

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
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The purpose of our practice is, of course, to maybe to have full enlightenment. Why we cannot have enlightenment is because of our, you know, delusion or *mumyō*,<sup>1</sup> we say. Or—because we are not—we don't have clear picture of this world, or we do not have eyes to see, you know, clearly, to see clearly, or to have clear understanding of this world. That is, you know, so-called-it called *mumyō*. *Mumyō* is delusion. *Mu* is "no." *Myō* is "clear." "No clear light."

We are—maybe we are—we Buddhist or we student or someone, you know, who do not have clear eyes to see, you know, what is the true way—which way to go [laughs]. So naturally you are wondering about, you know, to find out some truth, or to have—because you are wondering about, so you want to have some clear map, you know, which way to go. And that is why you must have teacher who, you know, give you some map or some instruction or which way to go.

Even though you have map, if you have a map or, you know, and you have teacher, there is still, you know, difficulty in your practice. The difficulty may be, you know, you have no—if you have—if you—as long as you trust your teacher, you know, you don't have to worry about the way, you know, you take. But because you have, you know, no worry, you know, you, you know, you are liable to, you know, to see something else, you know, because you have—you don't have to, you know, try to find out which way you should take. So you just follow [laughs] your teacher. When he goes fast, you go fast, and when he goes slow, you go slow.

You know, maybe teacher will be like your driver, you know. Because you have, you know—you don't have to worry about driving [laughs], so you see something [laughs], you know, outside of the car, and you will be easily caught by [laughs] something. Or, "Let's have a cup of tea [laughs], a cup of coffee. Let's stay here for two or three days [laughs]." So, you know, teacher, you know, must have accommodate [laughs] with your request, and in that way you will waste your time, you know. Instead of, you know, trying to—asking your way to take, you know, someone else, you will, you know, stop at the coffee shop and having coffee—more than you need [laughs]. That is a trouble you may have. And even though, you know, in that way, eventually you will arrive at, you know, the goal or city you want to go.

But, you know, but sometime you will lose your driver, you know, because it takes too long time to go—to arrive at that city, and if he is

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<sup>1</sup> *mumyō* (Jap.): ignorant; dark; lightless; spiritual darkness; ignorance of the true nature of existence.

very old, he may die [laughs, laughter] before [laughs] you arrive at the city you want go. So naturally you should find out another driver [laughs]. But you have some advantage, you know, because you came, you know, already so far. So someone who, you know, find you, you know, will be very sympathetic with you, or [say], "You are very close to that city you want to go, so maybe I will take you to that city," you know. You will find out the advantage is, maybe, it is easy for you to find out someone who may, you know, drive you to the city. That is one advantage.

Ahhh.

But, you know, I think, you know, you will miss, you know, the driver, you know. After [laughs] he is no more, you know, you will miss him a lot. And there you have some advantage too, you know. Because you miss him, you will try hard, you know, next time—this time, you know, not to waste your time [laughs]. You know, if he dies, you know [laughs], you must find out another driver, so you will not waste your time and you will not disturb your driver anymore [laughs], saying, "Let's [laughs] stop here," you know. And especially you don't know how far it is city, you know, you want to go, so naturally this time you will, you know, you will not disturb the driver. That is the advantage.

But if you cannot find out a driver, anyway asking your way, you will, you know, make a trip on foot, you know. And maybe someone who has big confidence in himself [will say]: "Yes, I am strong enough. I can walk by myself," you know. But at that time the difficulty will be, you know, even though you actually arrive at the city, you know, you don't know [laughs], so you still wondering about, you know, where [laughs] to go [laughs]. You are actually in the city, but you don't know that is the city, you know. You will arrive eventually, at last. That is a trouble, you know.

Or another trouble maybe, you know, before you arrive [at] the real city, you know, you will think, "This is the city [laughs] which I wanted to go! This is the city." But that is not the city, you know. But when—before you arrive at real city, you think this is your city. That is another trouble. I think many people have this problem. The problem is to have right teacher, is to have good driver is a trouble, and not to, you know, disturb your driver, you know, is very difficult. Not to waste your time with your teacher is another difficulty, and, you know, to think you attained enlightenment before, you know, you attain enlightenment is another difficulty. Even though you have enlightenment, you know, you don't know, you know, that you have—you obtain enlightenment in your practice. That is another difficulty for us. In Japanese we have technical term, you know, for those difficulties.

Excuse me [sips water].

So best thing, you know, best thing is to have, you know, a good map. I mean by "good map" a clear understanding of our practice, even though to understand teaching does not mean you have enlightenment, you know, does not mean so. That is just intellectual understanding, you know, but, you know, that is just, you know, picture or map. And map is necessary, and you should know and you should know how to read your map and at least, you know, what kind of spirit is necessary, you know, when you have good driver. And, you know, if you have some experience of driving car, you know [laughs], you will not disturb your driver so much, so some experience or some idea of driving car will help.

This morning I want to talk about this point little bit, you know: the idea of, you know, driving your car. Our way, you know, is, you know, "way-seeking mind" we say, you know. Way-seeking mind is, you know, the understanding of how to drive. Way-seeking mind. Way-seeking mind is very difficult, maybe, you know, for you, although it is not so complicated thing. It is quite simple, but actually, to have it may be difficult. When we, you know, make trip—why you make trip is to go to some beautiful city or sight-seeing place. For instance, you know, it is—the way-seeking mind is lit [?]<sup>2</sup>—and your desire to make trip, you know, is quite different thing [laughs]. Your desire. Your desire, you know. And, you know, to know this point is very important. To know this point—if you know this point, you can, you know, you have direction, you know, in your trip. You know which way to go, anyway.

Kitano-zenji—you know, when I was at the monastery, Eihei-ji Monastery, Kitano-zenji<sup>2</sup> was the archbishop of the Eihei-ji Monastery. When he was young, you know, he was making trip, *takuhatsu*. And when he reach to the, you know—he was an inveterate smoker [laughs], you know, and when he reached to the, you know, top of the pass, you know, and he took a rest there, sitting on a stone, and, you know, take out cigarettes or I don't know what it was, but—took out his pipe. And seeing the, you know, down, you know, he will arrive on that evening, you know, he took a cigarette. And it was wonderful, you know [laughs]. It was so wonderful, you know, to have a, you know, puff, you know.

So, you know, so it was so wonderful that he gave up. He stopped smoking at that time [laughs]. How about that [laughs, laughter]? You know, it must be, you know, foggy, you know. Through mist, you know, he could see the town. And he thought it may not be so difficult to, you know, arrive at that city, and so he must kill his time little bit more, and he was smoking. It was so nice that he stopped smoking. He knew, you know, what is, you know, real desire or what is desire exactly.

[Laughs.] This is another, maybe, story. I think here in San Francisco you don't have so [such] cold weather. At Tassajara, maybe, it is pretty cold, but in wintertime when you have a lot of snow, in wintertime you

<sup>2</sup> Kitano Daiko Genpō (1862–1932 or 1842–1933): 67<sup>th</sup> abbot of Eihei-ji.

will have, you know, "frostbite?" or, you know, frostbite. Before spring come, you know, it will become very itchy [laughs]. You will scratch [scratches himself], you know. And there is, you know—I think there will be no more agreeable thing than to scratch your [laughs] itchy, you know, frostbites. This is the time of the year when we scratch, you know [laughs], frostbite. So you will do, you know, and more you do it, more the frostbite become itchy [laughs, laughter], and you cannot stop it. You know, you know, that is not so healthy, you know, thing to scratch it. And you know this is not wholesome, you know, condition of your skin. So no one try to be, to, you know, to have more frostbites [laughs]. No one want to have it, you know.

He knows, you know—Kitano-zenji knows this is not so very good [laughs], but, you know, it is not something, you know, he should desire so much, you know, he should attach so much, like, you know, like frostbite. So he didn't—no one try to have more snow—frostbite, but many people will be interested in that kind of joy or agreeable feeling, you know.

Because others have [?] [laughs], you cannot make good—quick trip, you know, fast trip to the goal—to the city you want to go. You know, you know, we shouldn't stop so long, but you will stop there. If you demand—if you ask driver, you know, "Let's," you know, "stop here," then driver, you know, knowing that this is just to kill time—waste of time—he may be annoyed. Or he may be sometime very sympathetic with you, you know. "Oh, okay," he may say [laughs], but he is not so happy.

So in that way, you know, but if you know, you know, if you only know you shouldn't scratch your frost bite so much, you know, you should know what kind of desire is, you know, will help you, you know, and how much desire you should have, you know. And naturally you will have control over it, as you don't scratch your frostbite so much. And it seems to me that it is very difficult for you not to scratch [laughs] frostbite. This is, you know, vital, you know, this is, you know, very big problem for us, this point. Even though you think you are striving for attaining enlightenment, actually you are sometime you are scratching [laughs], you know, frostbite.

That is, according to Buddha, that is to refrain from your desire. To refrain from your desire. Refrain from your desire. But it is not because, you know, desire, you—not because desire is bad, so you shouldn't have desire. It doesn't mean that. But to have right practice on your desire is the true practice. Desire itself will create, you know, if you let them, you know, alone, if you let them go, you know, without control over it, it will create you various karma, you know, and you will suffer from the karma. And so even though you think you are, you know, [doing a] religious practice, but unless you not notice this point, you will, you know, by religion, you will create another karma, you know.

To study Buddhism is to create karma [laughs, laughter]. [*Sentence completed. Tape turned.*] ... on the desire. But even though he gave up smoking, he has desire as long as he is alive, you know. But he knows how to treat his desire, that's all.

[Laughs.] Do you understand this point? I want you to understand this point very well, very clearly, before you make your trip. [Laughs.] Are you sure about this point? It is very foolish of you not to notice this point, very foolish, you know [laughs]. I am not talking about something, you know, difficult. To know this point is very difficult. Maybe to give up smoking is difficult. I know that. But to know this point cannot be so difficult, you know. If you only know this point, I don't say give up, but if you know this point, you know, you will know how to treat yourself. Even though it is difficult you will know that.

So it is easy to follow, you know, our practice, but if you don't know this point, whatever, you know, rules you have to help your practice, you know, you will, you know, you cannot follow it, you know. You don't like to follow it. Our rules is provided not from the standpoint of your, you know, wild desires. It is provided, you know, from standpoint of the enlightened person, enlightenment experience. So, but your understanding of our rules is, you know, from the viewpoint of wild-, you know, open desires: "freedom" and so on. It doesn't make any sense. [Laughs.] Don't you think so? You are just want to scratch your [laughs, laughter] frostbite—that is your freedom. It doesn't make any sense. If your mother said, "Don't do that," you will fight with her [laughs, laughter], that's all. That is what most people are doing, you know. Understanding of the rules. But our rules is not, you know, something like that. Our rules is, you know—we call it "pure rule," or "enlightened rules."

So if—it is the map to go to the city. It is, you know, to help your practice, you know, we have rules or we have maps, and you have driver. If you always, you know, demand your teacher to have more, you know, pleasure, [it is] only a trip. Doesn't, you know—that is big problem. But it is not—as we have, you know, desires, so it is not necessary to be too strict with it, you know. Maybe if you ask too many things, you know, [laughs] maybe your mother will [be] angry with [laughs] you. But what mother want to do is just, you know, just to make you come, that is all. If you do not drink anything, you know, she will worry, you know. "Don't drink so much," she may say, but, you know, if you doesn't drink at all, she may worry. So it is not necessary to be so strict, but you should know the point. And you should have right attitude, and you should, you know, be cooperative rather than disturbing, you know, your teacher. Okay? [Laughs, laughter.]

I won't saying, you know, because of me, but because I want to help you,

you know, I am saying this point. It is very easy thing, you know, to understand and to do, and you can trust my words on this point [laughs]. I don't know when I say something very, you know, fancy [laughs, laughter]. I don't know. But I am very straightforward, you know. I have many experiences like this, you know. And you will enjoy, you know, your understanding of your desires, and naturally you will have good practice, and that good practice will help your, you know, everyday problem.

Here in this zendō, you know, we—our way is the so-called-it Sōtō way, you know, Sōtō way, not Rinzai way [laughs]. But "Sōtō way" we say, but actually, you know, our way is nothing but, you know, how to get rid of our confusion and our trouble from our life. So we, you know—Sōtō way put more emphasis on zazen. Zazen, zazen, zazen [laughs]. And what zazen means to you is to have, you know, to be yourself, you know. How to be yourself is, you know, how to treat yourself, you know, including various desires. How to treat yourself. How to treat your painful legs, you know, how to have good posture, how to make your smooth, good breathing.

When you, you know, really, when you take care of yourself, you know, then you will have mother-like mind, you know. You will not say—you will always say to yourself, "Oh, don't eat too much" [laughs], you know, because you are always taking care of yourself, like in your zazen, you know: always trying to take of yourself. When you become angry, you may say, "Oh, don't be angry so much." Or you may, but [laughs] it will not help, you know. You will treat your anger in that way.

That is how you treat yourself in your zazen. If you, you know, shout, "DON'T DO THAT!" you know, [laughs]. In zazen you cannot say so, you know. So naturally [laughs], you will, you know, because—even though you are angry [laughs], you will be like this [laughs], without saying, you know [laughs], "DON'T BE ANGRY!" That is how you treat your anger [laughs]. So naturally, eventually anger will go, you know. You will not be so indignant about any special things. You will be tired. Actually, you have no time [laughs] to be angry. That is how you, you know, take care of yourself.

And if you become boss of yourself, include desires, then you will be a boss of everything, you know. Your practice include everything. The way you treat yourself is the way you treat, you know, your friend, the way you live in this society. You will not create any problem, but you will not even try to help others, but, you know, you are actually helping others in that way. And it is very difficult for almost all the people to be like that, you know. If, you know, you, you know, are like that, it will be good example for others, and others will follow your example. They will not recognize you, but they may feel very good to be around you.

So what you learn by Sōtō way is, you know, how you treat yourself, you know, and how you live in this world without creating karma for you and for others. You ignore the, you know, idea of karma. Mostly it seems to me, you know, you ignore, you, you know [laughs, laughter], you don't want to see your karma, even though you are creating a lot of karma, one after another, you know, one over [laughs] another. But you try to ignore it. But who will suffer from the karma? You yourself karma. No one else will suffer from it. And you cannot ignore the truth of cause and effect, you know. If you do something, if you create some karma because of no controlling practice over your karma, the result will come, you know. [Laughs.] You cannot escape from the law of karma. How you, you know, make your bad karma into good one is also power of practice. When you create bad karma, because of your good practice, bad karma will change its direction. It will not vanish, you know. Once you create karma, karma is there, always with you, but that karma will change its direction. Karma is not good or bad. But, you know, when you work on karma, it will be a good karma, and when you don't, you know, the karma will create various karma on you because you don't know how to treat yourself, how to treat your karma.

This point should be, you know, realized. Perhaps you don't want to hear [laughs] this part, but this is also true, you know. It is not so fancy Buddhist, you know, teaching. It is very very clear teaching. You know, no one can ignore this truth. Your foolish effort will try to ignore it, but it will never work.

If you force too much, you know, you will invite destruction. It is, you know, worse than war. We are actually, you know, creating war through everyday activity. You talk about peace in some angry, you know, mood [laughter, laughs]. Actually you are creating, you know, war with angry mood. *Rhhh, rhhh!* [Laughs.] That is war, you know.

We should know. We should open our, you know, dharma eyes, you know, and we should know the map, you know, once again, once more. And we should help together forever.

Thank you very much.

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