

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
Sesshin Lecture No. 3:
NON-DUALISTIC PRACTICE
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Yesterday I talked about how to, maybe—two ways of practice: one is zazen practice under the guidance of the right teacher, and the other is how to extend our practice in our everyday life. And the—it—our teaching mostly—especially Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings—mostly directed how to extend our practice to our everyday practice.

The teaching of emptiness or teaching of interdependency—those teaching are to explain how, you know, from our practice which is non-dualistic—to be extended dualistic everyday life. And that was what I told you last—yesterday.

So in our practice, you know, our practice is not the practice to attain something, you know, but to start our practice from the beginning, jump—jumping into the non-dualistic pure practice. That is our practice. [Sounds like tape was stopped here and then started again.] Without, you know, realizing there is nothing to depend on and even ourselves—our physical body is transient, so we cannot depend upon ourselves physically and mentally.

And things exist looks like permanent, but it is not so. It looks like existent, but it is nonexistent, and that is true. With this understanding, we devote ourselves completely in our practice. That is our practice. Then your question may be what kind of effort, you know, you should make to practice that kind of practice of non-attainment [laughs]. That will be, you know, your, you know, question.

I told about it a little bit, you know. Our effort is not like some effort to achieve something, or to carry something or to run a race, you know [laughs]. It is not, you know, that kind of effort. The effort—mostly, you know, directed—excuse me—[adjusts microphone]—it [the mike] should be directed this way, you know—our effort [laughs, laughter]—not that way. Usually, you know [loud laughter: mike probably swung around toward students again]. Your effort is directed that way [laughing, laughter]. From inside to outside. But our effort should be directed this way, you know [laughs]—inward—inwardly, you know. To—to direct our effort inwardly means, you know, to have big mind, you know. If you have big mind, which is no outside [laughs] of it, there is no way to direct it this way [sounds like he is aiming mike away from himself]. It is not possible, because there is no outside of it. Whatever happen—things which happens is always happens within ourselves. That is why we say our practice is non-dualistic practice.

If, you know, when you direct your effort, you know, outward it means that your effort is dualistic. How to practice non-dualistic practice is let things happen, you know, within ourselves and without disturbing by it. Because things happen within our big mind, so our big mind couldn't be disturbed. Things which is going on—which are going on is, you know, always inside ourselves. That is so-called-it perfect acceptance. That we don't say good or bad means, you know, things happens within ourselves as a movement of big self. Then whatever the movement is, that is movement of the big self, so we cannot say good or bad. The—fundamentally, with this understanding, we practice zazen.

I already explained the idea of self or idea of being is not perfect understanding. So when we have right understanding of things, you have this kind of perfect understanding of non-duality too. But here is, as you see in *Fukan Zazen-gi*,¹ if there is slight, you know, mistake or misunderstanding arise, then our practice—the difference between our practice and true practice will be like heaven and earth. Completely different. We will be involved in—involved in a quite different practice.

This, you know, slightest mistake does not mean—no, when to hear some sound from outside, you know, or to be caught all of a sudden drowsiness, or to have difficulty in painful legs. But, you know, the difference between wrong practice and right practice, when you have, for an instance, painful legs, it is maybe rather hard [laughs]. Let painful legs, you know, be painful [laughs]. That is, you know, how you practice zazen.

In Meiji Period there were famous Zen Master called Nishiari Bokusan.² When he was—he was—what was the name?—anyway, epidemic, you know, and he—he was hospitalized, but he was still, you know, hanging some book from the ceiling [laughs]. Lying in his bed, he was reading kōan [laughs, laughter], and doctor said you must not read, you know. And he didn't mind, you know. "My mind is reading. Let it read [laughs]. My body is suffering. Let it suffer [laughs]. It's okay," he said.

There is—I think there is some suggestion, you know, how you control or how you practice zazen. Let it completely go as it goes [laughs]. Of course there is some technique, you know, which is very difficult to explain. Some technique, you know.

There is—in his time there was another great Zen master called Morita Goyū,³ who was very gentle. And the other Zen master was very short-

¹ *Broad Recommendation of Zen*, by Eihei Dōgen. His earliest exposition on Zen, written in 1233, shortly after his return from China.

² Nishiari Bokusan [also Bokuzan] (1821-1910): the most prominent Meiji scholar of the *Shōbōgenzō*. He taught Oka Sotan-zenji and Ian Kishizawa-zenji, eventually becoming abbot of Soji-ji and head of the Sōtō-shu.

³ Juko Morita Goyū was the 64th abbot of Eihei-ji. He is known as the "Double

tempered [laughs] Zen master. It was very good contrast. And he was, you know, a kind of person always calm and always practicing his way. Once his, you know—once he was crossing the narrow[s] between Honshū Island and Hokkaidō Island, and they met a big typhoon. And, you know, their ship almost wrecked and, you know, by wave. And almost all the people, you know, including crew, you know, get sick [laughing]. But he was practicing zazen. He—he didn't mind at all. He didn't get sick when, you know, all the crew were sick. And the captain came to him [laughing] and [was] amazed, you know, seeing a person who is sitting zazen in, you know, in a ship like a leaf in the, you know, ocean.

To have—to have this kind of practice, it is necessary to switch, you know, to switch your way of life completely to another channel, you know. *Shht!* [Laughs, laughter.] Because you don't do that, you know, you suffer a lot, and you—you will suffer from sticky mind [laughs, laughter]. You get into conflict. If you put it aside, you know, and see what will happen [laughs], nothing happen! [Laughs, laughter.] Because you do not, you know, switch your channel of life to the other, you have difficulty. That is one. Secondary, you know. After you could, you know, switch over the channel to the other, you should have—you shouldn't go back. That is—to switch one channel from the other is difficult. But more difficult thing is to continue that, you know, practice after switching over to the right practice—to the non-dualistic practice.

Mostly when we talk about difficulties of practice, we talk about the difficulty of continuing the practice—how to continue that practice. That is why we, you know, put emphasis on perseverance or endurance. Especially, you know, most part of our practice is directed to—to continue this kind of practice, but even though it is difficult to switch the channel, you know, but [laughs] if you sit, you know, so long time as six days, you have chance, you know, you have chance if you try hard. So if you realize, if you have—if you find out this is the way, you should find out the way how to continue it—how to extend in our everyday life. And the way to extend non-dualistic practice to dualistic everyday life was—is what I explained previous two lectures.

We—to switch, you know, over the channel is so-called-it, is, according to Dōgen-zenji, is *jikige shōtō*⁴—to say "*Hai!*" [Laughs.] That is the secret. When you are ca- [partial word]—when someone call you by name, "*Hai!*" [Laughs.] That is how to switch over the channel. If you think when you are called, you know—if you think, if you hesitate to say "*Hai,*" you will lose the chance to switch over, you know. If you do it quickly [laughs], you can do it like you catch fish, you know [laughs]. [Sounds like he makes a quick grabbing gesture.] If you do like this [laughing]—escape, you know. *Shht!*

So you shouldn't give yourself to escape from, you know, the chance to

Founder" because of his work in restoring Eihei-ji.

⁴ *jikige* (Jap.): immediately; *shōtō*: to agree, to admit.

switch over. *Jikige shōtō*. Even though you are not called by your name, you know, to observe things like a flash, you know, that is non-duality. If you hesitate, you know, more and more you will be caught by sticky ideas, and you cannot move about. And if you lose the chance, the more you will suffer from the sticky things [laughing]. And the more you suffer, the more the things can be sticky. So to do something in a flash of light is the secret. And if that is just casual, you know, success it doesn't make much sense. Knowing that what is dualistic practice and what is non-dualistic practice—and to—to say "this is it," you know, to feel confidence in your experience is necessary.

So even though you have, you know, because of some reason you haven't good practice, you know, if you know that is—if you know the—what is real non-dualistic practice, still your dualistic not-so-good practice is working.

To explain in this way is, you know, maybe not so difficult, you know—if you have little—a little understanding of non-dualistic practice it is not so difficult. But to continue it until you can do it without much effort is difficult, and you should be very patient, and you should continue same way of life for many years. This is also the difference between usual practice and our practice. We put emphasis on the habit we do something, you know. If you can do it without thinking, like a kind of habit, then we say—he is pretty good. When you reach that stage or that—that much training, then even though you say something—something mean, or even though you are very angry, you know, there there is some flavor [laughs] of non-dualistic practice.

That is so-called-it "way downward." The way upwards, after attaining—after having some experience of non-dualistic practice, and to continue it until you get accustomed to it and until you can do it without making effort. That is way upward. And way downward—to help others is sometime, you know, you should be angry, you know. But actually that anger is different from usual anger. The meanness you behave is not same as usual meanness.

So, in short, Zen is not knowledge, you know—something to study intellectually by reading or listening lecture, or to have some special experience. But important thing is to be able to continue it without making much effort. More natural ... [*Sentence finished. Tape turned over.*]

... the way upwards and the way downwards is to go further to the ground. To go back to our dualistic life and live with dualistic—live in the world of duality with some flavor of non-duality. And that is the practice after you get accustomed to our way. So [laughing] actually takes time [laughter].

I am saying—I don't say so to keep you in big building [laughs], you know, but if you are involved in hasty idea of practice—way of practice, you know, or if you discouraged and give up, or if you stop practicing our way when

you have some understanding of it, then you will not accomplish our Sōtō way. I said Sōtō way, but because this kind of practice is called by people Sōtō way [laughs]. Actually for Dōgen-zenji, there is no Sōtō school or no Rinzai. He points—point at many Rinzai teachers as a good teacher. Even though he belongs to Sōtō lineage, if he—his practice is immature he didn't accept [laughs].

There is kōan⁵—by—by—Tōzan-zenji,⁶ you know, Tōzan-zenji and—Tōzan-zenji is supposed to be founder of Chinese Sōtō Zen. And he and his brother disciple were taking a walk, and they met—when they were walking a hare, you know, cross the road. And Mishihaku,⁷ his brother disciple, they studied their way under the same teacher, Ungan Donjō.⁸ He is Sixth Patriarch—[counting patriarchs' names to himself]—Daikan Enō, Seigen Gyōshi, Sekitō Kisen, Yakusan Igen, Ungan Donjō—fifth generation from the Sixth Patriarch, so Eleven[th] Patriarch. Ungan. They were good friend, and the were walking. And hare crossed the road, and Mishihaku, his brother, said, "Oh, how swift it is," you know, "swift or alert it is!" And Tōzan started, you know, question and answer: "How swift is it?" [Laughs, laughter.] Tōzan asked him, you know, how swift is it. And Mishihaku said, "It is as swift as a commoner," you know, "became a minister" [laughs]. Common city people became a minister so swift it may take many, many years, you know, or many more lives [laughs]. But hare, you know, became a minister in a minute. *Shht!* [Laughs.] So—it is so swift. So alert. He is so alert, he said. It means that, you know, evil desire is good desire; Buddha and, you know, common people not difference—not different.

We are, you know, originally Buddha. There is no difference in between original—originally there is no difference between Buddha and we ordinary people. So without, you know—it doesn't take time, you know, for us to become a buddha because we are originally Buddha [laughs]. That is non-dualistic practice. Swift, you know. There is no need to make effort because we are originally buddha. When we think so, it is so.

And Tōzan said, you know, to him: "Oh, you are—you look like a great Zen master, but what you said was very slow [laughs], very dull. I thought you are a greater Zen Master," he said. So his brother asked back, "Then how swift is it, you think?" you know, he said. And Tōzan said, "Old, old hairpin," you know, "given by mother"—he didn't say so elaborately—"old hairpin and comb—beautiful old hairpin and comb was broken" [laughs]. "Was broken," he said. Do you understand? [Laughs, laughter.]

According to Tōzan-zenji, you know, that was much swifter than a

⁵ *Book of Serenity*, Case 56: "Spiritual Uncle Mi and the Rabbit."

⁶ Tōzan Ryōkai (Dongshan Liangjie): 807-869.

⁷ Referred to in the *Book of Serenity*, Case 56, as Ch'an Master Sengmi of Shenshen in Tan Province.

⁸ Ungan Donjō (Yunyan Tansheng): 780-841.

commoner to be a minister in a minute. That is the way downward [laughs]. To be a, you know, beautiful—to be a minister is way upward, and to—to be a, you know—to be a broken treasure which no one pay attention to it is, you know, much swifter way. To, you know—it is for him—if that is possible, you know, to go up and to come down is very slow. So from the beginning, you know, to go directly to the common, you know, world is swifter [laughing]—shortcut, without going up and down. *Shht!*

Anyway, you know, even though they are beautiful comb and hairpin, anyway it will be broken down by children, by grandchildren. So it may be much better to be broken hairpin from the beginning, so you don't care—you don't care what they treat it. There is no need to say "Be careful!" [Laughs, laughter.] "Keep them out of the children," you know. There is no need to say so. So that is much better [laughs]. Tōzan said "old hairpin and comb."

I want you to, you know, understand our way in this way. We have now many new students who is involved in hasty [laughs] way of practice. Many people, you know, I think may ask me "how to practice zazen." [Laughs.] "I have too many ideas. My mind [is] confused. How," you know, "to get out of it in our practice?" But that is not, you know, so easy. It is difficult to tell you how, and—but if you continue your practice, you will have time to know what it is.

There were one—one more things—one more thing which I wanted to tell you, but I forgot. [Laughs, laughter.] Maybe better to forget. [Laughs, laughter.] And this will be—tomorrow perhaps Katagiri-sensei will continue this lecture. [Laughs, laughter.] So he may tell you, you know, what it was. I thought it was something which is very, you know, difficult, you know, to tell you. Or which is something which—it was something which I don't want to tell you. [Laughs, laughter.]

Thank you very much.

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Checked against tape and made verbatim by Dana Velden and Bill Redican (9/28/00). Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.