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JAPANESE WAY, AMERICAN WAY, BUDDHIST WAY

July 19, 1970. San Francisco.

after ...after forty days of my leaving from here I feel I am a stranger to the building, not to you, but to the building and my cups and (laughs) I forgot where are my things. Each time I need something I have to...try to think about "Where is it-oh there!" Something like that. I am thinking about now at the same time Dogen Zenji's teaching. There are people who is in enlightenment over enlightenment and delusion in delusion. Enlightenment over enlightenment. It does not mean after attaining enlightenment you lost yourself. And he...that he became a hermit or something. Enlightenment over enlightenment maybe too much enlightenment. But enlightenment over enlightenment-maybe my translation maybe wrong, but I don't know how to translate it. Enlightenment over enlightenment means to forget enlightenment, after attaining enlightenment. Such people, you know, because they have no idea of enlightenment anymore because they already have gone through enlightenment, so there is no place of enlightenment in their mind, so they have, you know, they do not stick to enlightenment anymore, they do not stick to Buddhist way anymore, so they are quite common. And you...to be an ordinary person. So, he says-delusion in delusion *meichu omae, gosho toku. Gosho toku wa* means enlightenment after enlightenment-or over enlightenment. And delusion in delusion.

Many people ask me, you know, at Tassajara you are practicing Japanese way. Japanese Zen. Do you think that is appropriate for us to observe Japanese way of practice. Are we going to be Japanese after practicing zazen. They ask me that kind of question. Our purpose of zazen, is of course, first of all we should attain enlightenment or we should get through our practice. But after, you know, you become real Buddhist then you should forget that you are Buddhist even though you wear robe, you should forget all about what you are wearing. This is very important point. But I don't mean that because you attained enlightenment there is no need for you to practice zazen anymore, you should continue your zazen practice. But in that zazen practice you should have complete freedom even from zazen practice. There you have no idea of zazen or eating or special idea of *oryoki*, you know, eating by *oryoki* or practicing in crossed-leg position. This is very interesting point. And if you really get through our practice you will enjoy your robe or practicing zazen-people may ask you why do you wear such a long-sleeved robe, isn't it better to wear something simple? Sometimes they may ask me and sometimes they may say-"oh that is beautiful! Let me see how long your sleeves are." many people ask me various question, but for me it...my feeling and their feeling about my robe is completely different. I don't mind what I wear, you know, but people, when people become interested in what I am wearing-"Oh..Ohhhh, my sleeves are very long. This must be very inconvenient!" But when people think it is inconvenient, if I don't feel, you know, inconvenient, this is strange feeling-"What-what are you wearing." You may have that kind of feeling. And this is actually the secret of...secret of how to live in this world. And how to be successful in your business. Is

there some businessman here? I don't know, I don't think so, but if there is some businessman, I want to tell him the secret of...how to be a successful..._____.

That is-it is not so much, but...when I was quite young, young school boy, what we see in Yokohama City where there was a big port-you know Yokohama is big trading center and there were many cups and cups and everything from foreign countries, to export. What we see there supposed to be Japanese article , you know. But to me it was, to us it was not at all Japanese thing. It is things to attract foreigners, as a Japanese article. But it was not actually-they were not actually Japanese article, they were too, really too much Japanese or something. Anyway, we felt very bad about-to see, about seeing that kind of article, to be called Japanese article. When your understanding, when your practice is not good enough or very superficial, you will buy that kind of thing, thinking that they are Japanese article. If you really understand what is Japanese article, what you may buy is really Japanese. And which could be applied-which could be very harmonious articles in your own room. Sometime you may not realize this is Japanese article, because it will be very, it will go with the other furniture or things you have there. That is, you know, what I want to call Japanese article. There are many such articles. Which is really Japanese and which could be really American. That kind-that kind of an article is the article I want to introduce you to. And what that kind of Zen is I want to introduce to America. That is why I stick to robes. Do you understand? maybe not.

I thought at that time when I saw many, you know, pseudo-Japanese articles in...Yokohama, I felt b=very bad and I felt very sad to see them, and to export that kind of thing as Japanese article. At that time I thought, I thought...I might go to-abroad after understanding our Zen completely. To introduce real Zen Buddhism to some other countries. Buddhism I want to introduce to this country is, I think should be very very Japanese in its true sense. And at the same time it could be completely applied in America too. So I am very particular about, about design of the temple or altar. I don't like too much Japanese thing or...not enough Japanese or seemingly too much, but in its real sense it is not enough Japanese. When our practice is not good enough, we will stick to our practice. We have no freedom from our practice. When we understand Dogen Zenji's way completely when he said-"No trace of enlightenment there," or "Enlightenment after enlightenment." Over, not over...after enlightenment. I don't mean that I am completely Japanese or completely Zen teacher. I don't think so. I must confess. Because I am very much maybe Japanese still I may stick to Japanese, Japanese way maybe still. But what I am trying to do-without changing my outlook and to be completely-how to be completely Japanese or forget all about Japanese, this is not so easy thing. You shouldn't think it is quite easy. If you think it is quite easy, it is maybe a great mistake.

So at the same time I do not accept so-called it American way/. As I don't accept Japanese way so easy, even though this is Japanese old beautiful thing, you know I may say most of the time. So even though you say this is American way, I don't easily accept that. Here there is real point of our practice in Tassajara and in city zendo-how to be really American, how to be for us-real Japanese, without changing original nature-

original face. Before we attained this point for Japanese it was necessary to be a Chinese and I think it is necessary for you to be a Japanese monk and forget all about American or Chinese. Without this kind of examination, you cannot be a Buddhist in its real sense. Even though you do not actually attain this point, even though you do not attain this point, as long as you know how to be real Buddhist then that will be a great help, for American culture, and not only for American culture, but also for Japanese culture and some other culture. If you have eyes to see what is real human culture and what is not.

As it is already...as the day is already growing shorter and shorter, and we already see the flowers, flowers outside, autumn flower, some Chinese monk said: "Don't you see the flower, late flower, on..." I don't know what you call the tree, a kind, it looks like the trunk looks like manzanita-you know red trunk and it is not evergreen tree and it has this time of the year, it has beautiful, beautiful most red, you may say red flowers. "Don't you see the flower in that tree." I don't know it in English. "Those flowers are result of hard practice of successive masters." Don't you see the flower. That is result of various masters' practice. For the tree it is not difficult to be that way. Without fail at this time of the year, that flower comes out in the same color, quite naturally, but for us human beings to be like that is almost impossible, but many successive teachers attained that kind of, you know, natural practice, which is free from everything and which is quite natural to him, and always helping people without saying anything, just to be there in the corner of their garden is enough. But for us human beings, it is-after training, after training, practice after practice. Our teachers attained that kind of freedom. "Don't you see the flower..."

(tape turned)...is human nature, but (tape bad many lines lost) He talked about our human nature and he wanted to make us realize what kind of practice you should have and what kind of understanding we should have. Actually when you realize what Buddha meant there is no reason why we should be just Japanese or why we should be just American. All of us should be some...of Buddha. When various rivers flow into big ocean there is no names of river or water. When all of us become, all human beings become Buddhist, there is no Japanese or no American people. And yet, Japanese will be just Japanese, and American people will be just American people.

We are now practicing our way, Zen Buddhist Way, to forget the distinction between Japanese and Chinese or Indian or American. When we get out of those area we will be real Buddhist. I want you to trust me. I don't try to force Japanese way to you. Actually, you know, I don't like stinking Japanese way. (laughs) It stinks like Japanese! And at the same time I want you to practice Buddhist way in its true sense and see what will happen to you.

If you have doubt in your practice, you cannot practice our way. Without having any doubt and involved in the practice in its,-with great confidence or conviction, you can practice our way. We shouldn't say American way or Japanese way. If you say so, I must find out what you mean by that. I am very strict with that point, since I am quite young I am making great effort on that point. Maybe that is why I came to America.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 70-07-19
