

69-11-29

## WINTER SESSHIN #1

### ROSHI'S LECTURE ON WAY SEEKING MIND

November 29, 1969. Tassajara.

.....mind. Without this Way seeking mind, our practice does not work. We say just to sit or *shikan taza*. Only when we have a strong Way seeking mind, just to sit make sense. Without this mind, just to sit means maybe...will mean just to sit mechanically and formally. the Way seeking mind...when we say Way seeking mind vitalized, the form you have in zazen may be actualized and make sense. People say a form or spirit. But to actually, you know, maybe if you do something without intellectual understanding, without knowing why you do it, that is formal practice. We, usually we understand in this way without knowing what it is, just to imitate, or juts to do something as others do, or in the way you are told to do its the formal practice. And knowing what is...actual reason, maybe, and practice...something, it is more spiritual way, but actually Zen is not something which you can understand it,...intellectual understanding cannot reach the true understanding of Zen. The only way is by actual practice to find out the meaning of it, is our way. Because intellectual understanding does not make much sense if you have no Way seeking mind your...even though the only way to, only approach to the enlightenment is practice, but practice without way seeking mind is dead practice. That is why we put emphasis on way seeking mind. Because intellectual understanding does not work. If intellectual understanding is proper approach to enlightenment, then there will be no need to put the emphasis on Way seeking mind. But intellectual understanding we do not...take intellectual approach, but by actual practice, we find the true approach to the enlightenment. But, without Way seeking mind, the practice cannot be actual practice because of the lack of the spirit. Now, when I was, when I was studying at Komazawa, I was, at that time I was studying, you know, Takada, Professor Takada taught us education. What is formal education and what is real education. And his understanding of formal education is opposite; one instance, to read scripture without anything, without knowing what it is, like you recite *Prajna Paramita Sutra*, that is, real approach, real education. And to explain what is the meaning of the sutra and let him understand what it is according to him that is formal, that s formal education (word lost in laughter). At that time we had to...we have to note whatever he says. When I was taking note, I thought it is funny, maybe my misunderstanding that it look opposite, I thought, but anyway, I came home and checked out my note again but in my note and in my friend's note was the same "formal education is to explain what it is, what it means and more actual education is to let them be whatever it is without explaining it. That is, he said, that is more actual education." I couldn't understand, I forgot. But only what I couldn't understand what he meant. But if you have no way seeking mind, the only way, maybe, first of all you should understand it by here, you know. And if it is, if you think it is good you will start your practice. Actually, in that way, you can, I don't say you cannot, but it takes long, long time because you or your study will go round and round and round same area, you know, until you get tired of trying to understand what it is. The best way, it looks like foolish, it looks like silly to do as only,

only because...only because you are told to do so by Shakyamuni Buddha, looks very silly, but even though it looks like silly, best way is to do it actually without thinking what it means so much. This is very important point. The purpose of our practice is, of course, to get rid of small idea, idea of small self. When you say, if it is good, I will do it, but that is big small self, very big small self (Roshi laughs), maybe this much. If I, if you convince me, you know to do so, I will do it, I will do it. If I could agree with you, I would do it. Big self, you know (sarcastic tone). So your practice is based on big small self. That doesn't work (laughter). When you forget small self or big self and just do it and feel it, that is actual approach to the reality. That is a direct experience, we say. And thinking mind will be very direct experience. Whatever it is, for instance, if you are eating, you never think a little bit and whether it is good or bad. Most food will not be so good for you and this is too sweet, this is too fishy, this smell is funny smell, I don't know what it is. You can never appreciate its taste properly as it is if you...anyway...I think only way to taste...to taste the real taste of food is to eat it, then, it may be, maybe you can eat it and you can appreciate the food even though afterwards you are told that what you eat was head of the snake, smashed head of the snake...with soy sauce (laughter). But it was very good, you may say. That is, you know, how to taste the real taste of the thing...if you think what...if you ask me, ask...if you...if you ask what it is and if you are told this is smashed snake with soy sauce, you will never eat it. But it is, I think it is foolish not to eat it when it is so good, whatever it is, it doesn't matter, it is not poisonous, and it....So best way is to practice here, our way, and to have direct experience of it. You will think, you may understand if I say in this way, how much difficulties we have just because of thinking mind, just because of your intellectual understanding. Zazen practice is to get, to be ready for anything, everything, experiencing everything and to have true understanding, actual, real understanding of things. The Way seeking mind arise when we understand how silly we are, even though you, we look like very wise, even though you look like very sophisticated but how silly we are...then you will have real Way seeking mind, we should not be so silly, that is way seeking mind. I promised with my *jisha* not to talk so long time, so I don't know what time it is. Maybe they not to happy with my thinking mind. My lecture is finished.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 69-11-29

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