

70-07-10

MORNING EKO II

July 10, 1970

The first chanting is heard in the Buddha Hall. In China and also in Japan, we have seven important buildings. One is the *sammon*. The *sammon* is the main gate. The first building you see in front of the *sammon* is the *butsuden* or Buddha Hall where we have the first chanting. Usually this Buddha Hall is the building where we hold services for our nation, for our President or Emperor, or something related to the country. That is the building where the most official ceremonies are held. And behind the *butsuden* or Buddha Hall we have the *hatto* where we give lectures or where we observe memorial services for members, and where we recite sutras. *Hatto* means "Dharma Hall," the place where we spread the Dharma. And on the west side of the *butsuden* there is the kitchen, *kuin* or *kuri*. Usually guests rooms are attached to the kitchen building. On the opposite side of the kitchen, the west side of the Buddha Hall, we have the *sodo* or *zendo*. That makes five buildings. We have *sammon*, the main gate, *hatto*, the Dharma Hall, *butsuden*, or Buddha Hall, and *kuin*, or kitchen, and *sodo* or *zendo*. And we count two more. One is the restroom. We call it *tosu*. Usually the *tosu* is the building on the right hand side as you enter the Main Gate. We also have *yokushitsu* or bathing room. You have bathroom and restroom in the same building but in the monastery we have two separate buildings. And so we have seven important buildings.

In the *zendo* and the bathroom and the toilet we do not talk. That is the rule. In the *zendo* we don't talk; in the bathroom we shouldn't talk; and in the restroom or toilet we shouldn't talk. Those are the three silent practice places.

The first chanting, the most formal, is chanted in the *butsuden*, the Buddha Hall. And the next chant is usually chanted in the *hatto*. At Eiheiji right now we chant most of the sutras in the *hatto*. But if it is something very formal such as the chanting we have on the first of every month, or fifteenth of every month, when we chant a sutra for the country, in that case, we chant it in the Buddha Hall. And noon service is usually hold in the Buddha Hall.

The second service or chanting is for the *arhats*. You may wonder why Mahayana Buddhists chant for Hinayana *arhats*. But we strictly observe chanting for *arhats* who are called Hinayana Buddhists. When Mahayana Buddhists arrived, they denounced the Theravadin Buddhists because the Theravadin Buddhists, or Hinayana Buddhists' practice was just for themselves and not for others. Mahayana Buddhists' practice is for themselves and not for others too. But this is a kind of discrimination which we should not have as a Buddhist. So in the Soto School (I think in Rinzai too) we recite a sutra for the *arhats* who were direct disciples of Buddha. There are many *arhats*. We count at least sixteen *arhats*. We find many of Buddha's disciples which include the ten famous Buddhas, outstanding Buddhas, and their disciples.

There are various kinds of Buddha's disciples. There was a disciple who was very forgetful, maybe like me. He couldn't remember a single word even. Buddha didn't know

what to do with him. So Buddha taught him to sweep the garden and he always swept the garden. At the time he was sweeping the garden he was sweeping his mind. He practiced his way so sincerely that at last he attained arhatship by sweeping the garden. He is very famous. Good Buddhists put emphasis on actual attainment, not wisdom, not wisdom acquired by intellectual understanding of the teaching.

The practice for *arhats*, or practice of Theravadin Buddhism (or sometimes we call it Hinayana practice) is, as you know, the practice of the four stages of meditation. Most teachers who come from the southern countries or from Tibet, talk about the four stages of practice which we will attain by our meditation. For Zen students it is important to know the four stages of zazen.

The first stage is the practice with many desires, ignorance, or the cause of ignorance. We count maybe four or five. One is ignorance. Ignorance has a very deep sense. Because of ignorance we appeared in this world. It is more than ignorance in its intellectual sense. Another is greed. Those are the important ones. And anger is another. In the first stage we shouldn't have drowsiness. When you are sleepy, even though you are sitting, you are not actually sitting. So drowsiness is the enemy of practice, and anger is also the enemy of practice.

If you are angry you cannot sit. When you start to sit you are not angry anymore. But as long as you are sitting you have no anger. You will have some desires, but these desires will be controlled, and you can sit pretty well. And when you sit your mind becomes clear, and you can think in the first stage.

So, in the first stage you will have a clear thinking mind, and you will have some control of the various desires, and you will have no anger or no drowsiness. That is the first stage.

In the second stage you don't think. That is the second stage. You have emotional desires but you don't think.

In the third stage you don't have emotional problems. Emotionally you are calm in the third stage. And you have the joy of no emotional problems.

In the last stage, which is the fourth stage, you do not even have the joy of calming down or conquering your emotional difficulties. You have no joy of anything. That is the fourth stage. And there you will attain arhatship. At the fourth stage you have nothing to attain or nothing to study. This is the highest stage, but later, they added one more stage. But in actual practice there are four stages in the form world. And over the form world we have the no-form world.

The first stage of the no-form world consists of meditation in which we experience nothingness of outward objects. And the next stage is the nothingness within ourselves. Even though you experience emptiness of outward objects you have some idea of outward objects, emptiness of outward objects, so your mind is directed to outward

objects. But in the next stage your mind will be directed inward, like a transparent jewel shining of itself. That is the second stage. And in the third stage we have no idea of anything which is inside or outside. That is the third stage. And in the fourth stage we don't have any idea of "somethingness" or nothingness. We have no idea of nothingness even. That is the last stage. So we count eight *dhyana*, or meditation, the first to the fourth stage in the form world, and adding to them the four stages of the no-form world. In the last stage we can see the characteristics of Buddhism.

According to ordinary meditation (excluding Buddhist meditation) those who meditate in the first stage will be born in the first *deva* or heaven. And when you practice the second stage you will appear in the second heaven. In this way we have respectively, four heavens. But someone who appears in heaven, according to Buddhism, should disappear from heaven too. Something which appears should disappear. There is nothing which does not disappear. So even if you appear in heaven, you should disappear from heaven. That is *karma*. You have *karma*. You create *karma* to go to heaven, and as long as you have *karma* to go to heaven that *karma* will continue and you will eventually go down to the bottom of the first "Desire World." So as long as your practice depends on *karma* activity, or *karmic* practice, that practice is not Buddhist practice, because the practice is involved in *karmic* activity. So Buddhist practice should go beyond *karmic* practice. That is why we practice *shikan taza* which does not expect any result from our practice. Just to sit, just to resume our true nature is our practice, without trying to attain something, without being involved in *karmic* activity. That is Buddhist practice. Various teachers, so far, from the Southern countries and Tibet, emphasized this point. Our practice should start from nothing and end in nothing. That is our practice. So that is the stage the *arhat* will attain finally. Their practice is very similar practice to non-Buddhist practice, but actually there is a clear distinction from non-Buddhist practice.

In the *Eko* we say, "*Aogi koimegawakuwa shokan, fushite kanno o tare tamae.*" "*Aogi*" is "to look upwards." "*Koneigawakuwa*" is "what we want, I want or I ask." "Looking upward, what we ask is..." "*Shokan*" is "Buddha's witness" or "Buddha's protection." "*Fushite*" means "to kneel down." "*Kano o tare tamae,*" "respond." When we kneel down with a pure mind, then Buddha nature will appear. "*Kanno*" means "respond." Subjectively speaking, our Buddha nature arrived from our innate nature, but objectively speaking Buddha nature will come to us when we kneel down with a pure mind. "Kneeling down we ask the response of Buddha nature." It means that we, looking upward, seeing respectively, many *arhats*, ask for their protection, and kneeling down, we ask the *arhats* to join our practice. That is what it means.

"*Jorai*" means "so far, the reason we recited this sutra." "*Jo*" is "up." "*Rai*" is "come." So "until now we recited the *Prajna Paramita Sutra*." "*Atsumuru tokoro no kudoko wa.*" "*Atsumuru*" is "to concentrate" or "gather up" the merit of reciting the sutra. We recite the sutra for..." "*Jippo joju no sambo.*" "*Jippo*" means "ten directions." "*Joju*" means "always present." "*Jo*" is "always." "*Ju*" is "dwell" or "live." "*Sambo*" is "three treasures." So "three treasures which are present in ten directions always." "*Kakai muryo no kensho.*" "*Kakai.*" "*Ka*" is "fruit" and "*kai*" is "ocean." "*Muryo*" is "limitless." "*Kensho*"

means "sages" and "*arhats*." The reason we say "fruit" is because if you practice our way that will be the seed of attainment, a seed of the merit. So if the practice is the seed, what you will have by it is the result, or fruit. But here, we shouldn't understand fruit comes after and seed is first. fruit and seed are the result in the same time in our practice. We should understand in that way, but we say, "*Kakai muryo no kensho*." "All the sages and *arhats* which are in the limitless sea of attainment, especially the sixteen *arhats*."

"*Ju-roku*" is "sixteen." "*Dai arakan*." "The great *arhats*." "*Issai*" is "all." "*O-gu*" is another name for "*arhats*" (who are worthy to receive an offering). "*O*" means "respond" and "*Gu*" is "offering." "One who is worthy to receive an offering." That is an *arhat*. "All the *arhats*." "*Burui kenzoku*." "And the *arhats* who belong to the sixteen *arhats* and the many *arhats*." Under each of the sixteen *arhats* there were many *arhats*. That is "*Ken-zoku*." "*ken-zoku*" is "the family." Sixteen *arhats* were the head of the family of *arhats*. So we say many *arhats*. In some temples we count five hundred *arhats*. Why we say five hundred *arhats* is in the first assembly after Buddha, about one hundred years after Buddha passed away, they had a big meeting. We say "*Ketsuju*." "*Ketsuju*" means to have a meeting, and to discuss the teaching Buddha left. And someone presented the teaching, what Buddha taught them, and the rest of the people corrected it. If there was some correction they made the correction and when all of them agreed that it was what Buddha said they accepted it. In this way the scriptures were transmitted to us. So there were supposed to have been five hundred disciples at that meeting, so sometimes we say, "*Go hyaku dai arakan*," "five hundred *arhats*." But anyway we count sixteen *arhats* or more.

"*Ogu*" is another name for "*arhats*." *Arhats* have many names. According to the attainment, they have different names, such as "no-return sage." "No return-sage" is after extinguishing all his *karma*. They do not come back to this world anymore. Because he has no *karma* to come back. That is a kind of stage he will attain.

You may think that the *arhat* practice is quite different from Hinayana practice, but Hinayana practice is very important, especially for the Soto school. We do not discriminate against the Hinayana practice at all. We respect *arhats*. We respect their effort. And we ask *arhats* to join our practice and our wish is to practice as hard as *arhats* practice. That is why we recite a sutra for the *arhats* in the morning.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 70-07-10
