

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
SESSHIN LECTURE, 7th DAY: CLOSING WORDS
Friday Evening
February 12, 1971
San Francisco

The Sixth Patriarch¹ said: "To dwell on emptiness and to keep calm mind is not zazen," he said. Or he said, you know: "Just to sit in squatting—sitting position is not Zen." But we say, you know, you—you have to just sit [laughs]. If you don't understand what is our practice and stick to those words, you will be confused. But if you understand what is real Zen, it is quite usual warning, you know—a kind of warning for us.

Now our *sesshin* is almost [at an] end. But—and some people, maybe, you know, go back to their home and participate or involved in previous everyday activities. But if you practice—if you have been practicing true zazen, you will not, you know—you may be happy to go back to your everyday life. You may be encouraged, you know, by our practice to—in going back to your everyday life. But if you feel, you know, if you feel hesitate [hesitant] to go back to your or—go back to your city life or everyday life, it means that, you know, you will still stick to zazen.

So that is why the Sixth Patriarch said: "If you," you know, "dwell on emptiness and stick to your practice, then that is not true zazen." When you practice zazen, moment after moment, you accept what you have now and what you have in that moment, and satisfying with everything you do, and you don't—you do not—you don't have any complaint because you just accept it, then that is zazen. Or even though you cannot do that, you know what you should do. Then sitting zazen will encourage you to do some other thing. Just as you accepted your painful legs, you accept difficult everyday life. Because city life may be more difficult than your zazen practice, so zazen practice will encourage you to have more difficulties.

If you understand in this way what is zazen, that is right understanding. If you have, especially in your seven-days practice, having some taste of real practice, without losing the taste of practice, and continue your busy activity, then that will be great encouragement. Even though you are [it is] difficult, and even though you are busy, you have always, you know, taste of calmness of your mind, not because you stick to it but because you enjoy it. There is some difference [between] "to stick to it" and "to enjoy it." When you enjoy it, you don't have to stick to it, you know [laughs, laughter]. So if you have real, you know, taste of our practice, you can enjoy it all the time, incessantly. Whatever you

¹ Dajian Hui-neng (Daikan Enō): 638-713.

do, that taste is not something you have to stick to it, something you have to recall it. That is, you know, true enlightenment. But even though you think you attained enlightenment, you know, when you are busy, when you are some—in some difficulty, and you think you need, you know, to have that experience again [laughs], that is not real enlightenment because that enlightenment is something you have to stick to it [laughs]. But real enlightenment is always with you, and [there is] no need for you to stick to or for—there is no need even to think about it. It is always with you. So difficulty itself is enlightenment. Busy life itself is enlightened activity. That is true enlightenment.

But even though expect—you—even though you want to have this—have a taste of true practice, you know, it may be difficult to have it. Only way to have it is, you know, just to continue right practice according to—following the right instruction and right teacher. That is the only way. If you follow right schedule in your practice, you know, naturally or some day you may have a taste of it. Nowadays, you know, you make date [laughing], you know, young people are making date, but, you know, enlightenment is not something which you can meet by date.

But if you, you know, follow—if you organize your life, if you get up at some certain time and pick up bag lunch at certain time, and go out for the work, then if you have some girlfriend or boyfriend, you know, you will meet her, you know, without any date. There is no need for you [laughs, laughter] to make date. At some certain time, she will come to the corner. You will usually see her, you know. That is our way, you know. It is rather foolish to make phone call, you know [laughing, laughter]. It is, you know—it is troublesome, you know. And you sh-[partial word]—even though you meet her, if you meet her by date, you know, by telephone call, you know: "Hey! I am leaving now," if they—if she doesn't come to the corner, you know, you will be irritated. If you do not make any date, you know, and if she come at some certain time to the corner, you will be really happy. That is, you know, how you attain enlightenment [laughing, loud laughter]. It is not a laughing matter. I am talking about something real, you know. I think you will agree with me.

That is, you know, how not to stick to enlightenment. Not to make any date means not to expect enlightenment or stick to enlightenment. Being encouraged by enlightenment, by seeing her even though you don't say anything—you don't talk with her, just have a glance of her is enough. And all day long you will be happy [laughs]. But if you, you know, are demanding too much of her, then already it means that you stick to enlightenment.

That is what he—the Sixth Patriarch meant when you—when he said: "Just to," you know, "dwell on emptiness is not true practice." Originally he attained enlightenment by one famous statement: "Without dwelling on anything, you will have true mind." If you d-[partial word]—so it means that if you stick to something, you will lose your enlightenment. Even though you try hard, you know, in making an appointment or date, it doesn't work. If you attain enlightenment in that way, you know, it may not be—most of the time it may not be true enlightenment. The enlightenment you will have in that way is enlightenment which you will stick to, and which—and is not something which is always with you, which will always encourage you.

This point is very important. So even though we finish our *sesshin*, we should continue well-organized life and to—to have real enlightenment. When you practice hard according to the right instruction of your teacher, then that is how you have real enlightenment experience.

In this *sesshin*—this *sesshin* was very fruitful *sesshin*, and some of you already had a good taste of our practice. Even though you haven't real taste of practice, I think, you knew—you have understood how you practice zazen. So what you should do from now on is to continue our true practice.

Thank you very much.

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (12/13/00).