

Rōshi Sama 004 (Talk given on the third day of a *sesshin*)

Our *sesshin* is moving along fast. We are well up the mountain now and we shall soon reach the peak in our climb. One foot, One step. One step. If you stop to look at the scenery, you will lose your footing, you will lose your momentum. More and more, put steadily more of yourself into THIS with care. Great care. Pure ONE Doing. Purer and purer, earnestly do this ONE Doing. We use different words to describe it: Your Original Face, The Genuine, Genuine Self, THIS ONE Truth. I want you to purely practice THIS ONE Truth. The truth of our inherent Oneness. Practice with a kind heart. Don't look off! With your practice, you receive and receive and receive. I want you to continue to receive the blessing of your zazen.

They say that when you are cooking rice at the beginning the fires flicker and then a blaze. In the beginning, in the first two days or so you take it slow. If you get in a rush, if you try to turn the fire up too high your practice may be shallow. So, you don't get in a rush. Steady. You start out steady, always working from your *tanden*. Straighten your posture, as much as you can. From the lower back all the way up, straighten the back. If your back is straight your neck will be right where it is supposed to be, and your chin will be as it should be.

Somebody came to me yesterday and said that they had had bad posture for so long that when they try to hold their back straight, it's all that they can think about – the posture. Just do your best to work towards a good posture. Although you don't yet know this, it is alright. Even if your body resists, keep your mind open, remembering always that it is alright. Just work with what you have got, where you are. You do not need to put any tension anywhere. If the posture is straight as possible, your centre will be firmly in your *tanden*. Place your mind in the *tanden*. It's not difficult. If you don't do this, if you don't place your mind in your *tanden*, you will find yourself operating from your head. And that leads to confusion, to becoming flustered, it leads to questions, thinking and doubts. So, put your mind in the *tanden*. Yes, you can do this. Just put your mind to it.

During one of the dedications the leader chants, "Buddha Heart, Buddha Mind pervades the whole universe". It exists right HereNow. Buddha mind changes constantly [and] takes form in accordance with causes and conditions. Each and every form is replete with eternal Truth Mind. We use the word "Mind/Heart" that is to say your true genuine self – your Life. Your Heart is the boundless Universe. Life, this is your All, fills the Dharma realm, All, the All, the All of the Universe. And each and every phenomenon, each one, all phenomena are sacred forms of THIS true Life. Life arises [and] takes form in accordance with karmic connections, causes and conditions. Sound is made – it reverberates. It's heard. You can hear. You can see. Aah, the air smells good, doesn't it? Oh, my legs hurt bad. We are touched

softly. We are struck forcefully. It is very straightforward, very honest. It appears as any and everything very honestly. It's very honest whether or not it appears, however, whenever, wherever. Straightforward. Everything Truth. Honesty. Perfect honesty. THIS is eternal. No going. No coming. You have no need to worry about anything. The source is absolutely perfect. Flawless. No birth. No death. It cannot be conceived by the discriminating intellect. Never! Your computer head is always running, but never in a hundred, in a thousand, or million years will that rationalizing thinking process come near to touching, to comprehending, the Heart. Life.

Yesterday, and the day before, I stressed this most important matter. Your True Self. It is the only important thing, because there is nothing outside of your True Self. Maybe you think I that shouldn't put it to you in this way, because it might give you licence to be careless, or lazy. "I'll just be self indulgent, is that alright? I mean, since there is nothing that is not, or outside of truth?" What if I tell you that it is ok to be selfish? Would that make you feel happy? No, you would not be pleased. Suppose that you fall on your face. Ouch, it hurts! Are you going to want to fall on you face a second, or third time on purpose? You, yourself receive just exactly what you put forth. It is very honest. Your world *is* what you make it. Now, do the dignified thing - take all the responsibility. Don't put the blame for anything on anybody else. Don't pass the responsibility to anyone else. In essence, there is no-one else. And to turn it around, everybody is me, myself. This is the basic – the first principle. We live our daily lives busy in the world involved with "this", and "that" and "the other". But, of course, I am talking to you now on a different level. I'm talking the source. If you are not clear about the source, your roots, you will continue to live a confused life. It is just as we chanted in the Hotsuganmon, "Before Buddhas were enlightened, they were the same as we are now. Before enlightenment, before awakening to Truth, to the source, there is ignorance, there are worries, always afraid, always anxious. There is fear and insecurity. Even though you may be doing your best trying to do your utmost to live right, you will have to fall, and that suffering is intense. It's your selfishness which arises from totally false impressions – the notion of a self, cut off, "I", "me", "you". Until you realize the source, you will be embroiled in self and you will turn your back on the kindness that you receive. You bite the hand that feeds you. So, I will ask you again, do you want to continue as you are, repaying kindness with ingratitude? If you do not awaken to True Self, you will continue to make the same mistakes you are making now – biting the hand that feeds you.

I am sure that you realize for yourself, now, that you simply must attain Self realization, that there is no excuse not to. You must come to be where you feel thankful, for even the tiniest little mochi cake given to you by the neighbour. Thankfulness. Gratitude. When you are touched by Life, when you are open, you

receive, you feel gratitude. Whether or not you feel the pats on your back, life is touching you. You are touched, everyone, always and forever. All Being is truly resounding to Life, each instant. In truth, at the source, we live in mutual resonance.

Shakyamuni Buddha raised one flower. *Mahakasyapa* smiled, he grinned, the Dharma realm grins. The Buddha realm blooms. NowHere. All of Heaven and Earth blooms - a flower. But out of the 80,000 assembled only *Mahakasyapa* grinned. Others may have thought, "Hmmm, Shakyamuni Buddha is playing with a flower", or "I wonder who brought that flower", or even, "Hmmm, I wonder how much that flower would cost in a shop? No, it's old, post-dated, it couldn't be too expensive". What I am saying now is an exaggeration, but the worldly way of thinking is to calculate, to figure out, to pin labels, and to place everything into pockets. That's alright. Go ahead and do it. But, you get just what you ask for. You wind up making yourself into a small clod, a small, small, [??] clod. That is to say, that you take away your own freedom. You cannot flow with the current of life. In grasping and attaching to a false notion of self, you are giving away your freedom. So, when you feel constrained, when you feel unfree, you so easily complain: "Look what he did", "Look at that. That ought not be", "This ought to be different". All the while, of course, you are bringing it upon yourself. You are creating this sense of a solid clump, a clod, "I", "me", "mine". Wake up. Face reality. And you will know that there is no thing, solid, fixed.

Emptiness. THIS Emptiness is just exactly Truth. Life. As it is. Life brimming full, as it is, in accordance with time, place and circumstance. Flowing freely. Well, maybe, since everything is alright I can take it easy for just a bit. Habits. The habit of self clinging. The habit of wanting to sit back. Life, Emptiness, does not permit selfishness. Life. Isn't it putting forth it's all in relation to causes and conditions? Being. As it is. Now and Here. Such kindness. This is intimacy. Being ONE with, meeting right straight with THIS. Your true Life is intimacy. ONE with this time, this place, flowing in accord. Now. Here. THIS. So, how can there be any trace of selfishness, of self grasping? Impossible. There is no little mould to harden into.

Everything is OK. Rest assured, enlightened people of today are exactly as those of old. THIS is the world and Shakyamuni Buddha awakened to it. As the teaching of Truth is transmitted to us - great peace of mind, satisfaction. So, no matter what happens, no matter what tragedy might occur, there is within each thing the radiance of salvation. Each and everything, each and every being, each and every encounter has within it the light of freedom.

All beings are Buddha, endowed with Buddha virtue, Buddha wisdom. In these words, I am not giving you a concept to mull over. THIS is exactly as it is. All beings are Buddha, endowed with Buddha virtue, Buddha wisdom. Yes. Come face to face

with your True Face. Your True Self is taking care of, treasuring itself. The reality of this treasure, this care, is right here in your ONE Doing. New and fresh – THIS ONE Doing. *Ichi Tantei*. The Self nurtures the Self. So, with all your might draw more energy into your practice.

Now we are in the middle days of *sesshin*. You can turn the heat up. Don't be careless. Do not be careless. Let your practice burn. Counting the breath: When you count "one", just ardently count "one", THIS One, in your hara. The ancient teachers were so kind to pass this teaching down to us. Keep your attention in your *tanden*. This is settling in. Settle. This is your breath, your heart, your practice. No matter what arises neither indulge in it, nor reject it. Indulging, following up, that's looking off. Rejecting. That's looking off. Earnestly, earnestly sit. Just sit. *Shikantaza*. Know that even if all the Buddhas in the Ten Directions, as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges exert their strength and with the Buddha's wisdom try to measure the merit of one person's zazen, they will not be able to fully comprehend it. This treasure, this pure treasure, the zazen that you are doing now. Now receiving the ONE support of everything. [sudden end of recording]

(transcribed 04.06.2018)