

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
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This morning, I want to talk about our practice.

And here in America, something special is happening: that is our group. Our students cannot be categorized in the same way we define Zen student—Zen Buddhist in Japan, because you are not—you are not priest and you are not complete—completely layman. I understand it this way.

That, you know, you are not priest is easy to understand, but that you are not completely layman is—I think you are special, you know, people in our society. [Laughs.] Not hippie. [Laughs.] But something like that. [Laughs, laughter.] So I don't know what to say.

So—that is, I think you want some special practice, you know: not exactly priest practice, not exactly layman's practice. And—but we are on the way to have special, you know—to have some different way of life for us. That is our Zen community, I think—not community, but our group. And—and so we have to have some—some appropriate practice for—for us.

Before I talk about our special way of practice, I think it is better to understand—better to understand what is original—what is Dōgen's practice. He says, "Some may," you know, "attain enlightenment. Some may not," he says. This is, you know, the point I am very much interested in. "Some may attain enlightenment and some may not," what mean—which means although we practice same way, same fundamental practice, but some may attain enlightenment and some may not. It means that even though we do not have enlightenment experience, you know—experience, as long as we sit in proper way, proper right understanding of practice, that is Zen. The main point is to have right understanding of practice and practice our way seriously. And what is important point in understanding of our practice is—we say "big mind," or "small mind," or "buddha-mind," but that kind of, you know, words means something—something we cannot—something we should not try to understand in term of experience.

"Enlightenment experience," we say, but it is not, you know, some experience which we will have good—in term of good or bad. It is special experience which is beyond those feeling or a kind of consciousness. So we should not, you know, ask what is, you know, enlightenment experience. Even though you ask someone—that you asks that kind of under- [partial word]—ans- [partial word]—question means you don't know what is Zen experience—enlightenment experience. Enlightenment experience is difficult, or impossible, or something you should not try to

ask in your ordinal [ordinary] way of thinking. When you give up this kind of—when you are not involved in this kind of understa- [partial word]—this kind of way of thinking, you have chance to understand what is Zen experience. I want to, this morning—I want to make this point clear as much as possible.

We say "big mind," you know. "Big mind." Big mind is not something which you can experience [in] some objective way. Big mind is something which is always with you, you know, which [is] always on your side, not, you know, objective side—always subjective side, here [pats something]. So you—you see, you cannot see your eyes, you know. Eyes cannot see themselves. The eyes only perceive things outside: objective beings, not eyes itself.

So, you know, we cannot see the big mind, because it is always with us—here—right here. [Laughs.] If you, you know, reflect on yourself, that self, you know, is not your true self anymore. You project—when you think about yourself, you project "you" as some objective thing, you know. Do you understand? Your mind is there. And your true mind is watching the mind outside. So mind outside of itself.

When I discussed this point at Tassajara, after lecture, Peter [Schneider?] said, "mind out of itself." This is very han- [partial word]—very good, you know, interpretation of big mind/small mind: mind outside of itself. You know, mind is here, you know, and you project your mind there, and you say this is my mind, and that is self—so-called-it "self" or "small mind," a limited mind. When you understand your mind something like this or like that, you know, it is—you are limiting—you put limitation to the true mind, or you object- [partial word]—objectify your mind, your subjective mind which is always with you.

Why I say so is, you know—this mind is—which is always on your side, is not just your mind. This mind is universal mind, which is—which is always same, and which is not difference [different] from other's mind. It is big, big mind. And interesting thing for this mind is, whatever you see, you know, your true mind is always with it, you know. When you see something like this, you know, although you don't know your own mind, but when—at the moment you see something, your mind is here. [Sounds like he is tapping on the *nyoi* stick. Laughs.] This is very interesting. [Laughs.] Always, you know, your mind is always with things you observe—you see. So this mind is at the same time everything.

We Buddhist, you know, traditionally talk about this kind of mind and this kind of being which is always one with mind, you know. Usually you may think, "My mind is watching this cup," you know. Usually you say so. You understand: my mind is here, and cup is here, and I am watching it. As I [laughing] tentatively explained, you know, [laughing], my—my

mind is always with it. But this is rather opposite, you know.

Real being is something which is, which—which has two side. You may think this is mind, or this is cup—it is rather confusing. [Laughs.] But did you understand what I mean?

When we understand mind in this way, that is big mind, which is always with things. And subjectively speaking, it is mind which is always on this side, not there. We Buddhist—from Buddha's time, we Buddhist do not have any idea of material only, or mind only, or we do not say our mind produce things, or mind is a kind of attribute of materialistic being.

We always—in Buddhism, mind and body, or mind and material is always one, and we are talking ab- [partial word]—always talking about this, even though sometime we say "dharma." That dharma means, you know, mind and body being—or mind and material—spiritual and material being. We are always talking about it. But, you know, if you carelessly, you know, carelessly listen to it or hear it, we are—as if we are talking about some material and some spiritual being.

So when we say "material," or when we say "big mind," that will be version of it, maybe. Mind which is always with being, with objective being, or mind which is always with—on this side [pats something three times], that is true mind. So enlightenment experience is, you know, to figure out, or to understand this mind which is always with us, which we cannot see it.

So that is why Dōgen-zenji says, "Don't think," you know, "we will have—don't expect all of us who practice zazen will attain enlightenment about," you know, "this mind, which is always with us." It—it mean that if you think, you know, big mind is somewhere outside of yourself, then that is mistake. If you practice zazen ex- [partial word]—expecting something outside of yourself, that is mistake. Did you understand this point? Because the big mind is always with us.

If you try to, you know—when you try to attain enlightenment as if you see the bright star in the sky, "Oh! That's beautiful," you know. "This is enlightenment." [Laughs.] But that is not true enlightenment. That is more—for us that is heresy, you know. You, you know—you found out [laughs] something there which—which was—which is—object of yourself, you know.

So when you understand the enlightenment experience in that way, that is more—strictly speaking, that is heresy. You, you know, have idea of material only. Even though you don't feel in that way, but version of your enlightenment experience is exactly like that. There is something material only, or object of your mind exists there, and because of good practice of yourself, you could found out that bright star. So in this

statement, there is the idea of, you know, self. And idea of the objects. That is not, you know, how to seek for enlightenment.

When—the morning I left Tassajara, students has—had discussion. And someone said, being and doing, you know—we are discussing about our practice of, you know, eating and sleeping. [Laughs.] And we started to discuss about sex, but that discussion about sex doesn't work so well. [Laughs, laughter.] I thought it is impossible to, you know, discuss about sex—sex. Even though you try, it is very difficult—very difficult discussion. You will be involved in very, you know, endless, you know, discussion, because sex problem, or sex is—if you say "sex," whatever we do [laughing] is sexual activity. So to talk about sex means to talk about our life, to talk about whole Buddhism. [Laughs, laughter.] So I thought it doesn't mean, you know, to talk about only sex. [Laughs.]

If we want to talk about sex, we have to, you know, talk about—we have to discuss about what is Buddhism from the beginning. That is almost impossible to discuss. Too big problem. Actually, if you understand sex in that way there's no more sex problem. [Laughs.] No more sex because there is no—nothing to—problem—problem of sex is not any special problem. That is, you know, that is our—to—that is actually our life.

You say, "Oh, how beautiful this flower is!" When you say so, that is already sex. [Laughs.] We understand in that way. Our version of, "Don't be immoral," you know, means, "Don't say this is wonderful," you know. That is—our unders- [partial word]—our version of the fourth precept. I shouldn't be involved in this kind of discussion right now, so [laughs] I have to skip this [laughing, laughter]. Ex- [partial word]—I don't want to explain it right now—what I was going to say, by the way [laughing].

Doing and being. When we discuss about being, you know—being—we are already involved in something material only or something spiritual only. When we, you know, try to understand doing—doing is practice, you know, then our discussion is Buddhist discussion. When we discuss doing, doing include two sides of be- [partial word]—two sides of—include two side anyway: being and non-being, right and wrong, good and bad.

When you think, you know—you see whether I want to stay in bed, you know, one minutes more. On the other hand you say, "I must get up," you know, "right now, to practice zazen." That is more idea [laughs] of being, you know, being in bed. You are thinking about being, you know, your being in Zen meditation hall, and you cannot be two beings at the same time. So there is conflict.

When you understand yourself—who is ... *[Sentence not finished. Tape*

turned over.]

... then you think you understand yourself by doing, by getting up when you try to lay your head, or support your body by your, you know, arm, there there is true practice. You are right there. When you are thinking about your being in bed or your being in zendō, naturally your—your mind will be divided in two—split in two, and it will create problem. So someone said this is, in short, the problem of doing and being. I think this is very—he, you know, he had—when he said so, he had key point of our zendō life.

Why I started to talk about this point—about this kind of thing is—priest—as a priest, you know, I think we—at least we have to have deeper understanding—more accurate understanding about our practice. And we should have some enlightenment experience, at least. We should be, you know, not only able to—being able to talk about—about practice, we should experience, you know—we must have full experience—better experience of our practice. And for—for someone, you know, it is necessary to have—to put confidence in your big mind which is always with you. And you should be able to appreciate things, you know, as a expression of the big mind. In short, you must have some faith in big mind, which I explained.

It is—actually, if you understand what I said now, it is actually more than faith, you know. It is ultimate truth which you cannot reject. Whether it is, you know, difficult to practice in that—whether it is easier or difficult to understand or to practice it literally, you—this is the absolute truth which you must accept. And you must have anyway strong confidence in your big mind which is always with you, which you will find wherever you go. I think this is—if you, you know, have strong confidence, at—I think you are already, in its true sense, Buddhist even though you don't attain enlightenment. Your, you know, your practice will develop, and you have not much danger [of] being sick or being in confusion.

Mostly, you know, physically and mentally when we become sick, you know, it is lack of confidence in your self which is always with you, and [you] seek for something, or try to be something else. You know, when you are sick, you should be sick [laughs] because there is true you. You will find true mind at that time in your sickness. So, you know, supported by everything, being supported by everything, you just lie on your bed like this, you know. The bed will be very comfortable, you know, warm, nice bed. When you have this kind of feeling, I think your sickness is already maybe 80, 90% over. You are recovered already. But most people struggle, you know, in the cold bed. "Oh! I should—I [laughs]—I must recover," you know. "Tomorrow we have party, so I cannot stay in bed." So he may struggle. "I have a baby, so I must get well."

In this way, if you struggle in your bed, that is very serious illness. Because of lack of understanding of yourself, and because you don't understand what is "you," you become sick. I am sure—I am quite sure, most people is ill, not healthy at all. But when you do not think you are sick, you are healthy. When you think you are sick, you are sick. [Laughs.] That's all. You may have some opposition to this kind of statement, but this is very true.

So how—I want to help people, you know, sick people, mentally or physically. I wish I could give my, you know, my understanding to him or to her. But it looks like—quite—very difficult for them to understand, to—to put faith in themselves, to understand big mind. I think best way is to practice our way before you are involved in this kind of, you know, sickness caused by yourself, caused by lack of understanding of yourself. Especially, you know, people whose parents or grandparents had some special illness. They are always in fear of getting same illness which their mother or father or grandmother or grandfather had. This is terrible thing, you know. Even though you are healthy, mentally you are ill, seriously ill. You are always confronting with the fear of being sick. Whether or not it's—their parents are, you know, mentally and physically healthy or not, he will be sick if he has—if they have that kind of fear always.

So how to get out of this kind of fear is to practice zazen. And to get out of—or to get rid of the mind outside of yourself. And to resume to your practice, to your actual being and practice, to find out yourself as doing—someone who is doing something, who is always with everything—with Buddha—and who is supported fully by everything. Then you are quite safe. When you are safe this moment, it means that you are—in future you are safe. When this moment of yourself is not safe, next moment of you will be sa- [partial word]—will be in danger.

For us, you know, today—tomorrow is future of this moment [tapping stick], you know, nothing but future of this moment. So when you think you are in danger right now, you know, tomorrow also you will be in danger—for you, I mean, for you right now. So when you continue this kind of confidence in yourself: today will be all right, tomorrow will be all right, and always with—you are on the—on the track. When you lose this point, you know, that is—you will be lost, and you will continue this kind of dangerous life, and you will be in fear always.

So it is necessary for you to be able to be—get out of it in this moment, right now. You may say "It is not possible," but it is possible. Even in one moment you can do that. That means it is possible. That you can do it in this moment means you can do it always. So if you see this kind of flash of lightning in dark, fearful, you know, sky, "Oh!" that is it. That is your enlightenment experience. You have great confidence in yourself.

This is, you know, how to be a Buddhist in its true—true sense. The difference between layman or Buddhist is not big problem. Whether we attain—whether we have, you know, enlightenment experience or not is minor problem. So someone may attain enlightenment, someone may not. But they are all Buddhist.

I have been thinking about future, you know, [of] Buddhism in America pretty long time. And if we concentrated on this point, naturally this kind of problem will be solved. Anyway, you know, it is good thing. I feel in America the young generation has a great opportunity to find out the true way of life for human being, because in Japan or in undeveloped countries, they have to have—be—they have to be involved still [in] materialistic problem. Here in America you haven't, you know, this kind of problem any more. Maybe you have, because you reject it. [Laughs.] The people in [laughs] Japan, they have this problem—want of material, so they—always to gain it, that is problem. But you are rejecting it, rather. "No, I don't want any car. I don't want bankbook [laughs]. I don't care." "I don't care" is very good, I think. But there is no need for you to reject it. That is too much.

Anyway, I think you started Zen practice in best condition, and with very pure mind. So you will understand Buddha's teaching in it—as he meant, exactly. Something will happen to us anyway, I think. In—in maybe—I don't know when [laughs]—tomorrow or next year, I don't know—maybe after I—maybe I will see you from the—I will see you from the ground, like this. [Laughs, laughter.] I don't know when, but something must happen. It is very clear.

I didn't join the—you know, yesterday's peace walk, but I heard of it, and I was very—very much encouraged by it.

I think it is the time to start our practice in its true sense, forgetting all about robed person or hippy-style person [laughs].

Let's—*Gya te, gya te*—recite *Gya te, gya te, ha ra gya te*,¹ and join the procession, join our practice. Thank you.

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.
Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Judith Randall and Bill Redican (11/6/00).

¹ The start of the Prajñāpāramitā *mantra* in Japanese version of Sanskrit, recited at the end of the *Heart Sūtra*: "Gone, gone to the other shore"