

Rev. S. Suzuki lecture
July 1966

In the last paragraph of Ashishoji (sp ?)...Ashishoji (sp?) is one of our scriptures compiled in (blank) period by various zen masters out of Shobogenzo. In this last part of this Shobogenzo Dogen says, "This mind itself is the Buddha. By awakening to a thorough understanding of this mind you will truly show your gratitude to the Buddha", he says, "and you should carefully think about who is the Buddha which is the mind itself." That is the last...that is the statement which is in the last part of Ashishoji (sp?). This statement is a quotation from Shobogenzo and there is...in Shobogenzo there is the fascicle called...titled SokuShinZeButsu. Sokushin is 'the mind itself, the Buddha'. Shkushinzebutsu, the fascicle six. And this is very important fascicle in Shobogenzo and very famous one. So let me explain what he meant by 'mind itself, Buddha'. I will interpret the original text literally.

The way which is transmitted from Buddha to Buddha, from patriarch to patriarch and obtained by them is the way which is called 'mind itself is Buddha'. However there is no such statement...there is no such word in India as 'mind itself is Buddha'. This word started in China but because of the misunderstanding of this word people...many zen students could not follow our way and they fell in the heretic understanding. Most people who do not understand what it means make it that by Buddha we mean the mind which is not enlightened in Bodhisattva mind is the mind which was transmitted from Buddha to Buddha. And mind which thinks...which makes some decisions, which memorizes something, which is conscious of many things is the Buddha mind...they think. This is the misunderstanding because of the lack of the right teaching.

What do I mean by heretic? In India there were heretics called (seni?). Their view of the way is the holy mind is within our body. How does it exist in our mind can be seen quite easily. The holy mind will know the suffering and pleasure, cold or heat, pain or

itchiness. This mind works without any obstacles, and this mind pervades everywhere. Within this mind things come and go, everything comes and goes within this holy mind. This holy mind is always permanent. This mind is permanent and this holy mind pervades everywhere. There is no difference in this mind whether it exists in sage or in commoner or in every sentient being, animate or inanimate. Even though there are some topsy-turvy views or ideas or functions in our mind when our mind resume its own function and true mind is clear and something which covers, which is on the mind, vanish. The original nature of the holy mind is always clear and always calm. Even though our body die this holy mind does not...will not be destroyed. For like a man who will escape from his house when his house is burning this mind is always clear and always holy.

Those who are aware of this mind...this mind is called the true nature of the enlightened one. This mind is called Buddha. This mind is called enlightened mind. This mind is in every one of us...in the deluded, in the enlightened; this mind does exist. Whether we are...whatever place we are this mind is something different from the place we are, from the things we see. This mind is always permanent although the things we see are not permanent. But if there is the holy mind all what we see will be the truth itself because all things we see...all the things this holy mind is always true...but although all what we see will be the truth itself because all things we see...but although all what we see is true it does not mean that the things we see are true. But it means the holy is always constant and always holy because they are not constant, because what the holy mind observes is not constant, that which is constant is the holy mind. Because of its constancy and because of its clearness we call it wondrous function of the holy mind.

This mind is called true self or original self or true nature or ontological existence. If we realize this true mind we come...we resume our true nature. When we resume our true nature we are called 'great one'. If we realize this mind we will never in the realm of birth and death, we will resume in our true nature. This is the only way to obtain

enlightenment. When this mind is covered we will be in the realm of three worlds or sixth world. This is the understanding of the mind of senji (sp) heretics.

This is about the heretical understanding of the mind. And our understanding of true mind is different from this kind of understanding. Here, in this view of mind... understanding of mind they emphasize the constancy of our mind which is always true... which is always in activity. What we see is not constant. The mind which see is always clear and constant. That is their understanding. But our understanding of mind is not the same. Our mind is always with things. Our mind is not something which exists besides something. Usually say, "I see something" Usually it means my mind see something. But according to Buddhism there is no such mind which sees. This is the difference. In heretical understanding there exists something which is called mind and that mind exists somewhere within ourselves. It will come and go, but it does not...it always exist. This kind of mind is the mind which is understood by almost everyone. Although this kind of idea is very common and usual understanding, it is not correct.

Our mind...by mind we mean...we do not mean some special substance or existence, but we do not say there is no mind. No-mind exists but no-mind is not some substance. It means...this mind we mean cannot be understood by thinking. That is the point. This mind is something which is unintelligible. Even though it is unintelligible it does not mean it exists or it doesn't exist. When we say it exists or it does not exist we are discussing about mind in realm or thinking. In realm of thinking we can say it exists or it does not exist, but how to understand our mind is not by thinking. It is deeper than our thinking. How we acknowledge our mind is not by thinking. Even though it is unthinkable, it does not mean it does not exist, but when we say it exists we do not say in the term of exist or not exist. This is the mind we mean. When I say it doesn't exist you will be disappointed. When I say it does exist you feel much better. This kind of understanding of mind is not strong enough. You rely on the intellectual understanding or you rely on someone who may say it exists. So sometimes the zen master will say it

exists and sometime he may say it does not exist. It is true. The mind sometimes exists and sometimes does not exist. Whatever you say the mind is mind. It doesn't matter whatever you say. Whether we believe in it or not is out of question when we put our faith...trust...absolute trust in the mind we mean. So we do not talk about the mind only. When we say 'mind' we also...it means...it includes or it means our attitude towards the mind. It is not just matter of the mind that exists or not. The most important thing is how we observe...how we observe the mind. Even though the mind exists if we do not see... or if we ignore it, if we cannot put our mind to it, it does not mean anything.

So that is why this mind is transmitted mind. Transmitted mind is transmitted way of observing the mind...how to work on the mind. This is the way. Mind is actually the way to observe the way, not just some thing which is permanent or not permanent, which is mortal or immortal. That is not the point. Whether we live in the mind or not is the point. So that is why it is called transmitted way. Transmitted way is mind-itself.