be like a stone [laughs]. Actually, you know, in this training period—in this *sesshin*, I found several student who almost changed into a stone [laughs]—almost, not quite. But I think that is good, you know, attainment—good progress, I think. But we do not practice our way to be a stone. That is what will happen to some students, not all of you. The way we practice zazen is different according to the, you know, personality of the person. But what will—what we will attain is the same.

As a Zen teacher, there is no special, you know, image. We have various kinds of, you know, teachers, but they have some quality as a Zen teacher. The quality—in this point, they are quite—they are almost same, but they have—they do not lose their character. So it is not, you know, possible to understand Zen just by, you know, hasty way of observation. It takes—I think it may take a pretty long time before people in this land understand what is Zen. But Zen has long, long history and we have many and many good teachers which could be our good example. Being encouraged [by] those teachers, we are practicing our way, and we are helping ourselves. As we are practice—as you are practicing hard here, and Tassajara, and some other Zen centers, more and more, you know, good teacher will appear. I'm quite sure about it. I want you, anyway, to practice our way as you do right now—as you are doing right now.

Today we will have another memorial service for Trudy Dixon. I feel, you know—whenever we sit, I feel her present in zendō always, you know. Those who knows Trudy maybe difficult to forget her in zendō. He was sitting, you know, he passed away July 6—I think 6<sup>2</sup>—and he was at Tassajara, you know, forth—fifth—fifth. And he—she left, you

<sup>2</sup> July 9, 1969 (from *WIND BELL*, 1970, IX (1), p. 3).

know, Tassajara one night before she passed away at Children Hospital. So he—she went back just to die in the hospital. And I think she knew she was in critical condition, judging from what she said and what she did. But she—she was, you know—she didn't mind so much about her life. She was always happy to sit with—with—with us. So it is difficult for us to forget her. So we want to have another memorial —another service for her.

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 Dana Velden and Bill Redican (8/17/00).