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SUZUKI-ROSHI LECTURE. SESSHIN # 3.

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This morning I said you must find yourself in each period. That is actually what Tozan Zenji said; Don't try to seek yourself. Don't try to figure out who you are. the 'you' found out in that way is far away from real you. It is not you anymore. But if I go my own way, wherever I go, I see myself. If you take your own step, it is the Bodhisattva way: wherever you go, you will see yourself, you will meet with yourself. And he says the image you see in the water when you want to figure out who you are is not you, but actually, just what you see in the water is you yourself. In the *Sandokai* we have the same statement: You are not him, and he is you. It is paradoxical, you know. To catch your mind, they use a paradoxical statement like this. It means that when you try to figure out who you are, even though you see yourself in the mirror, it is not you. But if you just see your figure in the mirror, without any idea of trying to figure out what you are, that is you yourself.

The reason it is not you when you figure out who you are is that because of your self-centered mind, limited mind, you cannot see. Self-centered practice doesn't work. If you try to attain enlightenment, or if you want to be some great Zen master, you cannot actually be a great Zen master. When you don't try to be so, or before you try, or before you practice our way, you are Buddha. But because of your limited, self-centered practice, even though you practice your way, you cannot have real practice. You will miss yourself, lose yourself in small, self-centered practice.

This morning I also told you that first of all you should try to help others. But when I say so, you will have some misunderstanding. Whatever you do, that is our practice. The misunderstanding (also) comes from selfish practice, practice with gaining ideas or limited practice. But it is pretty hard to practice our way without any expectation, or any gaining idea. It is actually very difficult. That is why we have various rules in the zendo. Because of those rules, you can just follow the rules without any idea of self. Giving up your idea of self, you can practice real practice which is not based on a self-centered idea. Unless you give up your idea of self-centered practice, you cannot follow your (our?) rules. so the rules will help you to give up you self-centered practice which doesn't work, and encourage you to practice real practice. In the *Lotus Sutra*, there is one chapter in which the Buddha is talking about our rules. Why we observe our practice is just to help ourselves to make it easy to keep our practice. It is the easy practice. You may think to follow rigid rules is difficult practice. Someone said, "Oh, I wish I hadn't started this kind of difficult religion." Maybe we feel that way, our small mind will feel that way. But if you know what the real practice is, then the various precepts and rules of the Buddhists way help us. We find it easy to follow the Bodhisattva Way because of the rules set up by Buddha.

Do you know Senzaki Roshi? perhaps you may know him. his last words were,

"Don't put a head upon your own head." Because you put another head upon your head, you are involved in foolish, self-centered practice. even though it is Buddha's head, you should not put it upon your head. It is better to have only one head. To try to attain enlightenment is to try to put another head on your own head: you cannot move so easily. We are not trying to put anything on our head. We just try to experience who I am or what our own head is, that's all. How to find out your head is our practice. Again, "to find out" does not mean to find out some head upon your head, to find out your head which is thinking. How is it possible to think about your thinking mind? How is possible to see your own eyes? That is not possible. But there is only one way for us which makes it possible to realize what my own head is. If you knock it, you may feel: this is my head. In other words, to put my head under some limitation is how we realize our own head.

By the way, a famous Zen master in China, Eichu Kokushi (?), Nanyo Eichu (?), who is one of the disciples of the Sixth Patriarch, was a very good Zen master. He didn't have many descendants, so we don't know him so well, but he himself was a great Zen master. When he was dying, the Emperor asked his *jisha* what kind of a tombstone they should make for him. But Eishu Kokushi told the emperor's messenger, "Ask my disciples." They made a tombstone for him, and had a discussion about it. One of the students said, "It is as big as this country. This tombstone covers all the state south of Lake tang (?) and north of Lake tang (?)." another student said, "No. It will include the whole world." But I would rather say, as their teacher Nanyo Eichu said when he was asked, "Any stone will be good enough; even a small stone can be good enough for me." which do you like, the whole world, or a small stone? I rather prefer a small stone which we can carry, or move. If you know what the small stone is, that is you yourself, which will cover everything. But if you think you know the whole big universe is yourself, you will be lost--it doesn't make any sense.

You need one small room for yourself. That is very true. When you find yourself really in the small room, as one of your room (?), then there is you yourself, and the whole universe is there, and the whole universe makes sense to you. Without your room, the whole universe doesn't make any sense. So what you need now is the small room, and what you will need after your death is a small stone, maybe. That is very true, that is actual reality, which is always true with everyone. So don't talk about the whole universe or some mysterious experience, but find yourself in the small room or in the rigid practice of Zen. "You shouldn't go that way; you should go this way. You should cross your legs this way." Under this kind of limitation, you will find yourself. Real self is there. But because you discuss whether this room is good or bad, big or small, you lose your real room. Before you discuss, before you are caught by discrimination or thinking mind, you own your room.

So if you find a true joy under some limitation, that is the only way to realize the whole universe. There is no other way for us to get an approach to the whole universe. When you exist right here, the whole universe makes sense to you. Before you think about it, it is important to give up your foolish discrimination, or foolish idea of freedom. In this way, we must practice our way. Why you practice zazen is to be filled with real

Bodhisattva spirit and real feeling of your being, which transcends our thinking mind, it is not possible to make your enlightenment happen to you. That experience may happen in various ways. You say, "big enlightenment or small enlightenment," but actually there is no small enlightenment or big enlightenment. After your death, do you need a big stone or small stone? It doesn't make much sense. Anyway, you need something, that's all. and It's better to have a smaller one, better to have a very narrow, rigid practice. It is easier for you to follow. If the rules are provided on a big scale, you may feel very good to see it, but you will find a great difficulty following that kind of complicated, big-scaled rules.

The rules must be very simple. The simpler the better, and the stricter the better. Actually it is so, but if we make it too strict, you will rely on them and you will just goof off. It is easy to follow strict rules: if you do exactly what your teacher says, that's all. It works, but on the other hand, you don't make much effort. So you should not be too big or too small, as Hyakujo Zenji said. Comparing various rules we had, he set up some appropriate, good-sized rules for us. That is how the Zen rules originated. And since then we have been trying to improve his rules according to the circumstances under which we practice our way. You have no danger in our Zen practice of being involved in small-minded practice. And you can trust our rules, because they are here now after the improvement of many great Zen masters. Of course I think we should improve, or we should have more appropriate rules for us, but the point is the spirit to follow, or the understanding of why we must follow our way, and why we must have some rules in our practice.

By now, after many centuries of being completely involved in the scientific world, we should be free from thinking mind. We have come to the point where we should find out our real self, giving up the superficial, universal self, which you can replace for someone's true self. We have enjoyed some medicine which is for everyone, but it will not help you so much. Do you trust some medicine for everyone? Medicine should be just for yourself. Universal medicine maybe better than nothing, but each one must have his own medicine. Buddha prescribed medicine for his patients according to the person. That is real medicine. But the scientific mind creates some medicine for everyone, to sell as much as possible. "This medicine is for everyone." Then everyone will buy it. But that kind of medicine cannot help people so well. Sometimes it maybe poisonous for someone. Scientific mind can provide something universal, but not for a special person. Scientific mind will deprive some specialty from each being, picking up some similarity and prescribing medicine for that universal similarity of many people. But right now, we should have our own mind instead of putting another big universal self on our head. Sometimes when it is raining, it will help, it will protect you, but in a place like California, it is useless--you don't need an umbrella so much. The more you universalize something, the more you lose the point of life. If you see something through a telescope, you may see many things, but is better to see them by your own naked eye. That is our way: not using something which will help you to universalize things. It is better to stick to one thing, rather than to try to understand many things. It is better to appreciate things one by one, rather than to put everything in your pocket. You will not see them in there, you know. It is better to pick one flower after another--this is

our way. We put emphasis on validity rather than universality. The direct effect on each one of us--that is our practice.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 71-02-07
