

69-07-03

SUZUKI ROSHI LECTURE

July 3, 1969, Tassajara.

I have explained the poem about "Emptiness is for" or "*Sho ju hen*." "*Sho*" is reality and "*hen*" is "form" or seeming. "*Sho shu hen*." "*Ju*" or "*soku*" means some activity in which...not activity, some, not relationship but something in which everything appears. Every event, you know, appears. What will it be? Something in which, you know, appears. You may say a little bit more: something in which everything appears. Something which always appears. That is the present moment, right now. You know, Right Now, you know, things happen, not in past or present. So practice should be the practice of right now. That is "*ju*" or "*soku*."

When we, you know, catch things, you know...how you catch it? You cannot, you cannot catch past or future. You can catch just present moment, right now. If you want to catch someone, you know, you, you should catch him right now, not past or not future. So if you want to practice zazen, you should practice it right now. That is "*ju*." "*Sho ju hen*" or "*Hen ju sho*." Or "*Shiki soku ze ku ku zoku ze shiki*" is, is...means "right now" there is being, you know.

But because we are always involved in thinking mind and because we try to understand teaching with seeking mind in term of present or past or, you know...now or later, or always. Usually it means "always so." One plus one is two, you know. That is, is always so. But "our is" (sounds like "our is") or "*soku ze*"...without changing, without waiting. You know, A is B...that is actually what we mean. Right now it is so. So we, if we catch thing right now, Form is emptiness and Emptiness is form. Because we catch it right now. _____ what we practice right now, zazen...not future or not past, we are Buddha himself. It does not mean...Form is emptiness does not mean: Someday we will, we will attain....That (the former) is right understanding of Form is emptiness.

So in empty screen, you know, you will see many pictures, the projected pictures. Without screen you cannot see anything. Because of the screen, you can see many things. What is that screen now? Screen is just parable, you know. In this parable, what do you mean by screen? This is a kind of a training of your mind. Comparing your thinking faculty and you non-thinking activity. The screen is "right no." Without screen you cannot see anything. You cannot have direct experience of anything. Only by the screen you can see things. Only you...the way you have direct experience of something is to experience it right now, not future or not past time. Do you understand?

So, when you count your breathing: one, two, three...means "right now. right now, right now..." "Right now" is one, two, three. It means that you never lose you practice. You will not be so rigid to try to do it in the future time, but right now. Whatever condition you are, you know, you should do it. Even though you are sleepy, when you do it, you have direct experience of zazen practice. So, you know. This is, it looks like very rigid formula but what it means is very direct and very clear. Much clearer than

formula of mathematics. Two plus two is four...is not so clear, you know, is not always so. But Form is emptiness and Emptiness is form is very accurate. Only you are not familiar of this kind of, you know, formula. You think this is just formula. You are, you will not be interested in...in it so much. If you...but if you become very sincere with your practice you will understand this formula very accurate and very explicit.

It means... "*ju*" or "*soku ze*" means: right now, or practice. Real practice which you do right now. Okay? So Form is emptiness...right Now it is so, but it is not always so. Do you understand? You don't understand. Let me have a cup of water. You have to think.

Waves and water you know. Right now. Wave is water; water is wave. But if you think about it, if you have the idea of water and idea of wave because you saw it...because you saw the wave and you have idea of water. Here. And you may think: "But that is water; water is something like this." (The water in the cup) But right now when you see waves on the water, wave is water and water is wave, Right Now. When you don't think. That you think means that you start some movement...activity and analyze wave from water. That is what you do when you think. But right Now...when you (whack) hear the sound, that is, that is, we say, (clap! clap!): Which hand...made the sound? Right now: Clap!...you cannot say which. Maybe this hand, maybe that hand, or maybe both. You don't know. That is reality.

But when you think...after you hear the sound, there is right hand and left hand and sound. Hands are sound. So this "*ju*" or "*soku ze*" is very, very important. That is why Dogen Zenji left *Shobogenzo* explaining this moment, this moment, this moment. What does it mean?...is very important. It is the point by which our teaching means something.

If you lose this point, your practice doesn't work. Whatever teaching it may be, it doesn't work. That is "someone's" teaching. Or teaching which you had a long time ago. Or teaching which you will understand sometime after...someday. "Someday is no-day," we say. Joyous (?) day after tomorrow. "Day after tomorrow we will do it. Day after tomorrow we will do it." That is, you know, if you lose this point, nothing works.

Now the form for the second statement: Form is emptiness. By the way, when you say Emptiness is form and Form is emptiness...those two statements make complete sense. Even though you say, when you say, when you just say, for instance: Sugar is something which is sweet...there may be something besides sugar which is sweet. But relationship between waves and water...there is no water except wave. There is no wave except water. So "Sugar is sweet"...statement: Sugar is sweet, is not complete statement. The waves, you know, when you can say both way: Waves is water and water is waves: then, water and waves are completely same thing, you know.

If it is not same thing you cannot say in two ways. So it means...when we say Emptiness is form, it is more stronger. It means you cannot escape from this. You have no reason not to practice zazen. If you don't practice zazen, you are not Buddha. Because you are not in complete relationship between Buddha and you. If you don't do

that, you...it is like water without wave. There is no such water exist. If it is water it must have some wave. Even though you cannot see it, there must be some waves.

So Dogen Zenji says: "Even though you are Buddha, if you don't practice zazen, you are not Buddha." Or you may say the other, in this way: "If you miss this point,"...or, "If you understand yourself on this moment right now, without moving anything, without moving even...without having even blink of...what...blink?...what do you call this?...blink ...blink of eye, you cannot, you are not Buddha." Without, without having blink, if you practice zazen or if you do something, you are Buddha. There is no such Buddha like dead Buddha. Dead Buddha is only exist in your mind, but, actually there is no such thing exist. Something exist is..."Something," as Buddha. Ahhh. Do you understand that?

So you have no reason why you are not Buddha. As long as you alive. As you are taking breathing. Because Form is emptiness and Emptiness is form. That this world exist is because you are doing something right now. That is why it exist. Right Now You Are Doing It. Because you are doing something. But when you think about it, about our world, it is not real world. The world produced by thinking mind. Isn't that so? So we should not be deluded by some idea which we just produce by thinking mind. By direct experience we should be Buddha. That is what it means. Okay.

The poem says:

At dawn an ignorant, old woman finds
her ancient mirror.

And there were story in India. There were and old woman called Enyadutta. And she used to see herself in her old mirror. And she liked to see her beautiful face, or her beautiful eyes and eyeballs in the mirror. But one day she couldn't see the beautiful eyes in the mirror. So she was, she became crazy, you know, at seeing...when she thought she lost her beautiful eyes or face. Eyes.

This is the story which we should understand first.

At dawn an ancient (ignorant?), old woman finds her
ancient mirror;
wherein she clearly sees her face,
which cannot be elsewhere.

This is the second one and next one is:

No more will she reject her head
by grasping at its shadow.

"An old woman" means "form." "An old ignorant woman" means "form." Or "seeming" or "attribute," opposite to the reality or original face. "At dawn"...early in the morning,

"an ignorant old woman finds her ancient mirror." It means that form, the Old Woman, and Mirror is one. When she saw herself in the mirror, you know, she is the image in the mirror, and image in the mirror is herself. So it means Form is emptiness. Emptiness is old mirror or original face...or Emptiness. So here, Old Woman is...it means Old Woman is Emptiness or original face.

The next line is:

Clearly, wherein she clearly sees her face
which cannot be elsewhere.

This is the translation. This translation may be too beautiful, you know. If you rigid...if you translate it literally: "Clearly it is nothing but reality." Both is nothing but reality. She is mirror, mirror is she. Image in the mirror is herself, and herself is an image in the mirror. If you take her as the subject of the sentence, it means Emptiness is form, "and clearly they are nothing but reality."

And this next line:

No more will she reject her head,
by grasping at its shadow.

No more will she reject her head,
by grasping at its shadow.

When she, she saw her eyes in the mirror, she was very happy. So she, she was grasping her head, in other words. And she, you know, but she rejected her head when she couldn't see her face in the mirror. So it means she thought...she took one and rejected another. But actually they are the same. Tentatively, you may understand this way, you know...Early in the morning an old woman had a mirror. And old woman and image in the mirror is one. So it is foolish of her to reject her original, her own face, accepting the face in the mirror. Even though, for some reason, she couldn't see her own face in the mirror, it doesn't mean she lost her face.

Tentatively, I want you to understand this way. But actually the story we have in Indian sutra " _____," you know:

There were an old woman who enjoyed to see her face in the mirror. But when she wanted to see her beautiful eyes and eyeballs on her head: it is not possible to see her face. So even though she tried to see her eyes which she see, and eyeball, you know...it is not possible to see. But she became very discouraged when she couldn't see her beautiful eyes on her head without a mirror. And she became crazy. That was more like original story. I don't know which...which is true story but...if we understand in that way...

To reject her...not to reject her face...oh, yeah. It means because she

couldn't...because she couldn't see, you know, her own beautiful eyes...that is real eyes...that is "form." And that is nothing but the image she will see, almost all the time, in the old mirror. Old mirror means reality. So maybe better to understand this story in this way. Do you...did I explain pretty well to make sense for you?

One story is, you know, she thought, when she thought she couldn't see her own face in the mirror so she became crazy. Another one is: after seeing her beautiful face in the mirror, she tried to see her own eyes and eyeball on her head, which is not possible. And she couldn't see, so she became crazy. Anyway, this is parable, parable, so I don't mind which, whichever is true. But anyway it means that what you see, right now, in this moment, is also reality. Not after or not before. The right now, what you see, is reality.

When I come to America, when I came to America, I didn't have any information about Sokoji temple and at that time, there was not Zen Center. So I have no way to ask what is Zen Center, but I could ask Where Is San Francisco? at least. But I didn't study anything about San Francisco, because I accepted to go to San Francisco, wherever it is. I thought: If I go there I will find out, with my eyes, what is San Francisco and what kind of temple Sokoji is.

May be only when you, you know...It is, you know, it may help but we shouldn't be too much interested in someone's talk, you know, or someone's rumor about possible future, future life. If you go there you will find it. Maybe I was kind of extremist. Maybe it is better to know something about what we will...where we will go. But that kind of information...information doesn't help you so much. And it will create your prejudice, you know, which will disturb; which will be a disturbance for your intuitive...intuition, I think.

Now, at this moment is very important point.

And next one is: Form is form. "*Sho ju lai*." Form is form or "*Sho ju lai*." "*Sho*" is emptiness. "*Ju*" is right now, or is. "*Lai*" is come. (I cannot clearly here whether "*Lai* or come" are correct). "Seeming," according to Charles Luk..."Seeming uniting with the real..." (Some missing tape here).

...as emptiness. That which exist is just emptiness. It is utter darkness where you cannot see anything in it. That is "*Sho ju lai*." It is enlightenment itself, in which anything doesn't make any sense. When someone attained enlightenment, he couldn't hear anything for three days, or he couldn't see anything. Whatever he saw, things doesn't make any sense. It is the stage where you cannot find any particular meaning to things you see, or when you are completely detached from things you see. So for him, things appears just like utter darkness. What he see is utter darkness. No perceptual world. Even in your zazen, you know, when you, you have very good *shikan taza* and if you hear the bird sing outside, there is no distance between you and the bird. And you, actually you are not hearing the bird. And the bird is not anywhere. Anywhere special. Not on the tree or across the street or on the wall. Just...sound. Beautiful sound.

That is the, you may say that is bird. But it is not even a bird. Afterwards you may say: "That was bird. It was very beautiful." But at that time it was not even a bird. That is something like this. Or you, you don't even move, you know. Just sound. That is, you know, "*Sho ju lai*."

In, in the new *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary* it says:

"Even in the state in which discriminative thinking is transcended, there exists power to manifest the function of all the phenomena." Even in the state in which discriminative thinking is transcended, there exists power to manifest the function of all phenomena. The thinking or sensational world is already transcended completely, but still it has, still there exist, or there will be the manifestation of sound or color. Even though there are sound or color, it is just same as no sound because that is the world of sound only. color only. If something, if, you know, if something just happens in that way...if sound...in the world of sound only...Do you understand? World of sound only...there is nothing but a sound...one sound. One sound of the bird.

That is the, you know, that sound is completely different sound than the sound you may hear in term of good or bad, in term of "who made" that sound. Do you understand the difference? The difference between you have in everyday life, in usual sense; and the things you will hear in complete zazen. In the world of "things only," or "sound only"...you hear. You cannot hear the sound...that kind of "sound only" or "sound only" when you are involved in lazy practice. "What time will it be? I am very sleepy this morning. I should stay in bed more, so that I can have good practice next time." You know. In that kind of zazen, you will not hear the bird...bird of sound only.

This poem says:

Hard though it may be, there is no way to keep
free from dust.
Tonight's ability to avoid what is forbidden...

Hard thought it be, there is a way to keep
free from dust.
Today's ability to avoid what is forbidden
Surpasses yesterday's most eloquent discussion.

This is also, is not literal translation. "Hard though it may be, there is a way to keep free from dust." If you translate it literally: "there is the way to keep emptiness from dust." It means that...excuse me. There is a way to keep emptiness from dust. The "emptiness" means original face or "emptiness." The 'dust' means dualistic thinking mind. "There is a way, there is a way to keep our empty mind...to keep our emptiness from the dust of dualistic thinking mind..." It is more literal translation. "Today's ability.

Today's ability to avoid what is forbidden. What is forbidden. Today's ability to avoid what is forbidden"...means: We don't call Emperor's name. You know. You call very intimately, friendly...name of the President, you know. But in China or in Japan we don't call Emperor's name by his first name and he has no...he has no second name. He has just first name and he has no...he has no second name. He has just first name and we don't call his first name, even. So "to avoid what is forbidden" means not to have the, not to call Emptiness by name as of many things like: "I attained enlightenment; or, Enlightenment experience is something difficult. And, I have attained enlightenment. And, This is big enlightenment; and this is minor enlightenment." If you say so, it means that you couldn't avoid what is forbidden. You called the name of...you called forbidden name.

So, if...if someone asks you what is emptiness, you know, there is no way to say what it is. If you say something, that is not all...that is not emptiness itself. We should know that. I think I have to explain this point next time...next time. There is many misunderstanding in this area, when you say: "it is not possible, you know, word is very...word have just limited sense and there is some limit...it will give some limitation to...to the reality." You know.

Even though I say: Water is cold"...but, if you don't drink it, you don't understand actually what is...what is water. This is just, you know...but when we say words is...when we say...We do not say, explain the limitation of the word, but we use words to point out the reality. So we do not mean to reject the word, or to reject our head. We should not reject our head; we should not reject our word, even though it is not perfect.

And if you talk about limitation...someone thinks: "If he thinks, if he talk about how imperfect ability, how poor ability it has...our thinking mind and our words...it is "Zen." It is not so. If he is real Zen student, he should be able to point out, you know, by word, what is emptiness or what is enlightenment. At least he should try to do so instead of rejecting word...instead of rejecting the intellectual understanding of sutra. This point is very important, because there are many people who make this kind of mistake: "Just talking about 'word' is no good. The intellectual understanding doesn't mean anything, it is so poor we cannot communicate by words. The only way is to attain enlightenment. Unless you sit and attain enlightenment, you cannot study Zen. So, I don't explain what it is. Just sit!" This is another mistake. If you understand zazen in that way, that is also a mistake.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 69-07-03
