

69-11-16

SUZUKI ROSHI'S LECTURE

November 16, 1969

Good morning. I want to talk about our practice.

Here in America something special is happening. That is, our group. Our students cannot be categorized in the same way we define Zen Buddhists in Japan, because you are not priests and you are not completely laymen. I understand it this way.

That you are not priests is easy to understand, but that you are not completely laymen--I think you are special people--you know--in our society. Not hippie. But something like that. And so I don't know what to say. That is I think you want some special practice. Not exactly priest practice, not exactly layman practice and--but we are on the way to have some special...some different way of life for us. That is our Zen community. I think not community, but our group. And so we have to have some appropriate practice for us. Before I talk about our special way of practice I think it is better to understand what is original, what is Dogen's practice. He says some may attain enlightenment, some may not, he said. This is, you know, this is the point I am very much interested in. Some may attain enlightenment and some may not; which means although we practice same way, same fundamental practice, but some may attain enlightenment and some may not. It means that even though we do not have enlightenment experience, experience as well as we sit in proper way, proper right understanding of practice and practice our way seriously. And what is important point in understanding of our practice is,...we say Big Mind, or small mind, or Buddha Mind...but that kind of, you know, words mean something, something we cannot, something we should not try to understand in term of experience. Enlightenment experience we say, but it is not, you know, some experience which we will have in term of good or bad. It is special experience which is beyond those feelings or a kind of consciousness. So we should not ask what is enlightenment experience. Even though you ask someone, that you ask that kind of question means, that you don't know what is Zen experience...enlightenment experience. Enlightenment experience is different, or impossible, or something you should not try to ask in your ordinary way of thinking. When you give up this kind of...when you are not involved in this kind of way of thinking, you have chance to understand what is Zen experience. I want to this morning, I want to make this point clear, as much as possible.

We say Big Mind, Big Mind is not something which you can experience some objective way. Big Mind is something which is always with you, you know, which is always on your side, not objective side...always subjective side, here. So you see, you cannot see your eyes. Eyes cannot see themselves. Eyes only are seeing things outside, objective beings, not eyes itself. So we cannot see the Big Mind, because it is always with us...here...right here. If you reflect on yourself, that self is not your true self anymore. You project when you think about yourself, you project you as some objective

thing...do you understand? You mind is there. And your true mind is watching the mind, outside. So mind outside of itself. When I discussed this point at Tassajara, after lecture, Peter said, Mind of itself...this is very good...interpretation of Big Mind, Small Mind, Mind outside of itself. You know, mind is here and you project your mind there, and you say this is my mind, and that is self, so-called it self or small mind, a limited mind. When you understand your mind something like this or like that, you are limiting, you put limitations to the true mind, or you objectify your mind. Your subjective mind which is always with you...why I say so, this mind is, which is always on your side, is not just your mind, this mind is Universal Mind, which is always same, and which is no different from other's mind. It is big, big mind. And interesting thing for this mind is, whatever you see...your true mind is always with it, you know, when you see something like this...although you don't know your own mind, but at the moment you see something, your mind is here. This is very interesting. Always...your mind is always with things you observe, you see. So this mind is at the same time everything.

We Buddhists traditionally talk about this kind of mind and this kind of being which is always one with mind, Usually you may think, my mind is watching this cup...usually you say so. You understand, my mind is here, cup is here, and I watching it. As I tentatively explain, my mind is always with it but this is rather opposite, you know. There being is something which is, which has purified. You may think this is mind, this is cup...it is rather confusing. But did you understand what I mean? When we understand mind in this way, that is, Big Mind, which is always with things and subjectively speaking, it is mind which is always on this side, not there. We Buddhists from Buddha's time, do not have any idea of material only, or mind only, or we do not say our mind producing, or mind is a kind of attribute for materialistic being. We always in Buddhism mind and body, or mind and material is always one and we are talking, always talking about this, even though sometimes we say Dharma, that Dharma means mind and body being mind and material, spiritual and material being. We are always talking about it. But if you carelessly, carelessly listen to it or hear it we are, as if we are talking about some material and some spiritual being. So when we say material or when we say Big Mind that will be version of it, maybe. Mind, which is always with being, with objective being, or mind, which is always with, on this side, that is true mind. So enlightenment experience, to figure out, or to understand this mind which is always with us, which we cannot see. So that is why Dogen Zenji says, "Don't think, don't expect all of us who practice zazen will attain enlightenment about this mind, which is always with us." It means that if you think Big Mind is somewhere outside yourself, then that is a mistake. If you practice zazen expecting something outside yourself, that is a mistake. Did you understand this point? Because the Big Mind is always with us. If you try to...when you try to attain enlightenment as if you see the bright star in the sky, that is beautiful, this is enlightenment. That is not true enlightenment.

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But that is not true enlightenment. That is more—for us that is heresy, you know.

You, you know—you found out [laughs] something there which—which was—which is—object of yourself, you know.

So when you understand the enlightenment experience in that way, that is more—strictly speaking, that is heresy. You, you know, have idea of material only. Even though you don't feel in that way, but version of your enlightenment experience is exactly like that. There is something material only, or object of your mind exists there, and because of good practice of yourself, you could found out that bright star. So in this statement, there is the idea of, you know, self. And idea of the objects. That is not, you know, how to seek for enlightenment.

When—the morning I left Tassajara, students has—had discussion. And someone said, being and doing, you know—we are discussing about our practice of, you know, eating and sleeping. [Laughs.] And we started to discuss about sex, but that discussion about sex doesn't work so well. [Laughs, laughter.] I thought it is impossible to, you know, discuss about six—sex. Even though you try, it is very difficult—very difficult discussion. You will be involved in very, you know, endless, you know, discussion, because sex problem, or sex is—if you say "sex," whatever we do [laughing] is sexual activity. So to talk about sex means to talk about our life, to talk about whole Buddhism. [Laughs, laughter.] So I thought it doesn't mean, you know, to talk about only sex. [Laughs.]

If we want to talk about sex, we have to, you know, talk about—we have to discuss about what is Buddhism from the beginning. That is almost impossible to discuss. Too big problem. Actually, if you understand sex in that way there's no more sex problem. [Laughs.] No more sex because there is no—nothing to—problem—problem of sex is not any special problem. That is, you know, that is our—to—that is actually our life.

You say, "Oh, how beautiful this flower is!" When you say so, that is already sex. [Laughs.] We understand in that way. Our version of, "Don't be immoral," you know, means, "Don't say this is wonderful," you know. That is—our unders- [partial word]—our version of the fourth precept. I shouldn't be involved in this kind of discussion right now, so [laughs] I have to skip this [laughing, laughter]. Ex- [partial word]—I don't want to explain it right now—what I was going to say, by the way [laughing].

[End of missing text from verbatim transcript]

.....Doing and being. When we discuss about being, we are already involved in something material only, or something spiritual only. When you really try to understand doing practice, then all discussion is Buddhist discussion. When we discuss doing, doing includes two sides...being and non-being; right and wrong; good and bad. When you think whether I want to stay in bed one minute more...but on the other hand you say, "I must get up to practice zazen.:" That is more idea of being, being in bed. You are thinking about being in Zen meditation hall, and you cannot be two beings at the same time. So there is conflict. When you understand yourself...who is...

You understand yourself by doing, by getting up when you try to lay your head, support your body by your (Abram? arm?) there is true practice, right there. When you are thinking about your being in bed or being in zendo, naturally your mind will be divided in two...split in two...and it will create a problem. So someone said, in short, this is the problem of doing and being. I think this is very...he had...when he said so, he had key point of zendo life.

Why I started to talk about this point...about this kind of thing is...as a priest, at least we have to have deep understanding, more accurate understanding of our practice. And we should have some enlightenment experience, at least. We should be able not only to talk about practice, we should experience of our practice. For someone (?) it is necessary to put confidence in your big mind which is always with you. And you should be able to appreciate things as an expression of the Big Mind. In short, you must have some faith in Big Mind, which I explained. Actually, if you understand what I said now, it is actually more than faith, you know. It is ultimate truth which you cannot reject, whether it is difficult to practice...whether it is easy or difficult to understand...to practice it literally, this is the absolute truth which you must accept. And you must have anyway strong confidence in your Big Mind which is always with you, which you will find wherever you go. I think this is, if you have strong confidence, I think you are already in its true sense Buddhist, even though you don't attain enlightenment. Your practice will develop, and you have not much danger being sick or being in confusion.

Mostly, you know, physically and mentally when we become sick, it is lack of confidence in yourself which is always with you, and seek something, or try to be something else. You know, when you are sick, you should be sick, because there is true you. You will find true mind at that time. So, supported by everything, being supported by everything, you just lie on your bed like this, you know; the bed will be very comfortable, warm, nice bed. When you have this kind of feeling, I think your sickness is already...maybe it is 9:00 over...you are recovered already. But most people struggle in the cold bed. "Ah. I must recover; tomorrow we have party, and so I cannot stay in bed." So he may struggle. "I have a baby, so I must get well." In this way, if you struggled in your bed, that is very serious illness. Because of lack of understanding of yourself, and because you don't understand what is you, you become sick. I am sure...I am quite sure, most people are ill, not healthy at all. But when you do not think you are sick, you are healthy. When you think you are sick, you are sick. That is all. You may have some opposition to this kind of statement, but this is very true.

So I want to help people, sick people, mentally or physically. I wish I could give my understanding to him or to her. But it looks like...quite...very difficult for them to understand, to put faith in themselves. To understand Big Mind. I think the best way is to practice our way before you are involved in this kind of sickness caused by yourself; caused by lack of understanding of yourself. Especially, you know, people whose parents or grandparents had some special illness. They are always in fear of getting same illness, which their mother or father, or grandmother or grandfather had. This is a terrible thing, you know. Even though you are healthy, mentally you are ill. Seriously ill. You are always confronting with the fear of being sick. Whether or not their parents are

mentally or physically healthy or not, he will be sick if they have that kind of fear only.

So how to get out of this kind of fear is to practice zazen. And to get rid of the mind outside of yourself. And to resume to your practice, to your actual being and practice; to find out yourself as doing...someone who is doing something. Who is always with everything...with Buddha...who is supported fully by everything. Then you are quite safe. When you are safe this moment, it means in future you are safe. When this moment of yourself is not safe, next moment of you will be in danger. For us, today...tomorrow...is future of this moment, you know; nothing but future of this moment. So when you think you are in danger right now, tomorrow also you will be in danger. For you, I mean; for you, right now. So when you continue this kind of confidence in yourself, today will be alright; tomorrow will be alright, and always you are on the track. When you lose this point, you will be lost, and you will continue this kind of dangerous life, and you will be in fear always. So it is necessary for you to be able to get out of it in this moment, right now. You may say "it is not possible," but it is possible; even in one moment you can do that...it is possible. That you can do it in this moment means you can do it always. So if you see this kind of...? in dark fearful ...? that is it. That is your enlightenment experience. You have great confidence in yourself.

This is how to be a Buddhist in its true sense. The difference between laymen or Buddhist is not big problem. Whether we have enlightenment experience or not is minor problem. Someone may attain enlightenment, someone may not; but they are all Buddhists.

I have been thinking about future, you know, Buddhism in America pretty long time. And if we concentrate on this point, naturally this kind of problem will be solved. Anyway, you know, it is good thing. I feel in America the younger generation has a great opportunity to find out the true way of life for human beings because in Japan and other underdeveloped countries (?), they have to evolve still materialistic problem. Here in America you haven't this kind of problem. Maybe you have, because you reject it. The people _____ have this problem...want of material, so they _____ gain, that is problem. But you are rejecting it, you say, "No, I don't want a car, I don't want bankbook; I don't _____." I don't care is very good, but there is no need for you to reject it; that is too much.

Anyway, I think you started Zen practice under the best condition, and with very pure mind. So you will understand Buddha's teaching as he meant, exactly. Something will _____ to us anyway, I think. In maybe, I don't know when...tomorrow or next year...I don't know...maybe after...maybe I will _from the ground, like this. I don't know when, but something will happen. It is very clear. I didn't join yesterday's practice, but I heard of it, and I was very much impressed by it. _____ it is the time to start our practice in its true sense by _____ ting all about dark (?) person or happy style person. Let's chant (?) "Gyate, Gyate, Para Gyate," and join the procession of our practice.

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