

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
EKŌ LECTURES, No. 4:
THE SECOND MORNING EKŌ, Part 3 of 3
Sunday, July 12, 1970
Tassajara

[This is the fourth in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-rōshi on the four *ekōs* chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Sōtō Zen temples and monasteries.

The Second Morning *Ekō*:

Chōka ōgu fugin

- Line 1. *Aogi koi negawakuwa shōkan, fushite kannō o taretamae.*
Line 2. *Jōrai, Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyō o fujusu, atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa,*
Line 3. *jippō jōjū no sambō, kakai muryō no kenshō,*
Line 4. *jūroku dai arakan, issai no ōgu burui kenzoku ni ekō su.*
Line 5. *Koinegō tokoro wa,*
Line 6. *sanmyō rokutsū, mappō o shōbō ni kaeshi goriki hachige, gunjō o mushō ni michibiki.*
Line 7. *Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku shō sen koto o.*

Dedication for the Morning Service *Arhat's Sūtra*

- Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and respond.
Line 2. Thus, as we chant the *Maha Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra*, we dedicate the collected merit to
Line 3. the all-pervading, ever-present Triple Treasure, the innumerable wise men in the ocean of enlightenment,
Line 4. the sixteen great arhats and all other *arhats*.
Line 5. May it be that
Line 6. with the Three Insights and the Six Universal Powers, the true teaching be restored in the age of decline. With the Five Powers and Eight Ways of Liberation, may all sentient beings be led to nirvāna.
Line 7. May the two wheels of this temple forever turn and this country always avert the Three Calamities.]

In the second recitation of the *Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra*, we dedicate for the —to the *arhats* and many various sages in the—in the world. And what

we pray is—what we pray is—this is the translation Mel [Weitsman] and I did. "What we pray is that the wisdom—that the wisdom—and Three Wisdom—and the Six Unrestruct- [partial word]—Unrestricted Ways of the *arhats*."

Three Wisdom—we explain the Three Wisdom. "And the Six Unrestruct— [partial word]—Unrestr- [partial word]—Unrestricted Ways of the *arhats* may be always with us in our unceas-[partial word]—unceasing effort to renew Buddha's way to save all sentient beings from the world of suffering and confusion." "World of suffering and confusion" means the *mappō*. "And to keep Buddha's way always new to our—always—our al- [partial word]—world always." That is the spirit of Dōgen.

We understand the three period of Buddhism¹ is just the skillful means of Buddha to encourage people to practice our way. And next: "And we encourage ourselves, and we pray to—we pray to *arhats* to encourage ourselves, to continue our practice, even in our adversity, and keep the wheel of dharma turning forever, and to avert disasters of fire, water, and wind, and calamities of war, epidemics, and famine. That is, actually, what it says in this *ekō*. After reciting *sūtra* we recite—*ek-* [partial word] —*dōan* recite *ekō*, as you know.

And I—I have to explain more about what we pray in this—the second paragraph of the *ekō*. Actually we—it is—according to the usual way of observing ceremony, we Zen Buddhist apply the usual way of prayer. But, according to Dōgen-zenji, there is no need for us to expect help from outside. He says: "We are protected, actually, from inside firmly, so we don't have to expect any protect from outside." That is his spirit. *Nyingmo sude ni sakan nare kemo nan somata*.² We are protected from inside, you know, by ourselves, always, incessantly.

So, we don't have to expect any help from, you know, outside. But actually, it is so—our belief is so, but, when we recite *sūtra*, we follow the usual—we apply usually—usual dedication—way of dedication. And this is also Dōgen's, you know, idea. He says—for an instance—I cannot find out his word regarding— We, you know, ac- [partial word: actually?]
—we do not have any idea of dirty or pure, or any idea of calamity or disaster. But even so, he says, we have, you know, practice of cleaning restroom, you know. That is a kind of practice. We clean our body, you know, because our body is filthy, you know. Even though, you know, we—our face, or mouth, or body is clean, we sh- [partial word: should?]
—when—if you get up, you should wash your face, and rinse clean your mouth, you know, even though it is clean. We do it as a practice, you know, but not because it is dirty. That is our practice.

¹ *Shōbō*, *zōbō*, and *mappō*.

² Phonetic only. Assumed to be quoting Dōgen-zenji.

So, if you think, you know, to cleaning of [to clean] restroom is dirty work, that is wrong—wrong idea. Restroom is not dirty. Clean. Even though you don't clean it, it is clean. Or more than clean. But, you know, even—but we have to clean it as a practice, not because it is dirty. If you do it because it is dirty—if you think you have to clean it because it is dirty, that is not our way.

[Line 6. *sanmyō rokutsū, mappō o shōbō ni kaeshi goriki hachige, gunjō o mushō ni michibiki.*]

So far we explained *goriki* and *hachige*. And next word is *gunjō o mushō ni michibiki*. *Gunjō* means "all sentient beings." *Gun* is "various folk" of [or] "folks," you know. *Jō* means "living being." So it means "sentient being." *Mushō*³ means "*arhatship*"—another name of *arhat*. *Gunjō*. But here it means "sentient being who is [in] confusion and suffering." *Gunjō o mushō*: "to lead sentient beings who is in defilement to the *arhatship* by the power of unrestricted power of *arhat*."

[Line 7. *Sammon no nirin tsuneni tenji, kokudo no sansai nagaku shō sen koto o.*]

And *Sammon no nirin*. *Sammon* means "the main gate of the temple," but sometime it means—*sammon*—means "temple." Sometime it is one of the building which is gate, but sometime it means "temple"—all the temple. *Sammon no nirin*. *Nirin* is "two wheels." Two wheel is dharma wheel and—and alms wheel or materialistic support.

So when dharma wheel is turning, you know, our belief is if the dharma wheel is turning—going, then the materialistic wheel will be, you know, will—will be going, too. That—that we are not supported by anyone means our dharma wheel, actually, is not going [laughs]. So we should know that. If our dharma wheel doesn't go—if we are not supported by people, it means that our dharma wheel is not going. This is very true.

I—you know—I have—you know—I—since I know this world of Dōgen-zenji, I experienced it, I tested whether [laughs] it is true or not. So I—even when I was in, you know, when I was almost, you know, especially in the—during the war, wartime, I had not much to eat [laughs]. Most priest, you know, worked to earn some money to support themselves and to support their families. But my belief was if I, you know, observe Buddhist way, faithfully, someone will support me, you know. If no one support me, it means that Dōgen's world was not true [laughs, laughter]. So I never ask anyone to give anything to me, and I just observed the Buddhist way, without working in, you know, as a teacher, or as a clerk of the town office [laughs, laughter], or I—I raised some vegetables and sweet potato [laughs]. That is why I know how to raise vegetables [laughs] pretty well.

³ *mushō* (Jap.): no-nature; devoid of self-nature or fixed nature.

When I was cultivating temple garden, you know, I have pretty spacious temple garden in front of the building, so I dig the garden out, and took out all the stones, and put manure in it, and I raised, you know sweet—I was trying to raise sweet potato, and some [laughing] villagers came and helped me too. And I had a good crop.

And one day, my neighbor came and opened my rice box, you know. I had rice box as much—as big as this [probably gesturing to students] and as long as this. Pretty big. One day, they came and—came to help me cooking. When they opened the rice box, there was no rice at all [laughing]. She was quite astonish—astound, and she, you know, brought me some rice—not much, you know. She didn't have so much rice. And, you know, my neighbors and my members collected some rice, you know. But I had pretty many members, so I had a half, maybe [probably indicating that the rice-box was half-filled]—pretty many rice. But, you know, when people found out that I have a—a lot of rice [laughs], they come to the temple. So I gave it—gave my rice to them. And the more I gave my rice to them, the more I got the rice [laughs, laughter].

But at the time, Japanese people had a awful time, you know. At that time, most people—city people went to the farmer's family and [ex]changed their dressing [dresses], or *geta*,⁴ or whatever it may be. Something good was changed to food: potato, or rice, or sweet potato, or pumpkin. But I had no difficult- [partial word]—no such difficulties. Most of the time, I had a plenty of food. But I didn't feel so good, you know, to eat something special, something different from the usual people, so I tried to eat the same food which was given to us.

The Tassajara food, you know, is wonderful, you know: strong and rich, in comparison to the food we had in the wartime. So I—I don't have any complaint about food. And, if you observe our way strictly, we will be—we are sure to be protected by Buddha. That is very true. We should—should trust people, and we should trust Buddha. Since then, since wartime, Japanese priest started to wear, you know, your suit, you know, giving up robes—not give up, but when they have funeral service [laughs], or memorial service, they wear it, you know, to observe service. But usually they didn't. I didn't feel so good about that, you know. So that is why I didn't, you know—I don't wear—that is why I always wear robes.

When I was coming to America, you know, almost all the priests who is going abroad wear, you know, good suits and shiny shoes [laughs, laughter], but the head was not shiny, their hair was pretty long and well-combed, but their shoes were very shiny. With shiny shoes and new suits [laughs, laughter], they came to America, because, you know, they

⁴ *geta* (Jap.): Japanese wooden clogs.

thought to propagate Buddhism to America. They have to wear something—they have to be like—something like American people. But, even though they wear—they buy best suits and best shoes, Japanese are Japanese. They cannot be American people anyway. And the American people will find some fault in your wearing—way of wearing your suits or shoes. So, anyway, Japanese are Japanese, you know.

So that is one reason why I didn't come to America in, you know, suits. Another reason is I was disgusted with the priest who gave up robe and change their robe into suits to support themselves. When Dōgen said: "We are protected from within, firmly, why do—do we expect support from outside?" That is our spirit. But [laughs] nowadays they started to lose that kind of spirit. The priests in Japan—most priests, I may say, in Japan, does not respect their way, their practice.

So we should [not?] expect from—material support from outside, but what we—here it says, what we pray is dharma wheel and alms—and—what do you call it?—material fre- [partial word]—wheel goes smoothly forever. But to—to observe this kind of ceremony is important. Not because we have to beg *arhats* to help us, but because that is the way which we have [been] observing for long, long time. And this is, you know, how to repay the—to the bene- [partial word]—benevolence of the Buddha and *arhats*. Buddha and *arhats* are the people who, you know, supported themselves by their practice only, so if we observe, if we pay full respect to the *arhat* we will be also protected.

Sammon no nirin. Sammon no nirin. "Two wheels of Budd- [partial word]—temple will—may go smoothly." We say: "—food wheel and dharma wheel may go smoothly, and may the calamities of the country and the temple"—calamity like war, epidemic, and famine, or fire, water, wind. And big calamity is the calamity we will have in the last period of—*kalpa*—time. Many eons of time after all the universe will have big disaster—disaster, then we say *kōka*.⁵

To some extent, you know, our universe will, you know, will—will go on and on and will be built firmly, and firmer and firmer, until some—when we—when the universe go to some point, it will go to the destructive—it will enter into the process of destruction. That is also, you know, a kind of good means of Buddha.

We don't know—to—you know—if you—if we are going to the way of destruction, personally, we—from the time we were—we were born, we are going to the—we are in the process of death [laughs], you know, but that is just our understanding. But at the last period of time we will have big disaster. That is the "big disaster." The "small disaster" will be war, and epidemics, and famine, or flood, or fire, and the typhoon or

⁵ *kōka* (Jap.), *kalpāgni* (San.): the fire that occurs at the end of the *kalpa* of destruction.

hurricane. "May those, you know, disasters avert from us." That is how we—what we decide in the second—in the second dedication—dedication of the *Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra*. Words is going this way, you know: "I pray, I beg, may such-and-such," but spirit is different.

So in—when you recite sūtra, you should express this spirit, you know. We should not, you know, observe our way or recite our sūtra to ask *arhat* to help us, you know. That is not our spirit. When we recite sūtra, the feeling we create here is the feeling of non-duality, perfect calmness, and strong conviction in our practice. That kind of feeling should be always with us. If that kind of feeling [is] always with us, we will be supported anyway.

If our practice, you know, become involved in dualistic, selfish practice to support our building, or organization, or to support our personal life, you know, there is not much feeling in our dedication. Only when, you know, we have strong confidence in our way, and without expecting anything, with, you know, deep, calm feeling, if we recite sūtra, there there is our rea- [partial word: real?]-actual practice. That is, you know, context of our practice—meaning of practice.

So if you cannot express that kind of feeling in your way of dedication, that is not our way. So Dōgen says: "If we do not practice our way with, you know, with everyone, with all sentient beings, with every being in the world, or in the cosmic space, that is not Buddhist way."

So the spirit of zazen, you know, the zazen practice, should be always with us, especially when we recite sūtra or observe ceremony. The spirit should be always there, that kind of spirit: not dualistic selfish spirit, but calm, and deep, and firm—with firm conviction, we should observe our way. That is actually *arhat's* unrestricted power.

So to clairvoyance or to hear something, you know, through or from distant, is just a part of our power—unrestricted power. Our power should be always with all beings, and our everyday life should be protected—that kind of power which pervade everywhere—which is everywhere. That is, you know, the last unrestricted power of *arhat* and the most important unrest- [partial word: unrestricted?]-power of *arhat*.

When we observe our way in that way, you know [*Tape turned over. Possibly not many words lost.*] ... even though you want to create karma in that way, that is not possible. Because we are always with us, we are always one with all buddha-world, where there is no karmic activity. That which is going in the world of Buddha is just, you know, Buddha activity, there is nothing but Buddha activity in the realm of dharma world. In that way, when we observe our way, we do not create any karma. We are beyond the karmic world. So with this spirit, and with this

understanding, we should observe our way. So when we observe our way in this—with this understanding, there must be actual spirit of this kind.

Nowadays, you know, as our world become busier and busier, you know, even in a big monastery in Japan, they have not much [laughs] time to dedicate, you know, our way, you know, without any idea of time. So, you know, their *dōan* is watching always time [laughs, laughter]—time to, maybe—"How many memorial service we may have?" [laughs], or "Ten more service, then it will be—will be—our breakfast will be—very late, so, let's make it faster [laughing, laughter]. It become faster and faster!

As we know, you know, how much—before we start morning service, we know how much service we will have, so from the beginning, we—we s- [partial word: say?]: *Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyō* [chanting very fast] —GONG! [Laughs, laughter.]

They may think, you know, if they recite many sūtras, they will be supported better [laughing], but actually it is not so. It is same, you know. Even though you cannot observe memorial service, ten [times]—but if you observe, you know, with the—with our spirit, one or two, we'll be supported anyway, you know.

If we are involved in the idea of time too much, you know, or feeling of the members too much, we will lose our way, and in this way, we lose our way, we lose our practice. And naturally, people lose Buddhism, you know. Our members thinks we have our priest, but priest is not any more priest because they are already involved in dualistic practice—involved in busy life, busy world, busy mundane world—so there is no priest, you know. Even though priest is there, they are not practicing priest way.

So, we say, "They're—they cover their pan with—you know [laughing], cover of bathroom." They mixed up, you know, worldly practice and priest practice. That is how we lose our way. So when priest observe our way like priest, there is priest. When we do not observe our way like priest, we are, you know, "cover of the restroom" [laughs], not cover of the pots and pan.

"To help others" mean—does not mean to help others for their convenience sake. Maybe, you know, priests may be the most troublesome people [laughs]. May be very difficult to handle. Even they offer, you know, million dollar, they may say "oh, thank you." Even one penny, they will "thank you." They will say "thank you," that's all. It is very hard—difficult to handle.

That is, you know, when—when—when people wants real priest, they should handle priest carefully. They shouldn't mixed up, you know, priest with someone else. Though we should not lose this confidence within ourselves, we don't have to say, you know, in—by words, but within

ourselves we must have strong confidence in Buddha's way, and we should be supported from within, not from outside. So Buddhists should be Buddhist, completely. When Buddhist really become Buddhist, you will be supported as a Buddhist.

The *ekō* will be like this:

- [Line 2] We dedicate the merit of the recite—recitation of this
Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra to
- [Line 3] the Triple Treasures—Buddha, dharma and sangha,
and to the sages in the sea of the fruitful world of
buddhahood,
- [Line 4] and the sixteen *arhats* and their followers who attained
the supreme attainments of the *arhatship*.
- [Line 5] What we pray is that
- [Line 6] the Three Wisdoms of—Six—Three Wisdoms and the Six
Unrestricted Ways of the *arhats* may be always
with us in our unceasing effort of—effort to renew
Buddha's way forever. All sentient—to—excuse
me—Buddha's way—to renew Buddha's way,
to save all sentient beings, and sentient beings
from the world of suffering and confusion.
- [Line 7] And all the—and encourages—encourage us to continue
our practice, even in our adversities, and keep the
wheel of dharma turning forever. And to avert
destruction of fire, water, and wind, and calamities
of war, epidemic, and famines.

This will be the translation of the *ekō*. Maybe good idea to recite, you know, *ekō* after English, you know, *Prajñā*—after reciting the English translation of *Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra*. In the second, you know, service. Tomorrow I will explain the third one, which is dedicated to the—our patriarchs.

Thank you very much.

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and *Ekō Study Book* by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican (2/9/01).