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Excuse me. [Laughs.] I feel rather stiff. Maybe I worked too hard.

Since we have Tassajara and the city zendō, we are—our practice is rather concentrated on city practice or Tassajara practice. But the most important point is to know what is Zen practice, which is not only city practice, but also Tassajara practice, and city zendō practice. Wherever you are, we have Zen way of practice. No matter where you are, you must have proper understanding of our practice.

In *Shōbōgenzō* "Genjo-kōan," Dōgen-zenji says, referring to this point:

"When all things are Buddhism, there are birth and death—there are defilement, practice, birth and death, buddhas, and sentient beings. When all things has no self, there is no delusion, no buddha, no sentient beings, no birth, no death. Buddhism originally is beyond the all positive or neg- [partial word]—positivity or negativity, so there are birth and death, defilement and enlightenment, and sentient beings and buddha."

There, you know, our—this is our fundamental practice. It is better now, I think, for us to follow more original way of Zen practice, which is go beyond Tassajara practice, or city zendō practice, or practice in—in city life. Wherever you are, this is the fundamental way of practice for us or else we will be too much, you know, involved in city practice or monastic practice and we will lose the point of practice, I am afraid.

"When all things are Buddhism—all things are Buddhism, there are defilement, practice—defilement, practice, birth and death, buddhas and sentient beings." The point is they are—they are. All things are Buddhism. Whatever you do, that is Buddhism. But there is some danger in your understanding of this kind of words—statement.

"Whatever you do, that is Buddhism." You know, whatever you do in Tassajara, or in city zendō, or in city life, that is Buddhism. It looks like—it sound like this: "Whatever we do, it doesn't matter. Anyway [laughs], that is a practice of Buddhism." If it is so, there is—it is not necessary for you to study Buddhism, whatever—if whatever you do, that is Buddhism.

But actually, what Dōgen-zenji meant is not—is not like that. So there —there is, maybe, in—in—when you understand this statement, "Whatever you do, that is," you know, "Buddhism." There may be two ways of understanding it. One is, whatever you do [laughs], you know, if you understand—you take this statement literally, from your non-

Buddhist—non-Buddhistic understanding. That is one, you know.

There is—another is real Buddhist understanding of this statement. Like, you know, in *Lotus Sūtra* we say "*shohō-jisso*." *Shohō* means things we see; *jisso* is truth, true way it exist—way they exist—real way things exist. So everything exist in the way they exist.

So usually when we understand, "Whatever you do, that is Buddhism," means even though you do not behave [laughs], even though you do not, you know, live the way you should live, it is Buddhism. You know, there is big difference [laughs].

"Way things exist." Here is, maybe, the problem of "to be" and "should be." "To be" and "should be." You know, recently people may not—do not like the words "should be" [laughs]—"should be"—and you like "to be," maybe. "Should be" is—looks some rules, and "to be" is, you know, freedom: Whatever you do, that is good—that is "to be."

But—but it is—it will be the opposite. "Should be" is "to be" [laughs], and "should be" is "to be." You know, when you behave according to the circumstances, appropriately, then that is "should be" and that is "to be." "To be" and "should be" is same. But when your selfish, you know, idea arise and rejects "should be," reject the way you exist, then that is—that is not way "to be." You are involved in delusion—delusion of self.

And in its strict sense, you cannot survive in that way. You think you can, but actually you cannot. Or you—you want to be in that—you want to survive in that way, but actually it is not possible. If you want to go to Los Angeles, you should take Freeway 101 [laughs]. You cannot go that way, even though you—you want to go opposite way. "Many people are going that way, take 101, so I will go to the opposite way." Eventually you will go to—reach to Los Angeles [laughs, laughter]. But that is a kind of—the way you choose.

So to think it is—about—about it—about a kind of freedom is good, but actually that is not possible. So knowing that that is not possible, to think about it is another matter, you know. But if you sit seriously—try to do whatever you want to do, that is delusion. You—it is—it means that you are completely involved in delusion. It is not actual. It is not possible to survive in that way. So "should be" and "to be" is—is not different.

So real freedom is in "should be" and in—in its true sense "to be." That "should be" is for—the way for beginners, and that "to be" which is one with "should be" is the advanced student. So first stage should [laughs]—should be "should be." [Laughs, laughter.] And "should be," "should be," "should be" [laughs]—an endless, you know, continuous practice of

"should be" [laughs]. You have no, you know, chance to get out of "should be" [laughs]. That is okay, you know. Pretty soon "should be" will be "to be." "Should be" or "to be"—you don't care. "Should be" is okay. "To be" is okay, for you. That is the goal of practice, you know.

So Dōgen-zenji says, "Buddhism originally is beyond all positivity and negativity." Buddhism originally is beyond the all "to be" and—or "should be," you know. Real way is not only—only "to be," but also "should be." Or not only "should be," but also "to be." That is real way. That is the stage you will acquire after following teaching.

Ahh. This is rather discouraging [laughs]. Maybe if I say so from the beginning, you will not, you know—you may say, "Oh, I wish I—I wish I didn't start practice Buddhism. [Laughs.] It is too difficult." You may say, but it is—Buddhism is not any special teaching. Actually, Buddhism is our human way.

Here we—we have many things to think about. First of all, we should know how, you know—we should know that this world for human being—for human being, not for birds or cat, you know, but for human being—this world is world of suffering [laughs]. Originally, you know—not originally, but—for human being, as long as we are, you know, human nature, which is very selfish, which care for something which you, you know, you cannot acquire or you cannot expect. That is human nature, you know. We care for something which we cannot reach, you know. Or because you cannot reach you want to—you want it. Because, you know, we do not stay young forever, we want to be, you know, young always [laughs]. Something which we cannot expect is something we like. That is our human nature. So human life is, at the, you know, same time, a life of suffering. That is very true.

We should know many things about our human being. When you know about human nature deep enough, then you will start, you know, Buddhism—you will start to practice Buddhism. It is like operation, you know. When the pain is, you know, strong enough to accept operation, you will go to the doctor [laughs]. But it is almost impossible to, you know, to have your—to have operation when you have no pain. Because you have a great pain, because you know human nature well enough, you start Buddhism like you go to the doctor to have operation. This is nature of Buddhism. That is why you practice zazen.

At first when you sit, many things will come up, you know, many ideas—many wrong ideas and many things you did before. We don't do so much good things in comparison to bad things [laughs]. Most of the things we do is bad [laughs] or things you feel regretful. Something you—when you do, you feel very good, but after you did it, how do you feel? [Laughs.] "Oh. I thought it was very good, but it was not so good." [Laughs.] That is something, you know—feeling you have. And

that kind of feeling come up, you know, constantly when your mind is very calm, like a bubble, you know, comes up—comes up from the bottom of the water. When the water is, you know, rough—not smooth enough, then no bubbles comes out. Even though it comes out, you don't notice it. You have—as soon as your mind become calm, you may realize how much bubbles you have in your bottom of your heart. The real practice, you know, start from that kind of practice.

You may say Zen practice should be calm—to have calmness of your mind is real practice. "I have been practicing zazen for so many years—two years, three years, or more than that. Still I don't have calmness [laughs] of your mind at all. What shall I do?" That will be your question.

In zazen—in zazen practice, we say if something, you know, arise in your mind, let it arise, let it come. Then it—they will not stay so long, so let it go away. In zazen that works pretty well. If you let it come, and if you do not entertain them, they will go away. But in actual life, that—it is not so easy, you know. You may suffer. Then what will you do? When you suffer, what—what you will do? The suffering is very strong. What will you do? Here is, you know, something you should think about.

The one point is, you know, your practice is in the first, you know, stage, and you have next stage and the third stage. In the next stage, you will, you know, like in—like when you have good zazen practice, nothing arise in your mind. Your mind will be, even for a while, in complete calmness, where there is no image or no feeling. Your mind is complete calmness. That is the next stage you will have in your zazen practice. And the third stage will be the stage you come back to the stage—something like the first stage where there is many problems, where there is many weeds, and where there is many flowers. But way you see—see the flowers, the way you weed the weed, is different, but nearly the same stage. Looks like same stage, but big difference.

So you don't have to solve that problem. The point is you should continue that practice of difficulty. That is the point. So you should know that is, you know, only the first stage of your practice. So you—you cannot solve the problem at—only at the first stage. If you struggle at the first stage, you will lose your practice. That is why we say, you know, "Great patience is the best of virtues. [Laughs.] To continue it is most important practice. Without struggling with it, just continue it. Then you will have chance to—to have the second stage or the third stage." It means that. It means—I—I forget where I, you know, found out that statement.

Someone who—who—who fell on the earth—on the earth, maybe by stumbling [on a] stone or something, you know—fell on the earth will

stand up [laughs] by the earth—same—by the same earth. Because of the earth you stumble, you fell, you know. Earth is the problem. Because of the problem, you hurt, you know, you hit against the earth. But because [laughing] of the earth, you can support yourself again, and you can stand up.

So you complain—you have complained because you think because of the earth you fell [laughs], but without earth you will not fell. And at the same time, you cannot stand up. So because you have problem, you know, you feel as if because of the problem, you, you know, you fell. A fell or stand up is, you know, a help, you know—great help which was given to you by earth.

So problem itself is your mother, you know. Because of the mother of earth, you can continue your practice. You are practicing, you know, so zendō of the earth—great earth, which is the problems. Problems are actually your zendō. That is very true.

So what is delusion, what is enlightenment? When you, you know, deluded of truth, that is delusion. When you are deluded of—of earth, that is delusion. When you enlightened of the earth, that is enlightenment. When you stand up by the earth, that is enlightenment. When you fell, you know, because of the earth—you feel in that way—that is delusion. So you have chance to attain a great enlightenment when you have problem.

Usually you talk about your surrounding. You talk about Tassajara practice and city practice. That is, I think, very good. [Laughs.] But that is not the point of practice. The point of practice is—the problem you have here or city or Tassajara is the earth. So if Tassajara is monastery, city zendō is monastery, and city is also monastery in its wide sense.

Our way is not to get rid of all the stones from the earth which could be a stumbling [laughs] stone for you. It is good to have many stones on the earth which could be, you know, stumbling stone. It is good. And when you stand up, if you have a high, big stone, it—it may be easier to stand up. But more people will [laughs]—will hit against it. But it is very good for your practice to have big stones everywhere. This is, for an instance, a big stone. If you understand it, that is, you know, enlightenment. If you don't understand it, it is big slap—painful slap. This is a big stone. So if there is not much stone for you to help your practice, we have to bring many stones from Tassajara to city zendō [laughs, laughter]. You are not so interested in this kind of stuff, you know. So if you understand our life, our problem in this way, then will you have—you will get through the first stage.

I don't think I have time to explain the next stage. But you may feel,

you know, if you understood our problems of our life in this way, then that is, you know, end of the whole picture, you know. But it is just a first series of the movie. Why it is so is, you know, something we should think about.

The—in the first stage, you are—very interesting stage, so you may want to stay the first stage [laughs] a little bit longer. That is—but again, that is too selfish, you know [laughs]. Buddhism is very strict, you know, very strict. You may enjoy the first stage very much, actually. In—in the city, in zendō, you know, when you come to zendō, you have, you know, a good Zen practice. When you go to city, you will enjoy city life, you know, with a kind of—what do you?—leisurely mind, you know. You—you have some space or some room to accept the difficulty—difficulties of the city life. Because of the wisdom of understanding of our human nature, you know, we can—we have time, or we have room for accepting the problems, you know. We are ready to accept problems. Like you sit zazen, you know, in zazen, many, many things come: "Okay. [Laughs.] I have enough room here or here or here for you to come. Please come." [Laughs, laughter.] But, you know, it is interesting to—to see how they go away. "Oh, nothing to see, nothing to eat," so they may go out [laughs]. It—it is very interesting.

But, you know, Zen is not something to play, you know, to play with—to play game with—with our prac- [partial word]—we shouldn't play game with it. If you practice zazen because you enjoy your practice, that is not Buddha's practice. He is very strict. Buddha's mercy is so deep, so clear, and so wide. When we selfish human being always want something good to eat, something good to hear, something good to see. So if someone give you something to hear, or something to eat, most human being will stay. Knowing this fact, Buddha became—become more and more strict with us [laughs]. Yeah, it's—it's something, you know, which you must think about. And when you, you know, study or when you want to learn religion, you know, you must learn something more than this. Just to solve our everyday problem is not purpose of studying Buddhism. [*Sentence finished. Tape turned over.*]

Yesterday I saw Sōen Nakagawa-rōshi.¹ And he was going to—I—I thought he is going back to Japan, but he was going to—what—the place—Elsahem?—what do you—how you pronounce, you know, when—where Christ was born? Hmm? [Answers from students: "Bethlehem."] Yeah. He was going to that place. Why is he going to there [laughs]? I think that is buddha-mind, you know, something more than this, something more than to enjoy his enlightenment. He is

¹ Sōen Nakagawa-rōshi (1908-1983): Rinzai master. Dharma successor of Yamamoto Gempō and abbot of Ryūtaku-ji Monastery near Mishima. The words "Yesterday I saw Sōen Nakagawa" are from a note written on the back of the original tape's case. The passage was not recorded on tape.

going somewhere else again. He looks like very much interested in helping people. Maybe so. But that is not, you know—helping people—without helping people he may not feel so good, so that is why he is going. But his going is not just to satisfy his personal feeling. He is mo- [partial word]—

You know, at the end of the *sesshin* [laughs] we bow maybe more than thirty times, calling many buddhas' name. Among the buddhas, they, you know, they call some special names: *Nam-* [partial word]—Sunshine—Sunshine Buddha, or Moonlight Buddha, or Dead Sea Buddha [laughs]. I don't know—because he—he has his disciple who started zendō at Dead Sea. That is why he bowed—he called the name of Dead Sea Buddha. And Good Practice Buddha. Many buddhas appeared. And [we] bowed and bowed and bowed [laughs]. That is something, you know, which is beyond our understanding. And he also bow—when he bow to all those buddha, the buddha he bowed to is something beyond his own understanding. Again and again he did it.

And he gave us, you know, *macha*² he made himself, you know, and gave us *macha*. What he was doing, I don't know, and he doesn't know, maybe [laughs]. Anyway, he did it, and he offered. And he—he didn't—he looks very happy, but that happiness is very different from the happiness we usual people have.

Our practice should go, you know, that level, where there is no human problem, or no buddha problem, where there is nothing. And to have tea, and to have cake, and to make a trip from one place the another—that was his, you know, practice. And he has no idea of helping people. What he is doing, he is helping, but he himself has no idea of helping people. So to solve [?] our human problem is not all the—doesn't cover all our practice—Buddhist practice. *Hmm*.

We don't know how long it takes for us to make, you know, buddha trip. [Laughs.] We have many trips: work trips, you know, various trips—space trips [laughs]—various trip we must have. Buddha trip is very, you know, very long trip. That is Buddhism.

Thank you very much.

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg and B. Fikes. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (11/15/00).

² Powdered green tea.