

70-05-24.A [70-05-24]

MONEY AND LABOR

May 24, 1970. San Francisco.

Good morning. Actually this morning I asked Yashida Roshi to give some talk to you, but as she has just arrived from Japan and she said she is not ready to speak yet so...I am going to speak something.

I introduced her already to you, but some of you here may not know her, so I think I have to introduce Yashida Roshi first. (Aside in Japanese...) Yashida Roshi...She is one of the important disciples of Hashimoto Roshi who passed away-passed away four years ago. Hashimoto Roshi is famous teacher who studied various old rituals and form of, especially *okesa* and robes and...besides study of *Shobogenzo*. By Hashimoto Roshi our rituals improved a lot, so we are so fortunate to have her here. Joyce-Zenkosan, has been studying with, under her at Keizenji near Nagaya Temple and we expect her always to come and give more...fundamental understanding of our rituals and way of observing things, not only just rituals but also how we should behave according to Dogen Zenji's way. As Dogen Zenji, you know, since Dogen Zenji it is several hundred, more than seven hundred and fifty years, so everything is not so clear and meantime our way is mixed up with some other things which is not so good. So still we are studying his way, what was his way, and because we have many things which we cannot accept completely, so that is why we study Dogen Zenji's way. We think Dogen Zenji's way cannot be like that. That is why we study-maybe that is wrong, wrong but...anyway we want to accept teaching sincerely with our heart or true mind. That is why we have to study and we think he is the most sincere student or teacher among the teachers we had-we have had.

This morning I want to speak on relationship between our everyday life, especially the relationship between material and our-

we Buddhists. What kind of attitude we have about material. When we say spiritual life, people liable to ignore material. That is big mistake, according to Dogen Zenji. Material and mind or spirit is same according to Buddhism. We-we know that all, all of us has Buddha nature, but if so, we are very careful how to-relationship between, between us, but we tend to ignore the relationship between we human being and other being, like plant or river. Especially, you know, food. But the way you study food is not always right because you put emphasis on yourself, ignoring the value of food. We have very selfish discrimination about food. I think that is a kind of selfish attitude of human beings. According to Buddha, everything has Buddha-Buddha Nature, if so we should respect everything as you respect yourself. That is main point. So how you appreciate food is the most important point. Before you have discrimination about food. Buddhists from all time-always noticed this point very strictly. You may say, that is too much, but for instance, my father was a priest. When he was going home, he, if he find some vegetables on the roadside he picked up and he brought the old vegetables the farmers and the people, which farmers and people throw away. And he cooked it for us and so I had to eat it. There was small river in front of the temple, the many rotten old vegetables would floating down from upper river, so as soon as he find some vegetable-like thing, not exactly (laughs) to me that was not exactly vegetables!-it might be good for (compost?), but not for eating, but he cooked it and he said "Everything has Buddha Nature. You should not throw away." And wherever he goes, he talks about how valuable the food is, you shouldn't throw them away.

So my teacher, my master, was my father's disciple, so he was also very strict with food. Here you say, you know, you study what food is good for you, what kind of food you should take, but to me and they are very much proud of their knowledge of food-how much nourishment some certain food has and this is acid and this is (laughs)...this contains a lot of...what do you say...opposite of acid, but you know, to me it is, I understand, I think that is good, but

before you say so you forget something. You make, I wonder, if you don't make big mistake. To appreciate the value of food is first and what kind of food you choose is next, I think. Dogen Zenji, you know, left instruction about our cook, what kind of spirit we must have when you become a cook in the monastery. He said the duty of cook in the monastery is completely different from usual cook in city. Completely different. So you should know what is the duty of a cook and he left *Tenzo Kyokun*, instruction for the cook in the monastery. And in the-in his instructions, one of his instructions was don't say *komae-komae* is rice. You should say *okomae*. *O* is honorific prefix to *komae*. *Komae* is rice; *okomae* means, you know, when-if we say *okomae* we respect expression of, as an expression of respect we say, without saying *komae*. Dogen Zenji says we shouldn't say *komae*, we should say *okomae*. And so Japanese-most Japanese people put honorific prefix to everything. Instead of saying *chawan*, we say *ochawan*. Instead of saying *kesa*, we say *okesa*. That is, you know, this kind of understanding is the understanding we Buddhists have had. Dogen Zenji put emphasis on this point. He didn't throw away even a left over water. He respectfully returned the water to the river. All the confusion we have right now in our society comes from the lack of understanding of what is-about what is material. You know in our society we respect labor. Labor is, you know, the most important element when you value things. But before you count value of labor, there must be something you should think. Something which was given to us, there is something here and if you work on it it will serve your purpose. But labor is not only thing which you should count. Most of you pay...only for labor. That is, I think, a kind of arrogance of human being. You ignore the Buddha Nature which everything has. If we notice this point our system of life will change a lot. Of course labors is important. Why labor is important is labor is-will be make sense when you work on, with respect, work on things which are given and to only to count labor is big mistake, so labor doesn't make any sense. Labor is, when we work on things with respect that is our human life in its true sense. We, you know, we pay, mostly you think you pay for the labor, but I don't think that is right

understanding. You pay for the labor and for the things which was given to us by God, according to your understanding, or by Buddha. Only when we have this kind of understanding of things, our system or economy, our economic system will change. I am not economist, but I feel in that way.

So money is also, should be treated in that way. You pay, you work on things with respect. Money is to exchange the value of things and labor, you know. Some money include-behind money there is respect for the material or for the things which was given to us from Buddha, and our respect to the labor, the effort someone else made and to exchange means to purify. When you exchange things it means to purify things. If you pay some money you don't owe anything for anyone, but that is also, you know, something is missing in that idea. Even though you pay for the labor, there is something which you cannot pay, that is, you know, the value of things which was given to you by Buddha. But only when you pay with respect for the things which was given to us for the labors which was worked by someone else, with respect, then in this sense, if you pay some money when you get something with this- only when you do this with this kind of understanding you can purify your life, your activity of changing things. Without this idea if you- even though you pay for the things you get, you owe a lot of, you owe a lot.

So that is why we must have always big respect for things, for money, for labor. This is-Dogen Zenji's idea of everyday life. So the money is not yours. It belongs to our society. Because you think the money is yours, you sometime you think money is dirty, you think in that way, some people may think, or some people may attach to the money too much. That is, you know, that kind of idea is dirty idea. Not pure idea. When you say money is dirty, your understanding is dirty. (tape turned, some lost)...if material which was given to is...pure, or the effort we make is our...so to accumulate money can be allowable only you accumulate to be ready to go to hospital to be ready to die, you know...funeral parlor.

It costs a lot of money. I have \$1000, \$2000-a lot of money...(laughs)...so we must have maybe \$500 or \$1000, but to rely on the power of the money is wrong. That is the, that is the way Buddha did not like at all. At that time the money system was not so strong, so he said don't accumulate things. You should eat-you should live on the food you, food which was offered just before you eat. And you should not beg more than the food which will suffice next meal. This is, I think, big,-I think Buddha was big scholar of economy. That is the most important point of economy I think. Why we have money is to exchange things. We should not, you know, stop the current of the money. So in this sense we say everything changes-you know money is not symbol, but...money express the value of, value of things which change. if the value, if things is valuable because we can eat, we can live on it, then money also should...should not stop. If money stops that is business depression. If money is going slowly all over our, in our society, our society is healthy. So money is, money purifies our world. It is not something dirty. It is very pure. It is very important thing for us. When we take good care of it, when we respect it, because you don't respect, you don't pay enough respect to the money, the money becomes dirty. Don't matter how much money you have. Even the money is-amount of money you have is little, you should pay respect to it and you should make best use of it. How you make best use of it is to make it, you know, work. To make it help our society.

The other day we officers discussed how we should run this Zen Center. We don't like to say you should pay if you want to come and study with us, you should pay some money, you know. We don't like but for us that is part of practice, you know. Just sit on black cushion is not only practice. The old-how you treat money is very important practice for us. Most people forget all about how you survive here. You think you can survive alone in the remote mountain, but even thought you are in remote mountain or that you can go to the big mountain is because of the money. You cannot work to the Sierra or Rocky Mountain. It is very foolish idea to

ignore-not to understand how we survive here. If you, you know, miss the point, whatever you say that is (paper). It is much better to read white paper.

Before we study Buddhism we should know what we are doing and how we survive here. So we think this is part of practice, but we do not, we do not...reject people just because of money. We are ready to help with each other, but each one of us...should purify our zendo with money (laughs), first of all. That is why I say you should pay-"give me some money!" (laughs) You will give me some money, someone will take good care of it, we should not accumulate money for Buddha, because Buddha didn't like to accumulate anything.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 70-05-24
