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SUMMER SESSHIN LECTURE: 1 PM¹
Monday, July 26, 1965
Lecture D
Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco

Recently I find many problems concerning to religious problem, such as psychology or LSD or the problem of how to bring about complete peace. Those problems are most important problems in present day, I think. In our system of Zen—Zen philosophy—I'm not emphasizing philosophy, but when we have discussion, there must be some system or else our discussion will [not] result [in] anything. So I just want to present you some system.

As you know, our problem—the most important basic construction of culture may be science. Science is very important. And—but science just study or treat outward object, as a object of study. And—but—and science will result [in a] materialistic understanding of life. But whether our human being is spiritual or material is big problem, which has been discussed for a long, long time. We have no conclusion to it yet: We are [are we] spiritual or material [laughs]? Our mental function is just attribute of body, or our mental—spiritual function is basic function for human being. And this kind of problem is not solved completely.

But anyway, the problems which cannot be solved by science will be solved by culture of science. So the basic foun- [partial word]—basic—our [basic] construction will be science, and next one will be natural science, and next one will be cultural science.

In this science, there is—we discuss about what is truth, what is beauty, what is good, and, if possible, what is holiness. But it is rather difficult to discuss what is holiness—holy nature by cultural science. So the last problem for us is what is holiness? What is holy nature?

This problem will be solved with religious—religion. So we have four foundation—our culture has four foundation: natural science, cultural science, and—three foundation, maybe: natural science, cultural science, and religion. In religion, we discuss also what is our mind—what is our mind—whether it is material or spiritual, it is also our problem for religious study. And, of course, we discuss about what is holy nature. But we treat our mind not as a mind as psychology. Psychology—psychological study is to study our mind as a object of study. "Here is mind," you know, "which is universal to everyone. And what is the function of our mind?" This is psychology.

¹ According to a note in *Wind Bell* (1965, IV, No. 4, p. 1), this seven-day sesshin began at 5:45 am, Monday, July 26, 1965.

But religion—in religion we study our mind as our own—as our own. This is the difference, you know. My own mind—not everyone's mind [laughing]. I don't mind some other's mind, but we do mind my mind [laughter]. That is religion.

So science will bring you some universal truth, which is like a telescope. You will have a vast sight of mind which is universal, as if you see San Francisco from Tamalpais [laughs].² You can see everything in the—you can see the best sight of the San Francisco from Tamalpais. But that—that kind of study—of course it helps you, but [laughs] you will not be so interested in the science—your mind in—as a general na- [partial word]—general—your mind in general. We—our—the most concerning problem for us is what is mind. [Laughs.] What should I do with myself—with my mind is the most important problem. So—and religion only will give you the answer: What should you do with your mind? This kind of mind is the mind we—religious people is concerned very much—are concerned very much.

So you should have clear distinction from [between] psychology and religion, and from cultural science, and from natural science, or else you will mix up your—you cannot discuss properly. Dōgen-zenji had a clear distinction between those kind of study. Not only Dōgen-zenji, but also all Buddhists says there is no inborn sage or natural—natural Shākyamuni Buddha [laughs]. We are all Shākyamuni Buddha, but if you do not practice or if you do not train yourself, you cannot be Shākyamuni Buddha. You have hidden nature, but if you do not realize hidden nature, we cannot be Shākyamuni Buddha. To realize his nature as your own is religion.

Now we want to discuss something. If you have some problem with—some of you has problem. On that problem, we want to discuss how to solve the problem. And if you have some question in our religion or what I said, please ask me.

Student A: What do you mean by "cultural science"? I don't understand. Do you mean, like, philosophy?

Suzuki-rōshi: Philosophy, and education, ethics—those are culture—sociology, psychology—the culture concerned about mind—our mind, not materialistic side of our life, but spiritual side of—basis of our mind.

Student B: Do you mean "culture" in the sense of American culture or French culture or Japanese culture, or do you mean civilization?

² Mt. Tamalpais (2571 ft), a mountain just north of San Francisco in Marin County with a panoramic view of the Bay Area.

Suzuki-rōshi: Civilization, yeah. Not special culture, but culture in—in various countries, which is—is the studies of mind.

Student C: What about things like LSD?

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] LSD? LSD. I don't—

Student C: Can it help?

Suzuki-rōshi: I have no experience of taking LSD, so—but that is not so important, you know, problem at all. That is just like a, I think, medicine. So of course if you take too much medicine, it's [laughs]—it will not [be] good for you. But there is no objection to—in taking it, I think.

But what I am afraid of is they—they will mixed up with religion: LSD —Zen and LSD [laughs]. There is very, very little, you know, relationship or—it is quite another matter, you know—another problem. LS- [partial word]—problem of LSD and problem of religion is quite different matter. And—but actually, religious people may use it, you know. But when we discuss something or when we want to figure out the clear idea of LSD, we must make this point clear, or else we will, you know, we will have useless discussion. One is going this way, and one is going this way. And they are—they will have no chance to meet [laughs].

Student D: It has to be understood for what it is, you know, not—

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah, what it is. It is quite clear—

Student D: —like to criticize the [4-8 words unclear].

Suzuki-rōshi: —it is a kind of medicine, you know.

Student D: Right.

Suzuki-rōshi: It's—the study of LSD is the study of science, not religion. Non- [partial word]—what I notice is in America or maybe in Europe too, a great confusion—there is big confusion in religion and, you know, other culture.

Student D: In other cultures?

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. In thinking. In everyday life, you know, it must be mixed up, you know. Religion should use various means to help people. But the—if the leaders of religious movement do not—mixed up, you know, religion and other culture, it may be awful.

Student D: Where—where—where is the line drawn? [1-2 words.]

Suzuki-rōshi: No, there is no need to draw a line like LSD. You can use it. I'm not talking about "you should not use it," or something like that. How to use it, and who is using it? You are using it [laughs].

Student D: I have used it, but I'm not using it.

Suzuki-rōshi: But that "you" is problem, you know? Small "you" or big "You." [Laughs, laughter.]

Student D: I know. Who is using it.

Suzuki-rōshi: This is the most important point. If you do not know what is "you," to use something is, you know [laughs, laughter]—is crazy. So this point is very—very, very important. And this point is missing. So it is necessary to make this point very, very clear because almost all people mixed up many things. So they will waste their time a lot—not only waste of time, but also it is suffering [laughs] actually. Don't you think so?

Student D: I don't know. I have to think about it [sentence?].

Suzuki-rōshi: Some question?

Student E: This morning you—this afternoon³ you said that just the practice of zazen is not so good because you may be practicing for some [1 word]—

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] Yeah.

Student E: —I mean, a better [?]—anger or something like that. And then you said, "Then if you do this you will abuse your practice until it is mixed with other practices."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: And—does this mean that at some point, that a serious student maybe has to begin to take some peace from the scriptures, for example, or otherwise he may be in danger of—of mixing his practice which would, you know, [1 word]. It seems to me you are referring to some kind of true practice—

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah.

³ "Just practice is not so good, because you may practice zazen for sake of something. You will abuse your Zen practice until you mix pure practice with various fancy or wrong practice." —SR-65-07-26-A.

Student E: —that's in danger—

Suzuki-rōshi: Danger.

Student E: —I mean the danger of drawing away from it—mixing it all [?] up.

Suzuki-rōshi: By "danger" I don't mean you will be poisoned or [laughs]—

Student E: No, I mean—

Suzuki-rōshi: —you will go insane. Not that kind of danger, but you will not understand what is Zen, and you will make big mistake. So this kind of discussion is very important.

Student E: Well, how do you keep from making the mistake and mixing your practice? [2-3 words.]

Suzuki-rōshi: You know, you should know that—

Student E: You won't help me, then.

Suzuki-rōshi: No—no, no, no. I am—what I mean is, you know, what is the pure-most concerning point? What is your inmost request? What will appease your suffering or, you know, your agitation [laughs], or irritation? And how you can appease it.

Student F: Dōgen-zenji, I think, wiped himself with one hand and used the other hand to light incense—to put incense down. Isn't that correct?

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: He said that. If there's no—no space or time, why would he do that?

Suzuki-rōshi: "No space—" [laughs]—oh, what did you say, please?

Student F: If there's no space or time, as the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* says

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Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: —why would Dōgen make a distinction between which hand he would use for which activities?

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh, I see. This is good problem—good question. You know, this is very good [laughs].

"No space or no time," you know, means we thinks there is, you know—when we say "time" there is some—you have idea of continuity, you know: Time is something continuous, and space is something wide. You know, this is time and space—idea of time and space.

But time is not only continuity. Discontinuity is also time, you know. In the smallest particle of time, you—you—you can think in this way: You can form the continuity of time, adding smallest particle of time. This is continuity also. And actually this understanding is better. If so, time is continuous and discontinuous. Do you understand?

You say, "Flower grow—comes out in one week from birth." You know, it is continuously they [are] growing. But when you see the flower, you—you cannot recognize the growing flower. The flower is stop growing when you see—just see. You can't see—you can't—you don't see the movement of the flower. You cannot see even the movement of the hands of the clock. But it is moving. It is like a moving picture. It—moving picture is accumulation of small, you know, pictures. One after another those pictures come, [and] it will form some movement.

So that is what he meant: There is no time or no space. No time as you think, or no time—no space as you think. Actual time is continuous and discontinuous. And it is not even a time. It is actual growth in the flower—actual—the sun rising in east—from east and setting in west. This is the time, actually. So in this sense, he says there is no time or no space. What actually exist is our movement which moves in one whole existence. We are all moving, and there is some uniformity in our moving. That is actual time and space.

So when you do—when we do something, you know—when I say something, you are listening. And not only you, but also Buddha will listen [laughs] to me. So in this moment there is—even the—there is no need to say "time" or "space." When I say something, there is you and there is two. So we must not neglect what I am doing just now, and relationship between you and I, and I and Buddha.

Instead of emphasizing time and space, he [Dōgen] emphasize actual relationship which exist in this moment—just now. So that is why he is very strict with what we do—how we treat everything. We—you abuse something because you think that is some material—some permanent existence. So you—you will [laughs] abuse it. But actually we cannot abuse anything. If you want to abuse it, it is—it will create problem to you because there is no such a thing which can be abused. Everything is actually—everything is living existence which cannot be—no alternative way of—which do not have no alternative way of

expression. You know, when I say something and you are listening to me, there is no alternative [laughs] expression of yourself. For me, it is so. So it is impossible to abuse something.

But when we, you know, idealize something, and when we become attach to the idea of "you," I may abuse you, you know. I think it is possible to abuse there [?]. But it is not possible. When you do something which is not possible [laughs] you will have problems, that's all. That is why he says there is no time or space. Actually what exist is what you see, or what you do, or what you listen on this moment. So you must not abuse it, or you must not even to—try to utilize it. Just respect everything, and just treat everything respectfully. That is our way. Do you understand?

So our way is to—to do something in proper time, in proper way [laughs]. That is Zen, in short. And mind and object is one. Did you understand? This is good question, I think.

Student G: There have been some systems—some systems of metaphysics which are not strictly Western philosophy, meaning that they are Eastern, which try to explain—"not explain"—but try to make us understand our existence not as well as by work [as] by study, so that we have a particular chemical or physical understanding of any object and of our—of why we do things: for example, why we—why we adopt a proper position, why we keep our back straight. This is—was there ever a time when Buddhism used explanations like those, or has Buddhism from Shākyamuni on always been disinterested in—in analysis of things from a physical level?

Suzuki-rōshi: I think that is why you are interested in Buddhism. You have a good background to understand what is Buddhism. You know, you have very advanced science and various kinds of philosophy. And your achievement is perfect—almost perfect, I think, especially in natural science. This kind of—this achievement is very meaningful for us—for us Buddhist—Buddhists. But Buddhists will give you some inter- [partial word]—another interpretation from another angle, you know, in your achievement. We do not change your—what you have achieved. We believe in your achievement. There is no, you know, no room to [laughs] ignore scientific truth. The science developed by, you know, actual experiment—experiment after experiment, you achieved scientific progress. And you have—you have been—and you will continue this, you know, effort.

But that is, you know, scientific knowledge. We should know that, you know [laughs]. That is not religious knowledge. Religious knowledge is something different from that. To give some—another interpretation to scientific—science is religion. From an- [partial word]—to understand science from another angle is religion, without changing

the—your conclusion. We do—we do not doubt scientific truth. We accept scientific truth. But we will give some—another interpretation to it, without changing the meaning of—not "meaning"—without changing the conclusion of science.

There is many very famous parable in Buddhism. Water—for fish—water is their home [laughs]. For human being it is water, not our home. And for celestial being it is—water is some palace or something [laughs]. Palace, like Cow Palace⁴ [laughs, laughter]. So for human being, science is something different, you know [laughs]. For me [laughs], science is something different from the viewpoint of scientist. That is why even though—even [a] scientist [who] has very advanced knowledge in scientific way, they become very superstitious [laughs]. We know many people who are very super- [partial word]—we know many superstitious science [scientists]. You may say, "How is it possible for him to believe in such a primitive religion?" But some of them are quite superstitious. Science and his spiritual life is quite different for him. You know, scientific knowledge and spiritual understanding is quite different: two matters for us. Some question?

Student H: What criteria do we use for deciding what are the proper things and what the proper ways to do them are?

Suzuki-rōshi: Proper way? Oh. You know, when you say so, that is the question of ethics, you know. Now I am not talking about ethics, you know. Do you understand? For—so—what I can say now is for a person who understand what is my mind is no—there is no—there is no alternative way to take—to take. That is good. There is no "bad" for us who understand our inmost nature. For—in realm of morality there is two—two ways: good and bad. That is ethics, which is good. "This is good," and "This is bad." So you have to take good instead of bad: That is morality. But that is because you live in moral realm. But [in] religious life, there is no alternative. There is only—just only one way. If—when you become quite religious, you know, there is no —no other way than to take one way. Water does not come up; it always come down.

That kind of, you know, question—because we say "no good," "don't discriminate," you know, we Buddhists say "don't discriminate," "there is no good or bad." So that kind of question is quite natural question, I think. We do not ignore good or bad. So here you see the religion will give the life to morality. Religion—for religious people it is the pleasure to take good instead of bad. There is no alternative way. But for a moral mind, there is two ways which is good. And you have —you must have some measure, you know, of value. [Laughs.] This measurement will—how to make the measurement is big problem

⁴ A large convention arena in Daly City, just south of San Francisco.

[laughs]. The measurement for a woman will not be the measurement for men [laughs]. There is big problem.

So if there is no religion, you will make your effort to utilize morality, or to make some excuse in what you do. That is [laughs]—if there is no religion, that will be the—your effort. Not pure enough, you know. You are—you are just making excuse because our constitution says like this: "Oh, this is good, and this is bad." But when it is not convenient you will not say anything [laughs, laughter]. That is morality. Only you will have—you will be the abuse of morality, and abuse of law, and abuse of religion. Religion is very handy to use [laughs]. So if you say, "Shākyamuni Buddha says so" [laughs, laughter], even a stone will be a medicine. That is abuse of religion—abuse of Shākyamuni Buddha. That is not religion at all. That is, you know—I don't know what it—what it is. Not—it is not even science [laughs, laughter]. Some—some questions? We have 15 minutes more.

Student I: In the—in the manual for meditation that you in the hall, it says "Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student I: Why is that?

Suzuki-rōshi: Usually you are doing like that, but, you know, beginner will wonder what should we do—should he do with their tongue, you know. When you sit, you know, for the first time, your mouth will be full of water [laughs, laughter]. When your tongue is like this, your, you know, mouth will be filled with water. But if—when your tongue is like this, it's all right. If you do like this, try—what will happen to your mouth [laughs, laughter]. That is our pre- [partial word]—those are the idea of precepts. If we say "250 precepts," or "500 precepts," you will say, "Oh, my!" [Laughs, laughter.] "What a rigid religion Buddhism is!" But our precepts is something like that. What you are do—we, you know, make it sure—assure the—our conduct by study, you know. Actually, what you are doing is—what you are intuitively doing is our precepts. We do not force anything to you.

Student J: Sensei, do you think that the—that the yoga practiced by the religious people in India is very close to zazen? Do you know very much about it?

Suzuki-rōshi: No, I don't want to know it [laughs]. If I know it, I think I must say something, but—so [laughs]—I am afraid. If it is good, it's all right, but—. You know, it is idea, you know, it is not—yoga practice—not yoga practice itself, but how they—in what way or

in what purpose they practice yoga is the very important point. It is like medicine, you know. If you take it in proper way, it is all right, but if you rely on it too much—. So yoga practice is not only way [laughs] to help you. We should know that, I think. More question?

Student K: The book *The Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* by the Lama Anagarika Govinda⁵ compares point-by-point Hindu yoga with zazen posture—not going into all the special postures—Hindu yoga with Buddhist yoga. And he comes to the conclusion they're—the whole reason one does it is quite different and the—the background is quite different, and you end up with something quite different.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. I think so. Maybe. That is Buddhism, you know. The background or idea.

Student L: How could there be two truths?

Suzuki-rōshi: Huh?

Student L: How could there be two truths—how could there be two reasons?

Student M: [Apparently to Student L.] What are you talking about?

Suzuki-rōshi: Two reasons?

Student L: Yeah, two reasons: the reason for this and the reason for that.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Student L: There's a difference [?]

Suzuki-rōshi: In philosophical, you know, study there is always antithi- [partial word]—?

Student: Antithesis.

Suzuki-rōshi: Antithesis. [A few words off-mike with students.] Uh-huh. It is inevitable in philosophical study.

Student L: The appearance, yeah, that's the appearance.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student L: That's the truth.

⁵ 1898–1985.

Suzuki-rōshi: There is always paradox in philosophical study. It—it cannot be helped. And there there is truth, you know. Where there is paradox there is truth if you have eyes to see, you know [laughs]. But as long as you are confined in reli- [partial word]—philosophical study, you—you have no eyes to see though the paradox—paradoxical statement. Philosophy is good because it is paradoxical, you know. So we Buddhist use the be- [partial word]—paradoxical expression. It should be paradoxical, so we use—we apply paradoxical expression as philosophers do. And we do not think that is paradoxical.

We have one week discussion, so [laughs, laughter] it may be better to finish today our discussion.

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Bill Redican
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