

August 5, 1965

Rev. Suzuki's talk on Great Prajna Paramita Sutra

I want to give the conclusion to this Prajna Paramita Sutra this morning. In short, this sutra suggests to us how everything exists. Everything exists in two ways, visible and invisible. Something visible is not invisible. Actual existence has two faces, visible and invisible. Something visible is not visible. Something not visible is visible. That is true. Because you think only something visible is only existence, so you attach to something visible. And when you think only thing exists is something visible you become attached to some particular thing. If you understand something visible is at the same time invisible, and something invisible...if something invisible actually exists, there will be no need to be attached to something visible only and there will be no need for you to be afraid of losing your existence in visible realm. If you understand two faces of ultimate existence there is no more fear and you own everything.

The practice—by practice of zen you will have actual feeling of this feeling. So in this sutra says, “Form is emptiness”. Form is something visible and emptiness is something invisible. If I say in this way it is too abstract, so it may be rather difficult to understand.

The artistic effort is to make something invisible visible. Something invisible. To make visible something invisible is artistic effort. Actualize our true nature or visualize our true nature is artistic effort. To express our true nature is artistic effort. If you can express yourself through your activity that is also artistic effort. To actualize something invisible—to

visualize something invisible is artistic work. By something invisible I mean your true nature—inmost nature—the nature everyone will accept it, the nature everyone will appreciate it, and by this nature everyone can appease your superficial request.

We have various superficial requests, but if you understand your true nature, all the superficial requests will vanish, or will be absolved in or by the true nature. It is like blotting paper. That is our true nature. That is our practice.

Even though I say something invisible I don't mean something quite unfamiliar to you. Actually everything visible is invisible. When you hear birds singing, the moment you hear the bird, there is no more bird, there is no more singing, no more voice. When you just hear it, there is no more. So before you hear it or after you hear it there is the beautiful voice. After you hear it, "Oh, that was beautiful voice", you may say. Before you hear it you will expect the beautiful voice, but you will be expecting the bird singing for a long time. For a long time you have the singing of the bird in your mind, but the moment you hear it, there is no more bird singing—no more bird. That is opposite.

You expect to hear something, but the moment you hear it there is no more bird, or there is no more flower. It will fall down. It is falling down. The moment it is full open it is falling down little by little until it reaches the earth. That is true. So something appears is something disappears. Something appearing is starting to disappear. But when you paint something like this, you have always flower here. It means to visualize something invisible. Actually it is invisible, but what you have as a beautiful thing is visualize

something beautiful, but actually something beautiful if always vanishing. Isn't that so? It is so. It is how everything exists in this world. If you understand this secret, there is no more suffering. When some birds come you can appreciate the bird's singing. When they go, it's all right. Some other bird will come. And one after another you have something to hear and something to see. If your life is like this there is no more suffering. But if you become lonely, you can paint it, you can visualize it, you can worship Buddha. But actual Buddha is not here. Those who do not know actual Buddha cannot worship Buddha. Those who is not aware of beauty of everything cannot paint, cannot appreciate the arts. So you understand how important it is to practice zazen.

If you practice zazen in right posture and in right way there is no secret. That is why I rather strict with your posture. Not posture, but...I can feel, or I can see through your posture whether you have everything or not. Whether you are separated from your surroundings or not, whether you are one with your surroundings or not, if you are the master of the surrounding or not, if you are enjoying yourself in your surrounding or not. So those who can sit in right posture, in right way owns everything and has no difficulty in our life.

That is why we emphasize "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form". Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. The most important point of this sutra is those eight characters. Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. In Chinese eight characters – in English six. If so, form is form and emptiness is emptiness. Whatever happens to you, it is all right. Emptiness is not emptiness. Emptiness is form. Form itself. Form is emptiness itself. If so,

what is the difference between form and emptiness? You are empty and you have form. Because you have form you are empty. If you have no form... it is impossible for everything to have no form. All what exists will have form and color. All what has form and color is empty because form and color is not permanent. Because it is not permanent it exists. Something which is permanent does not exist. It is picture. It is art. As art it exists, but actually it doesn't. So when you know it is temporal you will love it. You will treasure it. You will appreciate it because it exists just in this moment. So you would devote yourself to this moment. On this moment, in this actual existence, actual form and color, you will be no more.

I go back to San Francisco so I must be quite sincere with you right now. This is the spirit of tea ceremony and spirit of flower arrangement. "Please have a cup of tea. I don't know when I'll never see you again, so please have a cup of tea." This is spirit of tea ceremony. In this way we have everything we hear, we see. Right now we have everything. This is the conclusion of Prajna Paramita Sutra.

ZMBMms box transcript. Exact copy entered into disc by GM and emailed to D. Chadwich on 06-03-08.

Handwritten not top right of 1<sup>st</sup> page of transcript reads 'original'.  
Lightly edited for readability by Gordon Geist (10/27/08).