

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

This lecture was the source for the chapter of *Not Always So* called "Supported from Within" on p. 65.

[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 to the *arhats* and many various sages in the world. And what what we pray is—this is the translation Mel Weitsman and I did: What we pray is that the wisdom—Three Wisdom—and the Six Unrestricted Ways of the *arhats* may be always with us in our 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 world—always. That is the spirit of Dōgen.

We understand the three periods of Buddhism¹ as just the skillful means of Buddha to encourage people to practice our way. And next: "And we encourage ourselves, and 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 the *sūtra* we recite—the *dōan* recites the *ekō*, as you know.

And I have to explain more about what we pray in this—the second paragraph of the *ekō*. Actually according to the usual way of observing ceremony, we Zen Buddhists 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 protection from outside." That is his spirit. *Nyingmo sude ni sakan nare kemo nan somata*.² We are protected from inside, by ourselves, always, incessantly.

So, we don't have to expect any help from outside. Actually, our belief is so, but, when we recite the *sūtra*, we follow the usual way of dedication. And this is also Dōgen's idea. We do not have any idea of dirty or pure, or any idea of calamity or disaster. But even so, he says, we have the practice of cleaning the restroom. That is a kind of practice. We clean our body, because our body is filthy. Even though our face, or mouth, or body is clean, when you get up, you should wash your face, and rinse clean your mouth, even though it is clean. We do it as a practice, but not because it is dirty. That is our practice.

So, if you think to clean the restroom is dirty work, that is wrong idea. Restroom is not dirty. Clean. Even though you don't clean it, it is clean. Or more than clean. 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.*]

¹ *Shōbō, zōbō, and mappō.*

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

So far we explained *goriki* and *hachige*. The next word is *gunjō o mushō ni michibiki*. *Gunjō* means "all sentient beings." *Gun* is "various folk" or "folks." *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 being 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 buildings which is the gate, but sometime it means "temple"—all the temple. *Sammon no nirin*. *Nirin* is "two wheels." Two wheels is dharma wheel and alms wheel or materialistic support.

Our belief is if the dharma wheel is turning—going, then the materialistic wheel will be going, too. 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.

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

When I was cultivating the temple garden, I had a pretty spacious temple garden in front of the building, so I dug the garden out, and took out all the stones, and put manure in it, and I raised—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. I had a rice box as big as this [probably gesturing to students] and as long as this. Pretty big. One day, they came to help me cooking. When they opened the rice box, there was no rice at all [laughing]. She was quite astound, and she brought me some rice—not much. She didn't have so much rice.

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

And, my neighbors and my members collected some rice. But I had pretty many members, so I had a half, maybe [probably indicating that the rice-box was half-filled]—pretty much rice. But, when people found out that I have a lot of rice [laughs], they come to the temple. So I gave my rice to them. And the more I gave my rice to them, the more rice I got [laughs, laughter].

But at the time, Japanese people had an awful time. At that time, most people—city people went to the farmer's family and exchanged their 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 such difficulties. Most of the time, I had plenty of food. But I didn't feel so good 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 is wonderful: strong and rich, in comparison to the food we had in the wartime. So I don't have any complaint about the food. And, if you observe our way strictly, we are sure to be protected by Buddha. That is very true. We should trust people, and we should trust Buddha. Since then, since the wartime, Japanese priests started to wear your kind of suit, giving up robes—not give up, but when they have funeral service [laughs], or memorial service, they wear it to observe service. But usually they didn't. I didn't feel so good about that. So that is why I always wear robes.

When I was coming to America, almost all the priests who were going abroad wore 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 they thought to propagate Buddhism to America, they have to be like American people. But, even though they buy the best suits and best shoes, Japanese are Japanese. They cannot be American people anyway. And the American people will find some fault in your way of wearing your suits or shoes. So, anyway, Japanese are Japanese.

So that is one reason why I didn't come to America in a suit. Another reason is I was disgusted with the priests who gave up robe and change their robe into suits to support themselves. When Dōgen said: "We are protected from within, firmly, why 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, do not respect their way, their practice.

So we should not expect material support from outside, but here it says, what we pray is the dharma wheel and alms and the material wheel goes smoothly forever. But to observe this kind of ceremony is important. Not

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

because we have to beg *arhats* to help us, but because that is the way which we have been observing for a long, long time. And this is how to repay the benevolence of the Buddha and *arhats*. Buddha and *arhats* are the people who 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 temple 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, then we say *kōka*.⁵

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

We don't know if we are going to the way of destruction. Personally, from the time we were born, we are in the process of death [laughs], but that is just our understanding. But in 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 hurricane. "May those disasters avert from us." That is what we decide in the second dedication of the *Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra*. Words are going this way: "I pray, I beg, may such-and-such," but the spirit is different.

So when you recite the *sūtra*, you should express this spirit. We should not observe our way or recite our *sūtra* to ask an *arhat* to help us. That is not our spirit. When we recite the *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 becomes involved in dualistic, selfish practice to support our building, or organization, or to support our personal life, there is not much feeling in our dedication. Only when we have strong confidence in our way, and without expecting anything, with deep, calm feeling, if we recite the *sūtra*, there there is our actual practice. That is the context of our practice—the meaning of practice.

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

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

So the spirit of zazen, the zazen practice, should be always with us, especially when we recite a sūtra or observe a ceremony. The spirit should be always there, that kind of spirit: not a 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 clairvoyance or to hear something 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 pervades everywhere—which is everywhere. That is the last unrestricted power of *arhat* and the most important unrestricted power of *arhat*.

When we observe our way in that way [*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 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 with this understanding, there must be actual spirit of this kind.

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

Before we start the morning service, we know how much service we will have, so from the beginning, we say: *Maka Hannyaharamita Shingyō* [chanting very fast]—GONG! [Laughs, laughter.]

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

If we are involved in the idea of time too much, 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. Our members think we have our priests, but a priest is not a priest any more because they are already involved in dualistic practice—involved in busy life, busy world, busy mundane world—so there is no priest. Even though a priest is there, they are not practicing the priest's way.

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

"To help others" does not mean to help others for their convenience sake. Maybe priests may be the most troublesome people [laughs]. May be very difficult to handle. Even if they are offered a million dollars, 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 when people want a real priest, they should handle the priest carefully. They shouldn't mixed up a priest with someone else. Though we should not lose this confidence within ourselves, we don't have to say in 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 a 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 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 and the Six Unrestricted Ways of the
arhats may be always with us in our
unceasing effort to renew Buddha's way forever.
To renew Buddha's way, to save all sentient beings
from the world of suffering and confusion.
- [Line 7] And encourages 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 *ekō* after reciting the English translation of *Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra*. In the second service. Tomorrow I will explain the third one, which is dedicated to 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). Lightly edited for readability by Gordon Geist (10/6/05).