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AUGUST SESSHIN, 1969, WEDNESDAY.

I think you are facing actual problem in your zazen practice. The worst one may be the pain of your legs, maybe. It is some, not secret, but it some certain way to sit in pain. Because it is so direct that you have no time to think of some way, you know. Before you think...it comes, and you are involved in the pain. But that is so-called-it...that you are involved in the pain immediately means that your way, your way of life or your attitude towards your life is not well-trained.

For instance, if you, I think some of you must have this kind of experience...if you are hoping to fall from, for instance, from the tree to the ground, the moment you leave the branch you lose your function of the body. But if you don't, there is pretty long time before you reach to the ground. And there may be some branch, so you can catch the branch or you can do something. But because you lose the function of your body, before you reach to the ground, you may lose your conscious.

But in zazen practice, first problem you will face will be the pain. Even for Japanese people who are sitting always on the floor, this problem of the pain. But how you endure the pain is, as I always say, to have...not to lose your power right here, (*hara*) and free your legs from pain, having more strength here. And this is, this kind of way, this way will be applied for various problem you have. For instance, when you are about to be angry, you shouldn't be involved in the anger immediately, you must have time before you become angry. So we say, count to ten before you are angry...; your anger will not come while you are counting: one, two, three, four.

My cough is same thing. You know, if I have some strength here, (*hara*) I don't cough. Even though I cough...it is not so bad. But when I laugh or when I am excited, in other words when I have no preparation in my tummy, I immediately cough. My doctor said: "Nothing wrong with your throat. Maybe that is some nervous cough." So I, I was very ashamed of being so nervous as a Zen Master. So I decided to conquer the cough. Before I didn't matter so much, but after doctor said; "Nothing wrong with your throat. If you cough, let your wife collect ten cents each time." He said so. So I am, I am trying to have always some power here. But when it comes, it comes so suddenly, so I have no time to prepare for it. My cough is good, good practice for me.

That you have some problem or difficulty in your practice, is, I think, very good thing. It is much easier to practice zazen without any problem. If you have some problem, you have some excuse to work on it, instead of *shikan taza*. *Shikan taza* is actually not so easy. If you are supposed to practice *shikan taza*, maybe it is pretty difficult thing. It is difficult to continue it. For a while you can do it, you know. Five minutes, ten minutes, you may be able to do it, but without cessation, to continue *shikan taza*, is pretty difficult.

We say "selflessness." "Selflessness" is...to say just, to explain what is selflessness is, is not so difficult, but actually what it means is not something to explain, but something to actually practice it or attain it. The state you must attain, although there is no such "self," no such thing as self. We have no self. Originally we have no self. But we feel as if we have a self. And we see as if everything has its own self-nature. But there is no such thing as self-nature. You may say water has its own nature and iron has its own nature, but that nature is conditioned by many factors. That is why water is flowing, iron is hot. So, as Buddha said: "All constituents objects have no self...no self-nature." The nature is...Universal Nature takes some particular way of function under some condition, that's all. So there is no such thing as, as self-nature.

But although, although there is no self-nature, there is some rules. The fundamental rule is rule of causality. If there is cause there is effect. That is the immutable truth. And that is, maybe, the only, only truth we can figure out. The rest of the truth, truth is...there is no special truth. To explain in this way is not difficult, and whether, whatever you feel about it, even though you say there is self-nature...but there is no self-nature. That is very true. Excuse me. Van you hear me?

So there is two, two ways of understanding about self-nature. Self-nature which exist and no self-nature as a ultimate, ultimate truth. And no self-nature as a goal of practice, you know. For human beings, unless we strive for, unless we make a great effort, it is difficult to realize the self-nature...no self-nature. Even though there is no such thing as self-nature, for us, I don't know why, it is necessary to practice and to attain no self-nature. It is, for us it is something to attain. That is why we practice zazen you know. By zazen we can realize...or realization of self, (I mean) no self-nature, will appear, will take place. Without zazen, even though you know that we have no self-nature, it doesn't work. That is why we practice zazen. And intellectual explanation of no self-nature is to give you some confidence in our practice, to point out the possibility of attaining no self-nature. Or even though you don't attain it perfectly, if you...you will find out...you will have some confidence in your practice. That is, we have teaching for...we have various explanation for zazen practice.

And you may ask, then, after, after we realize...or realization of selflessness happen to you, what, what will be your way of life? If you think something...after attaining non self-nature you will have some, some wonderful feeling or some special power, that is also a mistake. Nothing will happen. If nothing happens, why you make such, such effort? With pain. Here there is, there is interesting story. Here is some interesting or famous koan.

Do you know the koan of Yakujo..."Wild Fox and Yakujo?" Yakujo was the famous, famous Zen Master, as you know, who established special precepts for Zen monks. Before Yakujo, Zen monks were practicing at some other temple, some temple which belongs to mostly Precepts School...Precepts Master were living. There they were practicing zazen, as you have been practicing zazen at Sokoji...because they have, they haven't their own temple. And the observed mostly Indian precepts. But Yakujo established a monastery and they, he set up monastic rules, like Buddhist...like we

have precepts. Like Buddha set up precepts. And he, one day, everyday he was giving lecture. One old man always came and listened to the lecture. But one day he didn't leave after, after lecture. So Yakujo asked him: "Why do you, why don't you go back to your room?" And the old man said: I, in many hundred of years, before you come to this temple, I was a resident priest of this temple. And I, when I was asked, "Is it possible to be free from the truth of causality: if you do something good you will have good result; if you do something bad you will have bad results. This is rules of causality in morality?" And there must be various truths or theory...and, or you may say this is truth of karma. "Is it possible to be free from karma? To be free from truth of causality?" Someone asked him, and he said: "Yes. It is possible. And that answer was not proper, so I reincarnated in the fox and I reincarnated fox again and again, about five hundred times. And I cannot, now I cannot be, I cannot get free from the karma. Because i said something wrong."

And the old man asked...the fox actually, in disguise...fox asked: "What will be the right answer?" And Yakujo said: "Right answer will be, 'You will not...you cannot be free from karma. That will be the right answer.'" And at that time the fox attained enlightenment. And next day he didn't, the old man didn't come to the lecture, amazed. "Who died?" At that time, Buddhist didn't take funeral service for someone else. They take, they took funeral for Zen student only, or teachers only. "When no one dead, you know, why do we have funeral?" But Yakujo said: "Go back. Go to the mountain, back of the temple." And they found dead fox in the mountain. And they had big funeral for him.

This is the story. An since then we have, we made it as one of the many koans. To be free from karma is one. And not to ignore karma. That is next: two. We have two. But what do we mean by "we not ignore the truth, or truth of causality?" And, you know, to be free from karma, without ignoring karma, and to get free from karma, what will be the way? After you attain enlightenment, you, you, your way, still you should follow the truth of karma or truth of causality. You cannot ignore the truth. But you should not be caught by it. The way is just...I wear such a troublesome robe. This is karma. Because of karma I have to wear long sleeved _____ like this. And without taking off the, you know, to have freedom from _____ is the way. Do you understand?

Sometimes to use _-_, to hide something underneath, when it is necessary. To use karma to help others, or to enjoy the karma without ignoring it. To enjoy our life, complicated life, difficult life, without ignoring it, and without being caught by it. Without suffer from it. That is actually what will happen to us after you practice zazen. Actually you, whether you attain enlightenment or not, if you continue this practice, naturally you will have that kind of quality. It is a matter of just slight, subtle feeling, like, you know, the, this, like the sound of box. Some ...there is slight difference between my own voice and the voce through, voice you hear through this box. But this slight difference makes big difference. It is...you think I ...you say: "I practice zazen for two, three years, but I haven't make any progress." You may say. But actually, the feeling you give by your conduct, by your words will be quite different. It is like to feel something, you know. This is wood; this is cloth, and this is enamel, and this is a kind of lacquer. Looks like same,

but if you feel it, feeling is quite different. And feeling you have from it, when the feeling you have from it is different, you feel as if this is something else, you know. This is quite different from that. That kind of difference, subtle difference, but big difference in our actual life.

Physically it is very small difference, but spiritually or...feeling you have from it is quite different. And we...when we talk about our practice, we, our merit of practice, or our value of practice, we tentatively talk about the value in term of good feeling or bad feeling. If you help others or not. Or if you help others or don't help others, or give some...bother someone. We say non-discrimination, you know. Non-discrimination...but when we try to help others we should say "good and bad" or else we cannot help others...good feeling or bad feeling. But originally there is no such thing as good or bad. But when people feel something is good and some other thing is bad, we should also involved in that kind of idea of good and bad. Even though we don't actually feel as they feel, but...feeling is not exactly the same, but we, we must give...we must be able to express our sympathy by some words in term of good and bad. That is also actually two contradictory attitudes. One is non-attachment, but looks like discrimination. Looks like attachment. But there is slight difference.

If you do not have complete calmness of your mind, you cannot tell the difference, you see everything nearly the same, exactly the same. You cannot tell the difference of the quality. One may be grass and one may be jewel, but you think all jewels or all grass. So if you actually, you know practice zazen with pain, you will know what is pain in its true sense. If you sit in calmness of your mind in pain, you will know what is pain in its true sense, but which you didn't know in your everyday life. So when you have time, to wait when you are angry, you will know what is angry, exactly. So you will not make any mistake, you are so subtle in handling your words. Even though you are angry, you have time to think.

So it is necessary for us to have complete calmness, always. And we should be able to go back to the complete calmness, even though sometimes you are angry or excited. You should be able to go back to the calmness of your mind, over and over. If you train yourself in this, in this way you will have complete freedom from the karma. So, not to fall into karma; not to be caught by karma...and, not to ignore the karma. And the third stage will be to have complete freedom from karma. And those things should not be different, as I explained.

As we wear robes. It does not mean to take off. To be free from karma does not mean to take off all my trouble some robes. "Now I am free!"...this is not the complete freedom we mean. Do you understand? This kind of stage is the stage Buddhist are aiming at. So under...under the difficult situation, without escaping from it, we should have freedom from, from the circumstances...adversity or easy circumstances. If there is no pain in your legs, it is rather difficult to make progress. But if you have some problem, I think you will make progress easier. It is true with calligraphy or with *sumie* painting. When you start to feel some difficulty, you start to make some progress. When it is easy, you don't make such progress.

When you are wealthy and happy, with money and with family and with everything, you don't make any progress. After you lose, you have lost everything, you know, without money, without family, without house...with begging bowl, then...you will start to make some progress. That is why we go for...go for trip...trip of *takuhatsu*. But nowadays, we have big temple like this; once in a while we go out with begging bowls so it doesn't so...it isn't so difficult. But real *takuhatsu* should be done without anything.

But after you attain complete liberation from this world, without escaping from it, you will have all the money people have. So there is no problem. If everyone of us...oh, no...one out of ten persons have this kind of freedom, we will have not war, no social problem, we will be all happy. So we must trust people, and we must trust Buddha, and you must trust yourself. And you should be completely give yourself to practice, completely involved in practice, forgetting everything: pain or various confusion.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 69-08-06
