

In the first instruction of ten instructions in Gakudo-yojin-shu

December 17, 1966

One-Day Sesshin Lecture: Saturday 1 PM, Lecture A

In the first instruction of ten instructions in Gakudo-yojin-shu,¹ Dogen Zenji emphasized to arise the way-seeking mind. And way-seeking mind, according to him, is the mind to have direct feeling of evanescence of life. When we feel the evanescence of life directly, we will not have any more ego-centered idea. And our practice will be quite pure and strong. And in each moment, we will do our best in our practice. That is the most important point in our way.

And in the second instruction, he emphasized the immediate response to the teaching. And according to him, even listening to the teaching is the practice—not only zazen practice. It is not actually that after you hear the teaching and practice zazen you attain enlightenment. To attain enlightenment and to practice zazen and to hear the instruction is one, and the three take place simultaneously. That is his understanding here.

So he emphasized training when encountering the true law. To meet the true law is also a part of training. It is the training itself. That is what Dogen Zenji meant. But usually in Buddhism, we have an order. To hear, we say *mon-shi-shu*: *mon* is “to hear”; *shi* is “to think”; and *shu* is “to practice.” This order does not happen to us one after another, or one by one. It happens simultaneously. This is a very important point.

And today we will continue his instruction and start with the third instruction of Gakudo-yojin-shu:²

The Need for Entering Enlightenment through Constant Practice.

Ordinary people think that riches stem from study. The Buddha says, however, that enlightenment dwells within training. I have never heard of anyone who came on riches without study or who gained enlightenment without training.

“Riches” here it says, but it is a “fief” or stipend. You know, in ancient times, someone—according to his capability—may have received some land—not exactly land, but some [living?] from the land. That was the old system, especially in the feudal age in Japan. So, ordinary people think that a fief stems from study. Buddha says, however, that enlightenment dwells within training. I have never heard of anyone who had a fief without study or who gained enlightenment without training.

And the next paragraph:

It is true that training differences exist—between belief and law, between abrupt and gradual. Yet one attains enlightenment by training. It is true that methods of study differ. Some are shallow or deep; others, sharp or dull. Yet one gains a fief by accumulated study. All this does

not depend on the superiority or inferiority of kings or on the lack of plenitude of luck.

It is true that training differs. There are many kinds of training, even in Zen. Here he refers to the belief and law. It means that according to the people, Buddha gave teaching in an appropriate way.

And in Buddhism, we have three periods,³ the period of right law, the period of imitative law, and the last period. So in the period when Buddhism was very powerful, there may have been someone who really attained enlightenment. So there were—according to some Buddhist thought—in the first period, which was five hundred years after Buddha's passing away, there was, they thought, the true law, and people who practiced right practice, and people who attained enlightenment actually as Buddha did.

And that was five hundred years after Buddha passed away. But some said one thousand years [laughs] after he passed away. One thousand years after he passed away was the period of right law. And the next one thousand years was the period of imitative Buddhism, when there were no enlightened persons, just people there just imitating Buddha [laughs]. That is the second one thousand years. And the third one thousand years, they have just teaching: no practice, no enlightenment. That is the last period there is. Some Buddhists believed in those three periods.

But some say the first five hundred years was the period of right law. The second five hundred was the period of imitative Buddhism, and the third five hundred is the last period. And the last period will continue ten thousand years, and Buddhism will vanish. When Buddhism vanishes, Bodhisattva Miroku [Maitreya] will appear instead of Shakyamuni Buddha. That is the story.

The Kamakura Period,⁴ when Dogen appeared, was the beginning of the last period. But he did not believe in those three periods. He thought if you practice the right way, right practice, enlightenment is there. So whenever we practice zazen, there is Buddhism. And there is no difference between first, second, and third period. So for him it was quite ridiculous to believe in the three periods. He did not believe in the three periods. This idea shows the relationship between dharma and people who believe in it, or relationship between teaching and people.

People, you know, may be divided in three periods: people who were with Buddha, people who were born long after Buddha passed away, and people who were born thousands of years after Buddha. So this relationship is about the people who believe in Buddhism, or kinds of people who believe in Buddhism. So “belief” means the people who believe in it. And “law” means the teaching. So between belief and law, there were various kinds of understanding and practice. So the understanding of the relationship between law and people who believe in, there may be various sects and various practices in Buddhism. So he briefly says:

Between belief and law, between abrupt and gradual.

After the Sixth Patriarch,⁵ as you know, there were two schools: two outstanding—Zen was divided in two. One is gradual, and the other is sudden. The Sixth Patriarch and his disciples

were called “sudden school.” And disciples of Jinshu,⁶ who failed to receive transmission, were called “gradual school.” But this is not true too. In the Platform Sutra, as you know, the Sixth Patriarch denounced the gradual school. But that was not true. That statement was added long after the Sixth Patriarch passed away. And there is no difference between gradual or sudden. They are all one whole school.

But after the Sixth Patriarch, 250 or 200 years after, some of the hasty-minded Zen disciples denounced the disciples of Jinshu and compiled the Platform Sutra. So people at that time thought there were two schools in Zen [laughs]. But there are not two schools. We should be gradual and sudden school. Why we are sudden school is moment after moment we have enlightenment. When you practice zazen, there is enlightenment always. So we are sudden school. But if you do not continue it, that is not right practice. So [laughing], as long as you continue it, that is gradual school. Sudden and gradual: that is our study. So there are no particular schools which are called “sudden school” or “gradual school.” This is a big mistake, but some people think in Zen there is gradual school and sudden school.

Yet one attained enlightenment by training.

There are many ways of understanding of Buddhism. And there are various practices in Zen, but:

One attains enlightenment by training.

Training is necessary. And without training, you cannot attain enlightenment.

It is true that methods of study differ. Some are shallow or deep; others, sharp or dull.

People say “he has a shallow understanding of Buddhism,” or “deep understanding of Buddhism.” But even if they have a deep understanding of it, if they do not practice it, it means nothing.

Others, sharp or dull.

“Sharp people” or “dull people,” you may say, but in our practice there are no sharp people or dull people.⁷ When you stop your mind [laughing], who is clever and who is dull? There is no difference. Because you have wrong understanding in our practice, and remain in intellectual understanding, you think sharp ones will attain enlightenment faster [laughs]. For dull ones it will take a long time. But that is not true either. There are many and many famous Zen masters who were [laughing] very dull [laughter]. Even in Japan there are many of them [laughter]. It is not a matter of clever or dull.

And in Buddhism, good—*jokon*—we mean—*jokon gekon*, we say.⁸ *Jokon* is people who will easily understand Buddhism or will attain enlightenment quicker. *Gekon* is not so; Buddhism is not fit for those people. Those people are called *gekon*. *Jokon* does not mean “clever,” but

because of cleverness, it will take a longer time to attain enlightenment. So cleverness is one of the barriers [laughs]. So clever people are not *jokon*. [Laughs.] Do you understand? So, you may say “dull,” but dull does not mean—here it says “dull,” but this is not an appropriate translation. “Suitable people to Buddhism” is *jokon*.

If we have not met the right teacher, we cannot study. That is one difficulty. Even though we met him, if we do not study, because of some deficiency, that is another difficulty. And clever people—cleverness is one of the three difficulties [laughs, laughter]. And this is very true [laughs].

Yet one gains fief by accumulated study. All this does not depend on the superiority or inferiority of a lord or on the lack of plenitude of luck.

It depends on its own practice. Even if the lord is rich [laughs] or good, if you do not study you will not get anything from him. That is what he meant.

If riches can be gained without study—if fief can be gained without study, who can transmit the method by which a superior ruler knows how to control or ruin a nation?

If we do not practice, it is impossible for us to bring Buddhism into realization.

If enlightenment can be gained without training, how can we perfect the teaching of the Buddha? Who knows delusion and enlightenment?

Understand that when you train within the delusive world, full enlightenment is already there. When you realize that boats and rafts are like yesterday's dream, you forever abandon the old view that bound you to the sutras.

If you practice it, Buddhism is there, and enlightenment is there. So, what was written in scriptures is like an old boat by which you can cross. But people just believe in what was written in scripture, and believe in the three periods of Buddhism, and ignore the practice. And even practicing it, you are expecting something after practice. Then those practices are daydreams or an old boat by which you came across. [Laughs.] You should forget all about old boats. “Old boat” means sutras.

You forever abandon the old view that bound you to the sutras, when you realize that boats and rafts are like yesterday's dream⁹—because you have enlightenment there.¹⁰

The Buddha did not force this. It comes from the effort of those who seek the way.

Buddha did not force anything on us. Even if he forced something on us, if we do not practice it [laughs], there is no Buddhism for us. Buddha did not force this. It comes from the effort of those who seek the way.

Training invites enlightenment. Your own treasure does not come from the outside. Enlightenment comes into its own with training. How can enlightened action leave any traces? If we look back on training with enlightened eyes, we see no dust. If we look back on training with enlightened eyes, we see no dust. Looking for traces is like trying to stop a white cloud ten thousand miles away.

“If you look back on training with enlightened eyes, we see no dust.” “Dust” or “stain” means dualistic idea. So if you look back on training with enlightened eyes, we see no dust—we have no dualistic ideas. Or, because you have dualistic ideas, you cannot see the enlightenment in your practice. That is what he meant.

Looking for traces is like trying to stop a white cloud ten thousand miles away.

You cannot stop a white cloud which is ten thousand miles away. But looking for traces, “What is enlightenment?” And, “This is enlightenment,” or “That is enlightenment.” “My enlightenment is like this,” and “My master's enlightenment like this.” And “This is the enlightenment.” “That is not the enlightenment.” If you try to see enlightenment in this way, the enlightenment is ten thousand miles away. When you just practice with sincerity, there is already enlightenment. So, if you have enlightened eyes, you will see the enlightenment on each moment. Even though [laughing], you do not think your practice is good, enlightenment is there. And some day, you will find out what you have been doing [laughter]. But now, maybe, you are pretty tired of sitting. You may be sleepy sometimes, and you think there is no enlightenment in our practice. That is because you have no eyes to look upon yourself. But even though you cannot see it, there is enlightenment.

Anyway, as long as you practice, you have no reason why you should stop practice [laughs]—why you should give up. There is no reason. We are completely caught by zazen [laughing]. Completely caught by it. You can stop it after one or two days, or one year or two years. Or you may think, “I shall not practice zazen any more as long as I am alive.” But still you cannot get out of it. You are still in zazen. You cannot escape our zazen, and you have no reason to. This is—what is zazen. You think you can, that's all. But actually you cannot.

If you step on the enlightenment, we cannot step on even a speck of dust.

If you try to step on the enlightenment, you cannot step on it. You do not step on even a speck of dust. Enlightenment is not something to step on. So even though you try to do it, you cannot step on it.

If you do, heaven and earth fall apart. Here, if we return, we will transcend even the status of the Buddha.

If we return—“return” means to be beyond our consciousness—conscious world, or even pure conscious world. We say we return. Return means “to go home.” Our home is in pure consciousness, or unconscious world. That is our home. And our everyday activity that we work

in the conscious world means to go out of it, and to work on the outside [laughs]. So to return means to go back to pure consciousness or direct experience.

So, he says “if we return.” We say, *taiho joto*. *Joto* means to have direct transmission. *Taiho* is retreat, retrogression. *Taiho*. Not go on, but go back.

So this expression is very negative, from the viewpoint of bodily gaining idea. But this viewpoint—this word is a very positive word. *Taiho joto*.

If we return, we will transcend even the status of Buddha.

It means there is no Buddha even. When you get beyond the conscious world, and when you are in pure consciousness, there is no Buddha even. That is our practice.

Anyway, it may be pretty difficult to understand what he really means, but if you practice hard and seek for the truth, then you will find out what does he mean.

Thank you very much.

¹ Points to Watch in Buddhist Training, a fascicle written by Dogen in 1234.

² Suzuki is reading from *Gakudo-yojin-shu*, Section 3, in Reiho Masunaga (Ed. And Trans.), *Zen for Daily Living*, Tokyo, Shunjusha Publishing, 1964, pp. 56–72.

³ Shozomatsu: The three periods after the death of Shakyamuni Buddha: shobo (righteous law), zobo (imitative law), and mappo (last law). There are at least four views on the length of shobo and zobo in Zen literature (see, e.g., *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 299). See also Sandokai Lecture III, SR-70-06-01.

⁴ The period from 1192 to 1333, during which the Kamakura shogunate governed Japan.

⁵ Daijan Huineng (Daikan Eno): 638-713.

⁶ Yuquan Shenxiu (Gyokusen Jinshu): 605?–706. Dharma heir of Daman Hongren. Founder of the Northern School of Chan Buddhism. (See *Denkoroku*, Ch. 34.)

⁷ See also the Sandokai lectures (e.g., SR-70-05-30).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Suzuki-roshi reversed the order of the clauses in this sentence.

¹⁰ Possibly a reference to a prior line: "Understand that when you train within the delusive world, full enlightenment is already there."

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