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Tassajara Zen Mountain Center
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This evening we observed what is called *Fusatsu*. As I explained last night, this ceremony actually started even before Buddha. And after Buddha, the ceremony more and more include more positive elements: just to observe—not only just to observe, to keep their life, human life, from evil spirits, observing some good, and acquiring some strength—and throughout protecting themselves from the evil.

Also, to attain the perfection of human practice, Buddha observed this ceremony. The form is merely what we must do, and more and more exactly. But must be nearly the same. But meaning changed little by little.

So if we study what kind of ceremony in Buddha's time—Buddhists observe, then we will find out various elements. Last night I explained about it. Better to see various kinds of flower in a basket. There is many kinds of flowers. Some of the flower is about the precepts—about our human nature, or buddha-nature. And some of them is to stop doing something bad. And some of them is about life style of Buddhists—like the last one: "Don't eat after twelve o'clock [noon]." This is the life style of Buddhists at that time. And we Buddhists, even though we eat three times a day, we have this kind of spirit. And when we chant and you read meal chant, you will find out this kind of spirit.

And tonight [unfolds paper], I want to explain Mahāyāna precepts in comparison to the precepts they observed in early days of Buddhism. Here—this is the precepts they observed in sixth day of the month—eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-third, twenty-ninth and thirtieth, or some time—yeah, thirtieth—instead of thirty-first day observed it. Thirtieth or twenty-ninth.

One is "Don't kill." The first one is "Don't kill." This is old precept. If you can see it in *Āgama Sūtra* or *Kihara* or *Daibuddhasara*. [Suzuki-rōshi cites three different *sūtras*. The *Āgama* (San., lit. "Source of the Teaching") is the Mahāyāna name for the Sanskrit canon that correspond essentially to the Pali term *Nikāya*. *Kihara* and *Daibuddhasara* are ...] In old scriptures, Precept Number One is not to kill, "Don't kill." Second is "Don't steal." Don't take—if it was not given to you. Don't be involved in sexual activity. Don't tell a lie. Those are so-called-it *busshō-kai* [*busshō* = "buddha-nature"; *kai* = Buddhist rules of moral conduct. Buddha-nature as large as the ocean. (See *Shōbōgenzō* "Busshō.")] Something about buddha-nature—precepts about buddha-nature.

The explanation of those precepts is to don't be dualistic—in one word, don't be dualistic. Because you become dualistic you kill something, you steal something, and you are deeply involved in sexual activity, and you tell a lie. And *fuakku* [Japanese name for the fifth precept, which prohibits intoxication and/or malicious speech. Suzuki-rōshi may have used the other term for the fifth precept, *fuinshu*. (Phonetically, it sounded like "fukushan.")] is about laziness, lazier, easier practice, like to drink or to take LSD. And [laughter, laughs] lazy [laughing] practice.

And the last one is about the life style. And sixth precept include various [prohibitions] not to use powder or perfume. Don't play with *geisha* doll, do you know? [Laughs, laughter.] There are lot of "don't, don't, don't," you know [laughs]. Don't use a beautiful hair—what do you call it?—comb or hair pin.

Student: Ornament.

Hmm? Ornament. Oh. And don't sleep in big bed [laughs, laughter]. That kind of precept.

If you kept the precepts they observed it is very interesting. Later the Buddhist precepts more and more became positive, and they put emphasis on from precept number one to four. "Don't be dualistic." Actually that is the purpose of Buddhism. If you just see each precept, it is still very dualistic, but—

In short, if your mind is calm and clear, you will not be involved in dualistic idea too much. And when you follow your buddha-nature, which is always clear, then it is not possible for you to do something bad. If you follow buddha-nature, you cannot do anything bad.

So more and more we started to put emphasis on positive practice—to do something good. So rather than to attain enlightenment for us, or rather than to practice for ourselves, we started to practice for others—to help others. And underlying thought is to help others is, at the same time, to help ourselves, because as long as we are involved in some good activity, it is not possible to do something bad at the same time. That is the secret of not to do something wrong [laughs]—because you cannot do two things at one time. This is our belief.

You say, "I don't know which way to take." But if you take good way, at the same time, you cannot take bad path. So if you only follow good way, good path, you cannot follow bad path. This is the secret of doing something right.

And in Mahāyāna sūtras we include three refuges: "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the dharma. I take refuge in the sangha." And this three refuges is actually basic framework of

Buddha's teaching and Buddha's philosophy. If you understand the three refuges—Triple Treasure, you will understand what is Buddhism. And you will understand what is Zen. The meaning of the three refuges is so deep.

So to be a Buddhist means to understand the three refuges and to accept the three refuges. Then you are completely Buddhist. So to explain about the three refuges is to explain whole Buddhism. The understanding of three refuges covers understanding of whole scriptures and kōans and everything. It is so wide and so deep. In Zen Buddhism, we tentatively explain the words, but it's the three refuges. And when you receive transmission, you study, or you transmit the true meaning of the three refuges.

Whether you receive the three refuges or not, the three refuges is nothing but the three treasures you have intrinsically. You have already three refuges within yourself. So it is again, study of yourself. "To study Buddhism is to study ourself," Dōgen-zenji said. The Buddha in the Triple Treasures is fundamental: the absolute first principle or you may call it buddha-nature or nothingness or voidness. That is "Buddha" in the three treasures. Buddha treasure.

And how Buddha—nothingness manifests itself—our realization of nothingness happen is *daizamma zai*—the law of causality. Whole universe—maybe it is not so, but tentatively we can think the voidness is something like whole universe. It has no limit. And which it has no [...] or no suffer or no hurt—no emotions [laughs]. Do you know? The top of the universe. Which is top and which is bottom? Even the earth, it is difficult to know which is top and which is bottom. If America is top, maybe Japan is bottom [laughs]. But Japan is not always [laughs] on the bottom. Sometimes Japan is on top and America [laughs] on bottom. No one knows which is top and which is bottom.

The Sixth Patriarch said, "I have something which has no front or no back or no top or no bottom." That is actually emptiness—the absolute being which include everything. And yet it has no form or no color. That is Buddha. It is the law of causality, in short. But it can be all the teaching and precept. After Buddha realized the truth—Buddha wrote about it, and that was a scripture told by Buddha—and who realized the voidness—Buddha was Buddha later.

And sangha in the original Triple Treasure is harmony of the voidness and somethingness—of voidness and truth. Truth covers everything. And where there is something there is truth, and truth and law of causality and voidness doesn't different. It is always in harmony—in complete harmony. So that is why we call it harmony—harmonious sangha.

After Buddha appeared, the people who followed his way was sangha, because they understand the law of causality in Buddha's teaching. And they could become one with the teaching—Buddha's teaching.

So the people who follow the teaching was called "sangha." But in original "Triple Treasure," sangha is the harmony of the reality. And later, after Buddha passed away, we have Buddha in *sūtras*, Gautama Buddha, wooden Buddha, or bronze Buddha. Or even a stone can be a Buddha for children [laughs]. If there is some stone like Buddha, children will think, "This is Buddha." So anything can be, actually, Buddha later.

And the written scripture—teacher, this is dharma. Nowadays it is dharma. And priest—the sangha is someone like you or like me. That is Triple Treasure.

So this is just brief explanation of the Triple Treasures. But you now understand—really understand this Triple Treasure and accept the Triple Treasure. You can be a great Zen master or real teacher of Buddhism if you just understand what is Triple Treasure. And this is one of the triple you accept when you become Buddhist. It is understood that you say, "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the dharma. I take refuge in the sangha." Words is very simple, but meaning is very deep. And this is the precepts we received first of all.

The next three is the Three Collective Pure Precepts. The first Pure Precept is precept which is the source of all good deed. That is the first. The next one is precept which include all good deeds is the next one. And the third one is the precept which include all sentient beings—the third one. It is rather difficult for you to explain it in just one hour. But some other time I may explain about it.

You must have already noticed that in each precept [...] precepts—the three precepts. There were some precepts which you cannot understand by your mind—by your thinking mind. The first one, Buddha, is something voidness. It is beyond your thinking mind. And the source of all the good—all the precepts, next one, is also something you cannot have any approach to. Unless you realize by yourself what it is, not by listening to dharma talk or not by reading, but by yourself through your practice. That is why we practice zazen. Zazen practice is source of all the precepts. So if you practice zazen, it means that you've got the source of all the precepts.

So to have good practice means to have good precept observation. Why it is so—is better not to think about. This is something to realize by your true practice.

Hmm. It is pretty warm, isn't it? [Laughs.] Wet [?].

I am just telling you the framework of the Mahāyāna precepts. If you really focus strict, I think little by little you will understand what you are... But we must have time to know the whole framework of Dōgen-zenji, like you see it, a map of the world. You will make a trip— anyway, you enjoy your trip and enjoy the mountains you see and the ocean you cross. But if you are always making trip, even by airplane, it is difficult to have whole picture of the world. That is why I am giving you a kind of outline with which you can enjoy your trip.

This map include various trip, too [laughs, laughter]. There is big trip in it [laughs, laughter]. Very big trip. And Dōgen-zenji's outline. Very big map.

The best map so far we have is Dōgen-zenji's *Genjō Kōan*. He explain every corner of the universe [laughs]. It is revealed over and over again. You will not be discouraged in whatever experience you have in your everyday life. Anything you experience in your everyday life makes sense, according to his *Genjō Kōan*. If you don't... What I am saying right now is something in *Genjō Kōan*. This kind of study is included in our precepts.

This kind of precepts in this life is very different from the Prohibitory Precepts. This is Mahāyāna—so-called-it Mahāyāna precepts in comparison to Theravāda, the first kind.

And last one—last precept is fulfilling Prohibitory Precepts. That is also explained by Mahāyāna teachers, especially by Dōgen in explanation of the precepts. How you really understand the prohibitory precepts from the life of buddha-nature we have. This kind of understanding of precepts is started by Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma's *Jū-jūkai*.

So how you observe precepts is to try to be non-dualistic and try to extend our pure practice to everyday life. That is the way to teach our precepts...

Hmm. Okay? That is brief explanation of the precepts. Would you give me some questions? *Hai*.

Student A: I wonder if you could explain a little about ... men and women?

Suzuki-rōshi: I started to explain it last night. I didn't know much bigger than that. [Laughter.] How about you and me [laughter]? We will study very hard. Accident, you know. ...what is woman, what is man. Don't say: "You are woman." Don't say: "You are a man."

[Laughs.] It is easy to say so when you fight. Supposed to be too weak: "You are woman." [Laughs.] "Shut up!" [Laughter.] You are man, and you are suppose to be strong and supposed to help me [laughs, laughter]. "You are man! And I am woman." That is part of —confusion arise.

If you say, "We are human," it is different—different, that's all. So let's do it. Then there is no problem.

Woman thinks they have some privilege, and at the same time men think they have some privilege [laughs] only because she is a woman or he is a man [laughs]. That is not realistic understanding, but that is just idea—idea of mine, and idea of human. In short, that is delusion. There is no such person as this woman or man.

Some Chinese scholar said, "White horse is not horse" [laughs]. "White horse is not horse." White horse, he say, but is not horse. "Horse" is some idea. White horse is the horse which was here. "Horse," he said. That horse can be white horse, black horse, and white horse. That is—the whole thing have in our mind. So there is a white horse. It is quite different [laughs] from the horse we have in our mind. The pony is not [laughs] woman, according to Chinese scholar. I am not a man. A man can be better person. But why is can be a woman. ...can be a man, so ... [*Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.*]

...creating problem. Man which is not actual man. Man which is just in our mind without knowing exactly what it is. We think we know, but not quite. So you will lose the complete cause of the confusion. You don't have any reason if you involved in dualistic mind—dualistic—your mind.

So in this way we must have general... *Hai.*

Student B: I don't understand the prohibition on sexual behavior.

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student B: I don't understand the prohibition on sexual behavior. On sexuality.

Suzuki-rōshi: Sexuality.

Student B: It seems to me that what it does then is that man alone of all the sentient beings that has not learned to be naked?

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] If your understanding is right, that is something which really exists. But most of the time we are addicted to that which is not real. That is sexuality in its bad sense.

Student B: Then why don't we prohibit the habit, not the act?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student B: Why don't we prohibit the habit, not the act?

Suzuki-rōshi: It is— [Appears to speak in an aside for a sentence or so.] We don't prohibit. But we—*ahhh*. [Long audible sigh.] We don't prohibit. But we should know what it is as much as possible [laughs]. As much as possible. Okay?

Student B: Okay.

Suzuki-rōshi: Some other question?

If we prohibit, if we try to prohibit it, then again, someone who prohibit it will be involved in sexuality. So we must be very careful when we read... That is why we have comment on things.

[Long pause, during which pages are turned. SR then appears to read a quotation.] "Our self-nature is pure and clear. There is dharma of non-attachment. Do not have attachment. Do not cling to anything. There is called not to be sexual." Do you understand? "Self-nature is pure and clear. In dharma world, there is nothing to attach to." Without arising—do not arise. Let it arise cleanly. Mind is—the precept of not to be (difficult to translate)—or not to be sexual.

When I was making trip—not trip, but *takuhatsu*, [Begging for and living on alms.] I did more than forty days *takuhatsu*. And I came across a gentleman. I was alone, and he is alone. And so we talked a long, long time in a small boat. He asked me whether we have some experience of *geisha-geisha-kai*. [Here *-kai* means to buy or hire.] *Geisha-kai* means to pay someone to enjoy *geisha*. That is *geisha-kai* or prostitution. He asked. So I said, "No, I haven't." He said, "Then you are not qualified teacher." [Laughs, laughter.] "You are not qualified teacher. Why don't you stay with me tonight? I will take you somewhere, some good place. Why don't you follow me?" I said, "You want me to study [laughs] something, but I don't think I can study it. We study Buddhism. Maybe good monk, if it is a purpose of going to *geisha-kai* house is study of Buddhism, it is not *geisha-kai* service—*geisha-kai* house enjoyment. I cannot enjoy if that is for study of Buddhism." And he said, "Oh, that's right. That is not my way of going—your way of going. It is different. So maybe better for you not to come with me," he said.

There is some difference. Looks like same. Not exactly the same. And the difference is big—huge difference. One is to study how not cling to. And other is how to enjoy clinging to *geisha-kai*. [Laughs.] Big difference. Study of non-attachment and who will enjoy attachment: big difference. We don't have to study about those things. Naturally, you will study... okay [laughs]. Instead you should practice zazen. That is much better. Okay? [Laughs.] I don't encourage you to study something like that. *Hai*.

Student C: [Much of question unclear.] Uh, well, if you have a kind of trauma [drama?] and it's not really pertinent to your everyday life, and an idea comes up to eat some fruit or something. [General laughter.] I don't know. [2-4 sentences unclear.] What is the best method of handling it? Chew backwards, ...on the food, or—[laughs, laughter]. [1-4 sentences] ...life style ...life style ... [laughs, laughter] How can I eat that?

Suzuki-rōshi: Zo! [General laughter.] Don't study so hard, you know, don't study so hard. Ten minutes, you know. Just don't be so serious. Just let it come, let it go. If there is something to eat, eat it anyway. And if you think too much, don't eat in the evening, you may eat a lot and enjoy your food. And if you cannot eat in the evening time, don't eat it. Next morning you will enjoy your breakfast anyway. There is not much thing to think about. Let it, when you sit zazen, rest something. Let it come and let it go. To do so, you have a kind of strength—not like this [probably gesturing] but big mind or—I don't know what you say. So better not to be so serious. It will be taken care of anyway by Buddha or someone else. *Hai*.

Student C: Suzuki-rōshi, if we break the precepts, what form of suffering will we experience?

Suzuki-rōshi: Grave suspicions.

Student C: [1-2 sentences.] Will we suffer because of it?

Suzuki-rōshi: Well, physically, first of all, you will suffer. That is obvious, you know. That is direct result, and if you do so, why you will feel bad is you will lose your reason of life. That is pretty difficult thing to accept. Maybe especially about women [laughs]. If you lose your original fight. So that is why we have the precepts: Don't eat after noontime. It is a kind of reason of life. The old Indian teacher had—reason of life is very important. Why you don't feel so good if you do not come to zazen is because you lose your way of life. And why you come back to the more domestic life again is—domestic way of life again is you, you miss everything like that you had.

Student C: What about for laymen? Should the precepts be adapted to their way of life, you know, they are involved so heavily in an outside world—very much involved in the—

Suzuki-rōshi: For layman—

Student D: —small mind?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Layman—there is precepts, maybe, still. Even laymen observe precepts that priest observe and monks observe. And that will give them some—not strength, but some release. Even though just once in a while they observe—if they come to monastery, and spend several days having same food and practicing zazen, that will be a great help. Even though their usual—everyday life is not so quiet. Mostly [laughs], layman likes much better to observe precepts than even priest or monks like. I don't know why, but it does not mean that layman's practice is better than monk's practice. But anyway, they feel very good. Much better than monks, maybe.

Student E: Is it possible to become attached to those precepts? Kind of bound to them. ... You can't always say, "No, I won't do that."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. Yes, but precept is not set up in that way. That is why precept is good. If you think something..., you will be easily bound by. But no one will be bound by precepts. It is difficult to be bound by the precepts. The more you observe precepts, the more you will have freedom from it. Precept is not something which you can stick to [laughs]. And our... is Zen Center. It is very difficult to stick to the same way as you stick to something worldly—in the same way you stick to something—you stick to some extreme. In China and also in India and in Japan, Buddhists call it "precepts," but layman like Confucius—Taoist or Confucian—call it "lay." Lay is the set of some behavior—how we should behave. Those kind of behavior is separate so that we will not go the extreme. That is the main point of Middle Way, *chū-yō—chū-yō*. [*Chū-yō* is a Confucian concept and *sūtra*. *Chūdō* is Japanese for the Middle Way. Suzuki-rōshi may have been referring to either term.] Middle Way.

It is different from Buddhist understanding of—little bit different from our understanding of Middle Way, but they also put emphasis on Middle Way or lay behavior.

So it is not possible to be dualistic as long as you are observing some precepts or some rule of behavior. And this is, maybe, I don't know Christian Commandments so well. But Zen, or in India or in Japan, we have this kind of culture, but—

If you have time, you can study about those things in comparison to Western culture. Okay.

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