

7-8-70 EI

MORNING EKŌ I

I want to explain the EKŌ. After reciting the sutra the KOKYŌ recites the EKŌ, a sort of explanation of why we recite the sutra. This first sutra is for such and such a Buddha, or the second sutra is for the ARHATS, or the third one is for the Patriarchs, and the fourth one is for the disciples and students who are related to this monastery, and the ancestors or relatives who passed away. Those are the EKŌS.

First of all, recite a sutra for Bodhidharma, who is the first Patriarch of China, and for Dōgen Zenji, who is the first Patriarch of Japan. So in India, Shakyamuni Buddha; in China, Bodhidharma; and in Japan, Dogen Zenji. The first Prajna Paramita Sutra is recited for those Patriarchs and Buddhas. But originally, even nowadays in Japan, we recite the first sutra for Buddha, and Dōgen Zenji, and Kezan Zenji, who is the founder of Sojiji Monastery, and for many deities who are related to Dōgen Zenji.

Dōgen Zenji went to China when he was twenty-four, with Myōzen. After he arrived in China he stayed on the ship for two or three months, maybe three months. While he was on the ship he went ashore and visited many temples and came back to the ship. In this way he spent three months. During that time his DHARMA brother, Myōzen, who was Eisai Zenji's disciple, did not stay on the ship. Myōzen went ashore and went to the

temple where his teacher studied and received transmission. So Myōzen left Dōgen on the ship and Dōgen spent his time collecting information. Before he went ashore an old monk, about sixty one years old, visited the ship. Dōgen, of course, wanted to know what was going on in China. That monk was from Ikuzan Monastery. In Ikuzan Monastery there was a shrine of the deity who's name is Shōbōshichirō Dai Gongen. In Eihei-ji, and in many other monasteries, we recite his name, Shōbōshichirō Dai Gen Shuribosatsu. And that deity, which is enshrined in Ikuzan, is also enshrined in Shōbōzō. "SHŌBŌZŌ" means "to invite treasure mountain." It is enshrined in the mountain where people can see Japan and Korea. It may be a pretty high mountain. And by the mountain there is a big fishing port. Various trading ships come in from Japan and Korea, and many places. So they call that mountain "Shōbōzō", which means "inviting treasure mountain", inviting the treasure and many things from other countries. So this deity is very closely related to Dōgen Zenji's trip to China.

We say, in the morning EKŌ, "SHŌBŌSHICHIRŌ DAI GEN SHURIBOSATSU..". But here in America we don't recite the name of this deity. It doesn't mean much to you. So we skip "SHŌBŌSHICHIRŌ DAI GEN SHURIBOSATSU", or we say, "GATTŌ NO SHISAI." "GATTŌ NO SHISAI" means the temples in Japan which have a long, long history where many deities have been enshrined. So, in Japan, we recite the sutra first of all for those deities. But here in America we do not have these kinds of

deities so we don't recite their names. We just recite the sutra for Shakyamuni Buddha, and for Bodhidharma and Dōgen Zenji. Bodhidharma is the first Patriarch in China; Dōgen Zenji is the first Patriarch in Japan. So we recite the sutra not only to Shakyamuni Buddha, but also to those teachers.

"AOGI KOI NEGAWAKUWA SHINJI, FUSHITE SHŌ KAN O TARE TAMAE."

"AOGI" means "to look up" or "to look at". Order is a higher place so, "AOGI KOI NEGAWAKUWA." "AOGI KOI NEGAWAKUWA SHINJI FUSHITE SHŌ KAN O TARE TAMAE". "SHINJI" means "mercy". "KOI NEGAWAKUWA" means "we want" or "I want to receive". "SHŌ KAN" is "wisdom". "I want to receive the wisdom of the Buddha."

"JŌRAI". The meaning of "JŌ" is "up", and "GE" means "down". "JŌRAI" means "so far we recited the sutra". "So far we recited the sutra of the Maha Prajna Paramita and we respectfully...." Or "it's merit is" or "by it's merit we want to repay the mercy of our great teacher Shakyamuni Buddha, and Jōyō Daishi (Dōgen Zenji).

"SHIN-DAN SHOSO" "SHIN-DAN" means "China". "SHOSO" means "the first Patriarch", the first Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma Daisho. "NICHI-IKI" means "Japan". "SHOSO" means "first Patriarch", the first Patriarch in Japan, Eihei Dōgen Daishō. Eihei Dōgen is Dōgen's name. The monastery he founded is named Eiheiji. So Dōgen is called after the monastery he founded.

Here at Tassajara we recite sutras in the ZENDO, and in the ZENDO, as you know, we have Manjushri Bodhisattva. So we also recite the Prajna Paramita Sutra for Manjushri Bodhisattva..

So we recite four names, the great benevolent teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha, the first Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma, Daishō, the first Patriarch in Japan, Eihei Dōgen Daishō, (DAIOSHŌ means "great priest,") and the great sage, Manjusuri Bodhisattva. And we want to respect or repay the benevolence of those teachers and Bodhisattvas. That is what the EKŌ which the DŌAN recites means.

We skip many deities which are related to our history. I think it is necessary for you to know what kind of feeling we have when we recite sutras for those teachers. Let me continue telling you what Dōgen experienced in his voyage to China. It was not such an easy thing to go to China at that time. It cost a lot of money to go to China by a big ship, and it took more than one month to go from Japan to China. So it was not at all an easy thing to do. So after arriving in China Dōgen spent three months on the ship. During that time he was very discouraged in one way, to see the bad practice of famous Chinese Zen Masters. I think this is always true. If you go to Japan to study Buddhism you may also be discouraged to see many famous Zen Masters. Dōgen described, in Shōbōgenzō what kind of an experience he had at that time, good and bad.

After he received transmission from Nyojō Zenji he respected Chinese priests very much. But before he met Nyojō he was pretty critical of Chinese monks. For instance, he said that Chinese monks did not even know the precepts,

which are described in the Diamond Sutra, and the Sutra of Precepts they didn't know at all. They had long finger-nails, and long hair. It is very interesting. And they had dirty clothing; and they did not even know how to clean their mouth. That is why Dōgen wrote in one of the chapters of the Shōbōgenzō how to clean up our face and body when you go to the rest room or when you get up in the morning. And he said their breath had a strong smell. When he talked with some famous teachers he could hardly stay with them because their breath smelled so bad. Even in great China there were not many good teachers, and he was very discouraged. They did not even know the precepts.

But, on the other hand, he met monks like the monk who visited his ship to buy mushrooms. At that time ships from Japan may have brought in a lot of Japanese mushrooms. So the head cook of Ikuzan Monastery visited the ship from Japan to buy some mushrooms. So Dōgen Zenji, seeing a monk who was buying mushrooms addressed him asking, "Where are you from?"

"And the monk said, "I am head cook of Ikuzan Monastery. Tomorrow is July Fifth and we will serve noodle soup to the monks. So for noodle soup we want mushrooms for seasoning." If you put mushrooms in noodle soup it tastes very good, as you know. So for the special occasion of July Fifth the monk came to Dōgen's ship to buy some mushrooms. But he said, "I cannot talk with you so long. I am very busy. By this even-

6

ing I must go back to the temple because tomorrow I have to cook for the monks." But the monk was over sixty so Dōgen Zenji wondered why, in such a great monastery, there wasn't some young priest who could cook for the monks. Dōgen asked the monk to stay for one night to tell him something about Chinese monasteries. But the monk said, "I am busy. I must go back to the temple."

And Dōgen said to him, "You are over sixty. You shouldn't have to work so hard. You must rest, and you must read some scriptures or you must study some KŌAN or you must spend your time in sitting meditation or reading sutras. That is a more appropriate practice for you."

But that monk said, "You don't know what is practice. You don't even know any Chinese characters. You cannot read anything. And even though you read it will not help you." Dōgen was very startled.

And Dōgen asked him, "Then what are characters if I don't know any characters? I think I know many characters." At that time Dōgen had read all the scriptures three times. It is difficult for the usual person to read all the scriptures once, even in his whole life. But at the age of twenty-four Dōgen had read all the scriptures three times.

But the monk said, "You don't know any Chinese characters even." And Dōgen was very ashamed of himself, and he couldn't say anything.

Then the monk said to Dōgen, "If you want to know what characters are you should come to my monastery. Then I will

show you what actual characters are."

Later Dōgen said, "It was because of that monk that I could understand a little about Zen Buddhism." In China, even though almost all the monks were not so good, still there were several good ones, including this monk, the head cook of Ikuozan.

The first sutra is for Shakyamuni Buddha. As you know, sometimes Shakyamuni Buddha may be a historical Buddha, and sometimes he may be a DHARMA body, and sometimes he may be you yourself, who has the same Buddha Nature as Buddha himself. When we say Shakyamuni Buddha we mean Shakyamuni Buddha who is one with us, who is one with Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha is nothing but each one of ourselves. That is Shakyamuni Buddha in it's true sense.

Questions

Student A: Why is Manjurshri a special Bodhisattva for the ZEN DŌ?

Roshi: Manjushri is symbolic Buddha of Wisdom. Wisdom does not mean wisdom in its usual sense. Wisdom means something more than that. It is not the accumulation of knowledge or wisdom to know something. Wisdom means fundamental Truth. We call it "RI". I have spoken about "RI" and "JI". * So when we practice ZAZEN what we will have is

*"RI" is the Truth which is beyond the world of consciousness. "JI" is something you can see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think. (See Suzuki Roshi's lectures on the San Do Kai for a discussion of these two important Buddhist technical terms.)

Manjushri's wisdom, Manjushri's true nature. That is why we have Manjushri in the ZENDŌ. So we resume the true nature of Manjushri. We are supposed to resume the true nature of Manjushri.

Student B: Why did Dōgen Zenji stay on the ship?

Roshi: He wanted to be careful. He wanted to know where he should go, where he should be. Once in a while, of course, he left the ship and visited many temples around, but he came back to the ship. And he was preparing. He was writing many letters to many temples. He did not call on any temples without any preparation. Maybe that is the reason.

Student C: In the last line of the EKŌ it says, "KAMI JION NI MUKU-IN KOTO'Q." Could you explain exactly what the word, "MUKUIN" means?

Roshi: "KAMI" means "up". So "to the Buddha", "JION" Buddha's mercy. Buddha's mercy means Buddha who left the teaching for us, Buddha who transmitted his spirit to us, and Buddha who is encouraging our practice, who is protecting our practice always. So we say "DHARMA milk", the remembrance of DHARMA milk, giving DHARMA milk to pay back...

Student C: Who gives who....?

Roshi: We.

Student: The ones who are chanting?

Roshi: By merit of chanting this sutra, by practice of chanting, what we want to do is pay back Buddha's mercy of DHARMA milk.

Student C: Are we paying it back by practicing?

Roshi: Yes. The way to pay back his mercy is to practice hard. It is the only way to pay back his mercy. There is no other way. So by practicing chanting the sutra sincerely, in this way, we pay back the mercy of Buddha. That is what it means.

Student D: I don't understand how there can be more than one Buddha. How can there be Bodhidharma and Dōgen....? How can this be?

Roshi: There can be more, but we select just three. There can be numerous, innumerable Buddhas, but we select Shakyamuni Buddha from India, Bodhidharma from China and Dōgen Zenji from Japan. We should recite Kezan Zenji's name, but because we select only one from China, in America we select only one from Japan, who is the first Patriarch in Japan. Do you understand? They are a kind of representative.

Student D: Did these men differ in personality?

Roshi: Yes.

Student D: How can that be if they are all Buddha?

Roshi: A good question. It must be so. We shouldn't be all alike. All of us shouldn't be like Shakamuni Buddha who was born in India more than two thousand years ago. We cannot be the same. We say we are like candles; big and small candles, red and white candles, and even though the candles are different the flame is the same. Or the stream is the same even though it is shallow in some places and deep in others. In the mountain it will flow fast; in the field it will go slow, and maybe

deeper, but it is the same water. Unless you understand this point, you don't understand Buddhism. The spirit is the same, but how someone expresses the spirit is different. It cannot be the same. So we should be different, but there is no contradiction.

Student E: "DAIOSHŌ", "great sage" means something so big and so far away, and so long ago, and this practice that we have here is so small and so new and the flame of our candle is so small that it is hard sometimes to believe that when you say, "Bodhidharam Daioshō" or Dōgen's name in the EKŌ that they really will come here, that we can feel close to these men. I know it must be so, but it's very hard to feel.

Roshi: I feel for you. It is absolutely necessary to be related to this kind of spiritual history. We must make a great effort to get in contact with this kind of spiritual history or effort of the great sages. You say you cannot understand. "It is no wonder that I cannot understand," you may say. But it means that you have given up already the effort to understand something which has been going on in our human history.

Student E: If we chant sincerely, will that help us?

Roshi: It will someday. Why I say someday is that you will see here, in Tassajara, many teachers, many good teachers. Through their character you will understand something, not literally, but you will feel something. So we have come to the point where we should make one step forward in our practice in Zen Center. Somehow we have gotten together and started Zen

Center practice to establish American Buddhism. So far we have been striving to establish something. But when you say American Buddhism or establish something, it is apt to be for your own convenience. You think because this is America, America must have its own way, an American way of Buddhism. That is very true, very true, but one point is missing. As someone said, we cannot understand why we selected Bodhidharma or Dōgen or Buddha. They are three different characters. Pretty soon you will have one more character from America. They are different but they should be connected with some spiritual relationship. Without this kind of effort you cannot establish American Buddhism in its true sense. The American way should be established. But the American way should be closely related to some other country's way too. Your way should not be separated from other country's way. If you try to establish something special, something different from other country's way, that is selfish practice. That is not the Bodhisattva way. So if you think about this, you will have to understand Japanese Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and Indian Buddhism too, as a Buddhist. That is not such an easy thing. So we should be concentrated on this point from now on.

Student F: Roshi, the phrase "DHARMA transmission", what exactly does that mean? What is the DHARMA transmission?

Roshi: If you are ready to listen to me I will explain it to you. I have it and you do not have it. So, when I give

it to you I will explain what it is. But even though I explain it, if you don't understand, it doesn't make any sense. So a closer relationship between us is important and necessary, a really human relationship.

Student C: If your name were chanted in the EKŌ would it be Zenshin Shunryū Daishō like Eihei (Eiheiji) Eihei Dōgen? Would we use this monastery's name?

Roshi: My name? I don't know. My teacher gave me my name already, not Zenshin Shunryū.

Student C: Well, I thought that Dōgen was called Eihei Dōgen because he was from Eihei Temple, not because Eihei was his name. Was Eihei his name?

Roshi: No. Not his name. It was his temple's name. He called his temple Eihei.

Student C: O.K. What should you be called?

Roshi: That's up to you. Whatever you call me, it's O.K. Anyway I don't listen to you.

Student C: You wouldn't be able to listen if we chanted your name in the EKŌ.

Student G: The name that one's teacher give us, when is that name used as opposed to our name, Alan Marlow and Shunryū Suzuki? How is that name used and when is it used?

Roshi: After you receive ordination, strictly speaking we should use your Buddhist name. We should call Mel by his Buddhist name Sōjun We'll do it. He is Sōjun .

Student G: But Rōshi, you don't use the name that your teacher

gave you, do you?

Roshi: My name is Shunryū.

Student G: What does it mean?

Roshi: Not much. You make me bashful. You must be a great teacher. You must use your name. I'm O.K. I'm here, anyway drinking a lot of water. My teacher died when I was thirty-two years old. So I was not so lucky in this point. So I want to live as long as I can. I was very weak. I didn't think I would live more than sixty, but sixty-six...six is extra. But now I become greedy because of you. Ten years more, give me ten years more of life. I am asking Buddha to give me ten years more. Then you will be forty, fifty. You will be a good teacher if you try hard. If you follow the Buddhist way you will be sure to be a good person. I am so sure about that. Each student here has improved a lot. That is very true. So if you practice our way maybe five more years you will be quite a different person. Our way is difficult. Why it is difficult is because it is too simple. It looks like nothing is happening at Tassajara. All day long, day after day we are carrying stones and building cabins, scrubbing floors, eating the same food. It looks like nothing is happening here. But something great is happening here. I am quite sure about that. Then you will know what is transmission, what is Bodhidharma or Dōgen or Buddha. You yourself are Buddha. Then you will recite the sutra with full joy to pay back their mercy. Thank you very much.