

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**EKŌ LECTURES, No. 6: THE FOURTH MORNING EKŌ**  
**Wednesday, July 15, 1970**  
**Tassajara**

[This is the last in a series of six lectures by Suzuki-rōshi on the four *ekōs* chanted at the conclusion of morning services at San Francisco Zen Center and other Sōtō Zen temples and monasteries.

The Fourth Morning *Ekō*:

*Chōka shidō*<sup>1</sup> *fugin*

- Line 1. *Aogi koi negawakuwa sambō, fushite shōkan o taretamae.*  
Line 2. *Jōrai, Dai hi shin darani o fujusu,*  
Line 3. *atsumuru tokoro no kudoku wa,*  
Line 4. *tōzan bōsō hokkai bōsōgya tō kakkaku honi,*  
Line 5. *kokka kōrōsha sho shōrei,*  
Line 6. *tōzan kechien shidō no danna,*  
Line 7. *gassan seishu no roku shin kenzoku shichi se no bumo,*  
*hokkaino ganjiki ni ekō su,*  
Line 8. *onajiku bodai o madoka ni sen koto o.*

Dedication for the Morning Service Ancestor's Sūtra

- Line 1. May Buddha observe [see?] us and give us the true Triple  
Treasure.  
Line 2. Thus, as we chant the *Dai Hi Shin Darani*,  
Line 3. we dedicate the collected merit to  
Line 4. this temple's deceased monks plus all deceased monks,  
each one dignified,  
Line 5. all the souls of this nation's actual benefactors,  
Line 6. this temple's members and supporters,  
Line 7. this temple's priests and monks and all their relatives for  
seven generations, and all sentient beings in the realm  
of the true law.  
Line 8. May they be completely enlightened.]

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<sup>1</sup> Probably *shidōden* (Jap.): The memorial service hall in a Zen temple, which contains memorial tablets for lay practitioners and their families. Memorial services are also performed here, at the request of lay practitioners, for their relatives and friends.

The last chanting will be the chanting for the—for monks, you know, or students who is related—who was—who passed away: student related to the temple or monastery. We, for an instance—last year Trudy Dixon passed away, and we had a ceremony—memorial service the other day. But not only [on] memorial days but also we recite sūtra every morning for monks and students who passed away, and the parents or ancestors of we students, and our donors, and the people who worked for the country—for our country. That is—is the last service we have every morning.

[Line 1. *Aogi koi negawakuwa sambō, fushite shōkan o taretamae.*]

And in its *ekō* says: *Aogi koinegawakuwa sambō, fushite shōkan o taretamae.* *Aogi koinegawakuwa* means: "Looking upwards to the altar, we pray or we—we ask for Three Treasure's presence—Buddha, dharma, sangha—and, with the merit of reciting *Dai Hi Shin Darani*, we dedicate for the—for the monks and students who is related to us and passed away. And parents or ancestors of every student, and ancestors—ancestors and parents of our donors, and the people who worked hard for the country. And what we wish is that by the merit of reciting sūtra we—we can—we want to help their practice, and I want them to help our practice—encourage our practice." That is the meaning of the last *ekō*.

In each—in Japan, this kind of, you know, custom or dedication started already [in] Buddha's time. If you read scriptures you will have [read about] many event. And on that occasion Buddha told his disciples to recite sūtra or to make offering for those—for their parents. Maybe first event, as far as we know, the King Hashinoku-ō<sup>2</sup> asked Buddha to [if he could] make offering to Buddha and to—to make—to give sermon on that occasion. That is the first event, maybe. After that, in India, there are—in India, it is a kind of a custom to make offering.

And offering is—there are two kinds of offering: alms-offering, you know, alms-giving, and dharma-giving. Those are two, you know, two kinds of offering. To give sermon, or to—to give—to recite sūtra or to practice zazen is a kind of offering to the people and to the deceased too. And the best alms-offering was supposed to be to offer something—to offer—to make alms-offering to priest was the best offering. And for the priest to give in such an occasion, they would—Buddha would—give them—give them some sermon. And later, we have, in alms-giving, we have ince- [partial word]—our offering of incense, offering of flower, and offering of light, and offering of food. And those are, you know, most important offering to Buddha.

To ince- [partial word]—to offer incense means, you know, to—to offer incense, to ask Buddha to come is the meaning of offering incense. When

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<sup>2</sup> Hashinoku-ō: Prasenajit, the king of Shrāvastī in central India, born in the same year as Shākyamuni Buddha.

Buddha, you know, know someone is burning incense, Buddha would go—Buddha would visit the family who is, you know, who make incense offering, and he respond to their wish, and he would give sermon.

So incense is sometime called "messenger," you know, not messenger from Buddha [laughs], but messenger from someone to—for Buddha to come. That is, you know, original meaning of offering incense. Later, incense offering means like is fragrancy of incense pervades everywhere. Buddha's teaching and Buddha's wisdom or buddha-nature is everywhere. So it is the incense offering symbolize Buddha's inspiring activity. But originally, we think, incense is to invite, you know, to ask Buddha to come.

And flower—we, you know, offer flower in this way nowadays, but before, in India, they scatters flowers when Buddha come, you know. Maybe that is more Indian way. I don't know. I haven't been to India yet, but I understand they are observing—still observing that kind of rituals. In Vedanta society, you know, they, you know, they offer, you know, flowers to the altar. That will be the Indian way, but later in China or Japan, we offer flower in flower vase, like this.

Water—water also—when we drink water, all the thirst, you know, will go. All the flame of, you know, many desires will calm down [laughs]. So the water symbolize the wisdom—wisdom which will clear up our mind, wisdom which make our thirsty desire to calm down. So water means wisdom.

And light or candle also symbolize the wisdom which will break the darkness of the ignorance. And, as you know, we—when we offer light and flower, light is more—supposed to be more important offering. So we offer light left-hand side, and offer flower right-hand side of the Buddha. If I am Buddha, here there is flower, and this side there is candle. That is more usual. And we offer water and incense center.

Food—not only food—as you see in *Lotus Sūtra*, there is four offerings or more: food, medicine, and wearing [clothing] or bed. *Onjiki efuku*. *Efuku* is—*onjiki* is food. *Efuku* is clothing. And *gaku*—*gaku* is bed. Those are also important alms-giving.

When we say *hokuyō* in Japanese, you know, we—in Japanese we say *hokuyō itashimashō ari-* [partial word]—or *hokuyō* or *oniga itashimashō*. Our member may come—would come maybe tomorrow, or the day—week—"tomorrow is my mother's memorial day, so we want to have *hokuyō*—*hokuyō itashimashō*." *Hokuyō* means, you know, *ku* means "offering." Or "to offer" is *ku*. *Yō* means "to encourage," you know, their parent or their mother's spirit to practice more, and ask her encouragement for our practice is, you know, *yō*. *Yō* means "to—to give—to give some nourishment" or "to encourage" is *yō*.

In—and—when in Japan, you know, I didn't like so much, but [laughs] anyway, when they observe *hokuyō* or memorial service, and they would, you know, have a kind of—not party, but, you know, they provide various dishes for priest. Originally, you know, priest—they invited priest to give them some talk or to give them some sermon. And they would offer food for the sermon.

So still, in Jap- [partial word]—in China and Japan, whenever we observe —whenever we observe memorial service for their parents or their ancestors, they would give us food. A lot of food. If I cannot—if we cannot eat it, they give us, you know, too much, so we cannot finish it. If we cannot finish it, they would ask us to carry it back. When I was a little temple disciple, I had a very difficult time [laughing] to take them back to my temple. My teacher would leave as soon as he say goodbye. *Yatomo gyatso animashte*.<sup>3</sup> And wearing *geta*,<sup>4</sup> they—he would go—go back. And my duty was to, you know, to borrow some bags, you know, to put various food in it, and to carry his food and my food. And if I am youngest, you know, I would carry my older disciples' food too [laughs].

Sometime—and they may say, "As it is too hot, how about this watermelon? Please carry it back." [Laughs.] Sometime pumpkin. Pump- [partial word]—watermelon is, you know, good—still good, but pumpkin is awful to carry [laughs, laughter]. It is, you know, always rolling, you know, right and left on my back, this way and that way, because it is round. Watermelon is very smooth, so it doesn't hurt—didn't hurt my back so badly. But pumpkin is awful, you know, because it is [laughs] not—it is rough. And we say *dekoboko*.<sup>5</sup> *Boko* is—this is *boko* [probably gestures]—V-shaped, you know, and M-shape is *deko* [laughs]. *Dekoboko*. Several time, you know, I was given pumpkin when I was coming home.

Anyway, in Japan we observe—in the countryside we observe memorial service in that way. It—they are very good people, and they observe it very sincerely without, you know, asking too—too much question. Yesterday someone was saying—what—what was the song—religion?—religion?

**Student:** "Give Me that Old-Time Religion."

Oh—"Old-Time Religion," yeah. "Old-time religion [laughs] was good enough." [Laughs, laughter.] It is exactly so, you know. They don't mind what it is. "Old-time religion is good enough for me" [laughs, laughter]. But it was not so happy with me, you know, when I have to do

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<sup>3</sup> Poor phonetic only.

<sup>4</sup> Japanese wooden clogs.

<sup>5</sup> *dekoboku* (Jap.): uneven or bumpy surface.

some- [partial word]—too much about it.

And—**ohigan**, you know. *Ohigan*—do you know *ohigan*? Spring and evening—autumn equinox day. We every—almost all the family observe big memorial service. And they would, you know—each family will make offering to my temple's Buddha [laughs]. You know, so, if my village is— if there—there were eighty families in my village, eighty—from eighty families we would—Buddha would—receive eighty, you know, offerings. Sometime *mochi*.<sup>6</sup> Sometime *dango*. *Dango* is "rice bowl." It is originated in India, you know, and Japanese peoples still observe it, you know, Indian custom to offer *dango*, which is "rice bowl." You—you grind rice and steam it and make rice bowl and offer. So, you know, Indian people, as you know, when they eat they make bowl and eat it, so they—we still offer, you know, *dango* to the Buddha—one of the important offering to their—to the Buddha and their family shrine.

In Japan, actually, we are—we were too busy in taking care of memorial service or funeral service, and we actually didn't have not much time to practice zazen even. And around the temple there—mostly we have big cemetery, and to clean cemetery—cemetery of the family who is not—is not in village. Recently, you know, in countryside of the Japan, people give up their home and go to the city to work, to have more—to have better job.

So in the country, there are—there are many tombstone no one actually taking care of. So in *ohigan* or equinox day, we—we were pretty busy. This is for—I think *hokuyō*. Originally it is good—it has deep meaning, but if, you know, we depend on alms-giving or preaching too much, forgetting the fundamental—fundamental practice of zazen, Buddhism will be lost. I hope—I think in America we Zen Buddhist will not be involved in such a activity so much, I hope. But I think we should not forget our friend with whom we practice, and who encouraged us, and who had very good time with us. We shouldn't forget. But I don't think it is necessary to have big celebration or to have big memorial service for them.

As Dōgen-zenji said: "If you," you know, "if you have—if you want to make alms-giving, the cherry blossom in the mountain will be good offering—will be a good offering." Even a cherry blossom in deep mountain will be a good offering—will be maybe the best offering. So to have this kind of sentiment is important, but we should not be involved in that kind of activity too much, I think.

That is—anyway, we—last dedication is for our ancestors and for priests and students who practiced with us, and for people who worked for—who worked hard for our country and society.

I think this will be, as I am going to visit Japan end of August, I must—I

<sup>6</sup> *mochi*: Japanese rice cake.

am leaving Tassajara the day after tomorrow, and tomorrow evening we want to observe a kind of ceremony for our friend. So there will be no lecture. Accordingly, this lecture will be the last lecture for a while. If you have some question, please ask me. *Hai*.

### Questions and Answers

**Student A:** Rōshi, in a week or so the ordination—lay ordination of students will take place.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh. Oh, I see.

**Student A:** And some- [partial word: someone?]-a week or so ago,<sup>7</sup> someone asked you what your name meant. You said "not much," so you're not attached to your name very much.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** And though your name has much use—has many uses—we all see it and stand behind your name with our best effort. Buddhism is a name that many people attach to—many—though it too uses. So, as in the West, where—so as in the West, I believe in the East, as well, such names as Buddhism often do not have so much standing behind it. There are, perhaps, many people who are Buddhists who are not religious. And there are not many people who have never heard of Buddhism—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** —a practice that [2-3 words unclear]. You yourself once said that Buddhism, to use a term [3-6 words unclear]. Why then did you recommend last week [2-3 words unclear] lay ordination, and what is the difference that ordination will make? [*Sentence may have finished. Tape ends abruptly.*]

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Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and *Ekō Study Book* by David Chadwick; transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997; transcript checked and corrected against tape by Nigel Edmonds and Bill Redican 11/24/99.

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<sup>7</sup> See SR-70-07-08.