

67-12-02

## ZENSHINJI WINTER SESSHIN (incomplete+)

**December 2, 1967. Afternoon lecture.**

Our inner power of practice will appear according to the situation and will extend to the situation we have. So, if you sit strong, your tandem will be strong. But our true nature, our true power, does not make sense. But actually whatever you do the power is there...sitting is there.

In this way you should understand our daily practice power. It is not something to acquire but something to appreciate. **(THE NEXT THREE SENTENCES WERE UNCLEAR ON TAPE).**

But when your mind is caught by something you lose your true mind. So without being caught by anything but just to sit without thinking is our true practice.

In the last lecture I told you about this power from the opposite side. It wasn't called sitting but that you call it by its own name is alright. But the power is not something you can touch or you can understand. If something happens you will find out the power is there. But when acted in this way you have no idea of power. You are just sitting. But if you do something the power is there and so also in various activities the power is there. So to call it Void is to call it no name or "hidden power." And to call it its own name is to realize this power when you do something. But actually this is two sides of the one coin.

Here we understand how to apply our practice in everyday life, how to understand our true practice. So, to call it Void is to call it no name or "hidden power." And to call it its own name is to realize this power when you do something. But actually this is two sides of the one coin.

Here we understand how to apply our practice in everyday life, how to understand our true practice. So, true practice is simply everyday life. And everyday life is true practice. And when you practice true practice your everyday life should be there. This is how we understand our everyday life and how we understand our true practice.

We went through a practice period when Bishop Sumi gave us a koan. It was the question and answer between Baso and Hyakujo. As you know Baso, "the horsemaster," was master. We are told that when he sits he breaths through his nose. He has a big nose and makes a big sound. And so this is why they call him "Horsemaster." His disciple, Hyakujo, is the one who set up all the monastic rules. He is the first one to set up our Mahayana precepts. Before Hyakujo almost all the Zen masters didn't use Zen precepts. They observed Indian precepts.. But it is not always appropriate to observe Indian precepts. Chinese live in China where the climate is different and the way of life is different from India. Even though the teachings came into Mahayana from India the precepts shouldn't be the same precepts.

Hyakujo organized monastic life. His Zen is observed in our precepts. Of course, after Hyakujo, we have changed our precepts many times. Precepts are the way of life.

The question and answer between Hyakujo and "Horsemaster": "Horsemaster and Hyakujo were taking a trip. Suddenly wild geese flew over. And "Horsemaster" asked Hyakujo "What is it? What is it?" Hyakujo said: "That is wild geese!" And Baso said: "Where are they going?" "They flew away!", Hyakujo said.

But Baso was irritated with his answer and hit his disciple. And Hyakujo cried out. That is the story's point.

Here is something which we should understand. At first what the "Horsemaster" said was: "What is it? What is it?" This is very strong: 'What is it?'. It maybe wild geese. And, at the same time, it is not just wild geese. When we see something our practice power is power, our Buddha-nature is power. Wild geese are not just wild geese. For the Zen student wild geese are not wild geese. Hyakujo is not just a disciple nor Baso just "Horsemaster." He is also Buddha-nature itself.

"What is it?" That can be anything. "What is it?" It is not just wild geese. Everything can be wild geese. It is not clear Hyakujo knew this when he said, "That is wild geese."

And Baso said: "Where are they going?" Where are they going? They are going somewhere. Even though they are going somewhere they are there. They cannot escape from the Buddha-nature, from the power of practice. Wherever they go they are right here.

Hyakujo said: "They flew away!" This maybe a curious answer this "...flew away..." It is right here at the tip of his nose. "They flew away!" Here (at Tassajara) there are many wild geese.

You know now if he is practicing always, if there is no doubt in his practice. Hyakujo said: "They flew away!" But what do you think...if you were Hyakujo? Even though you say, "They flew away!", that is the right answer you know, that is "They flew away!", actually they are not here anymore. But if you are prepared for his teacher hitting his nose that is alright. But in his practice (Hyakujo's) there was some doubt. So he cried. But the way he cried, I don't know how he cried, the way he cried--that is alright. Even though he cried.

So, this kind of koan is very interesting. If you study this koan from various angles you will appreciate the endless interest in it. Our way of life should be like this. As between Hyakujo and the Zen master the way we talk must be different from our usual way of talking. But the difference is in whether we are ready for various circumstances and conditions. Even the great Zen master, when he cries, will cry, when he laughs he will laugh...when he is hungry he will be hungry too. But there is some difference between their hunger and the hunger of the usual person. If your practice is right you

will be ready for various activities. So what you will gain, (the power you will gain by our practice) is not common power. It is some special power. By 'special' I mean because it can be anything. Usually special power is something different from usual power. That is it cannot be usual. We always think in opposites: There is something usual and there is something unusual. But even though they say this is something unusual, for us (Zen students) this is not unusual. The only unusual thing is the thing which can be anything like money or gold. You can buy anything with that. Or, whatever you eat there is some amount of salt in it. In this way our power is like this something unusual.

Actually, the power is something you cannot understand. You cannot understand what it is. It is something which is beyond our understanding. And so we say: Teaching outside of the scriptures or records. It is something which you cannot grip. This will usually be understood if you have direct experience. But if we do not have direct experience you cannot see what is the teaching out of record.

It is like a river...It can be a river. It is without form or not high or low. It is like a rock. No wind or storm can move it. Even though you try to see it you cannot see it because it is too hard. So you worry.

But the high rock or the zazen sitter is always there giving us various teachings. This kind of teaching is true teaching. And our practice which is like this is true practice...always expressing the truth. This kind of practice is our practice.

(Read from a text) "When I introduced this subject I said: What do you call the substance of the universe? What do you call the substance of the universe or the great power? It is something which is not outside the universe. It is something which is not concerned with our particular way. Its powerful activity is entirely independent. An enlightened Zen scholar is one who understands this. He understands all ordinary circumstances and knows how to deal with them. Such a man maybe called one who has the light of a graduate."

"With regard to his life and death if he stops all self-regarding ideas he will attain to the mysterious power controlling all life and death, the power to be enlightened by the use of relative words or negatives."

"So the methods of instructions were now: "In what way did he reach the entrance, attain to his ultimate serenity? Here is something for you to ponder, something mysterious."

Here, he (the translator) said: "Mysterious." 'Mysterious' does not mean mysterious in the ordinary sense. 'Mysterious' means it is beyond words. That is, you know it, you can understand it but you cannot say it. You cannot put it in words because it is not comfortable with various understandings (interpretations). Various understandings are very wrong: If you say it from one side you cannot say it, at the same time, from the other side. So that is why we say 'mysterious'. Even enlightened men cannot say anything properly.

You cannot say, “It is here,” and “It flew away,” at the same time. That doesn’t make any sense. A Zen master will ask: Which do you mean? Is it here or there? You will have no idea...no eyesight left. So it is impossible relative words. That is why we say ‘mysterious’. It is not mysterious. It is too clear. It is obvious. But we cannot say it. Words are mysterious for us.

It is mysterious but we cannot say it. Even the deep words of a Zen master cannot say it. Even Baso with his big nose cannot say anything. If you say anything you get hit! You shouldn’t fool us with your long tongue! WHACK! That is right you know.

So if Hyakujo had stuck out his tongue the Zen master would have been very pleased. Not “mysterious” you know. Clear! Too clear!

We sometimes call it reality. It is too obvious.

**(Continued)**

**The rest of the lecture added from verbatim version:**

So Zen is not mysterious at all. [Laughs, laughter.]

#### *THE APPRECIATORY WORDS*

This<sup>1</sup> is also interesting. [Laughs, laughter.]

*That wild—wild duck. Just what was it? Baso saw it and started a conversation. The object of his talk would have—would have been love of mountain, clouds, seas, the moon. And yet Hyakujō did not understand—understand. It is just—just flew away [laughs]. He himself wanted to fly away. Instead, he himself was silenced.*

#### *[INTERPRETATION OF APPRECIATORY WORDS]*

*The wild duck! Just—just what was it—just what was it? Baso saw it and started conversation.*

The old teachers in his practice—there was no cessation in their practice. They are always practicing their way. They are always ready to [engage in] various activity. That is how we should be concentrated on our activity.

The concentration—our concentration is not the usual concentration, you know. Concentration means usually to be—we say to be involved in something. But at the same time, we should have freedom. So this kind of concentration is more deeper and more natural, you know. If you—if you are trying to be concentrated on

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<sup>1</sup> From Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

something, you know, your effort is directed to one way only. So it is difficult to change it, you know. If your concentration is quite natural, you know, you can change any time. And you will be ready to change your direction of effort.

So this kind of concentration cannot be studied by usual everyday practice—everyday activity. Just Zen can do it. Through Zen you can have this kind of training.

When you have some object, you know—some object—somehow your effort is directed to that object. It means, you know, your effort is working on one way only. In that way, you cannot understand how to change the direction of effort. But in—just by practice of pure Zen, you can—you will practice how to shift—make shift in your effort.

In this *sesshin*, our practice is concentrated to put more power in your tummy, but that does not mean, you know, to—to put special power in it. It means to put—to put some power quite naturally without, you know, making—without trying too much to put strength in your tummy.

So this practice should be—should follow—or should be followed by various instruction of sitting: *mudrā*, or breathing, or like keeping your back straight. And if you have some pain or some difficulty, it is good chance to, you know, to practice it because if your pain is this much, this much, you know, controlling power will appear. So, you know—but if you do not know this secret [laughs], you will be, you know, involved in just pain. But if you know the other side of the pain, you know, which is keeping balance in your practice, you will appreciate the feeling of the pain. Because pain is this much you have power of training this much [laughs]. If you have no pain, maybe it is rather difficult for beginner to appreciate the power of Zen.

So the ancient disciples and teachers were ready to study true way in our everyday life, but Hyakujō looks like he didn't understand this. He was not ready for question and answer with his teacher. But no one knows, you know, this is—he may be—he might have known it.

**End of lecture verbatim version segment**

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EZT – early SFZC transcript – incomplete - 67-12-02

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