**Selections from**

***MANIFESTING ZEN: THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF KYŌZAN JŌSHŪ SASAKI: DHARMA TALKS FROM MT. BALDY***

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**PRELIMINARY DRAFT MANUSCRIPT**

**DAY 2: March 3, 1986**

***TEISHO* BY JŌSHU SASAKI ROSHI ON THE *RINZAI ROKU,* Section 3**

**Translator: Christopher Ives**

**The Master ascended the hall and said, "Here in this lump of red flesh there is a True Person of no fixed position. Constantly he goes in and out the gates of your face. If there are any of you who don't know this for a fact, then look! Look!" At that time there was a monk who came forward and asked "What is he like—the True Person of no fixed position?" The Master got down from his chair, seized hold of the monk and said, "Speak! Speak!" The monk was about to say something, whereupon the Master let go of him, shoved him away, and said, "True Person of no fixed position—what a shit-wiping stick!" The Master then returned to his quarters.**

Yesterday I discussed how people practicing Zen should grasp this passage here, should grasp what is going on in this part of the *Record of Rinzai*. However, that was only an explanation. I have not yet begun to give a true *teisho*. This passage is sometimes used as a *kōan*. Now I am not sure how this has been translated into English. However, before we really start to study this passage or use it as a *kōan*, we must get at how we can grasp this, how we should approach this passage.

What I plan to do today is talk once again in detail about how we should grasp this passage. And what I said yesterday is that in order to truly grasp this passage one must engage in *Anapana* or “breathing Zen.”[[1]](#endnote-1) As I said, unless you practice breathing Zen you cannot understand how it is that the self emerges and how it then disappears. But this breathing Zen is indeed quite difficult. And saying to someone, count your breaths and sit there focused on your breathing, this approach is not true Tathāgatha or breathing *Anapana* Zen.[[2]](#endnote-2) Now people talk about counting your breaths and forgetting your breathing but this is not true *Anapana* Zen. *Anapana* Zen involves the out breath and the in breath, the cyclical ongoing repetition. But this breathing Zen is indeed quite difficult, so what I would like to do today is to look at this from a different angle.

What we need to do is look at the text and get a clear understanding of this expression “Lump of red flesh” and the *kōan* concerning this expression. So Rinzai does take the high seat in the hall and he begins by discussing this lump of red flesh. We must ask where this lump emerges from, and where it disappears to. And as I said yesterday, this lump of red flesh, is the heart/mind, the heart/mind that is the basis of the self. But as I’ve said this heart/mind inevitably disappears. So where does this lump of red flesh come from? If you don’t understand this you’ll just sit there looking at this expression, lump of red flesh, and think, that’s my heart/mind, that’s some organ in me and not understand this *kōan* or get a handle on it.

As you know I often use the metaphor of a tug of war with 50 people on either end of a rope, and I’d like to use this metaphor today as I discuss this passage. When there is equal force on either side of the middle of the rope, you do get smoke emerging there in the central point and eventually it begins to burn and then it breaks. So smoke emerges and then in bursts into flame. Where does this come from? What I’d like to say here is that this emergence of smoke and then the flames that erupt there, this is the lump of red flesh. So what eventually happens is, with the equal force on each side eventually the rope breaks, and you have this A side and the B side, and what emerges in the middle is space. And what I grasp here is the fact that space emerges through the eruption of smoke and then flame. And what I’m saying here is that emergence of space through the smoke and then the burning, this emergence of space here is the function of the self or the five *skandhas*. And so what happens is, when you have the activity of the Dharma, within itself this splits and gives rise to space, but all of this exists within the self. And what is usually taught is that one must first do *zazen*, what is sometimes referred to as the Diamond Posture or the *full lotus*. One must begin here. Now this posture is a point of contraction and out of this contraction there emerges expansion, and in this splitting, this dual process, you get the emergence of space.

I’ve talked about this many times, but you must do *zazen* and see this for yourselves. Look! Look at this! This is what I say. So you must not have monotonous or ordinary way of thinking in your *zazen*. So you must not be flat there, so to speak, you must become a sphere, a ball there in your *zazen*. And what is involved here is the self gazing upon the self. The self splits and out of this splitting there emerges an expansion, this expansive direction. And in this large sphere there is contained space. And the space usually possesses an outside and an inside. Now the Chinese character that expresses this holding or this containing is also the character that expresses “to be.”[[3]](#endnote-3) And so to be contained there is to be manifest, to be existing there.

As I was saying in regard to the metaphor, space does emerge in this burning at the central point of the rope and out of this burning we have the various things in the universe. This is the heart/mind. And the heart/mind does a heart/mind activity, in this case, in the metaphor, the activity of burning. Now when this lump of red flesh is complete, there is no inside or outside. However, when it manifests itself and is in an incomplete state you do have the interior and the exterior. What you must do in Tathāgatha Zen is grasp what this expression is referring to, the expression of Incomplete as opposed to the expression of Complete. You must grasp both of these terms.

This lump of red flesh, this heart/mind, manifests the self and initially this is an incomplete self. However, this is difficult here. Although they talk about the lump of red flesh, there is also talk about this one True Person of No Fixed Position. In other words this self, this lump of red flesh, initially looks at the outside and the inside and when it looks at the outside it’s only seeing half of the matter. Because there is a split between the inside and outside you have the Dharma activity of the outside and the Dharma activity of the inside. And what the historical Buddha teaches is that the Dharma activity does take on personality, and we get the Tathāgatha. And so Buddhism says there is no absolute, no absolute being, but for the time being in a sense there is an absolute recognized here.

Now in any case when this lump of red flesh emerges as the content of the self, and the heart/mind emerges as that content, we do get a split between the outside and the inside, the outside being half of the Tathāgatha and the inside being half of the Tathāgatha or Dharma activity. And so either one of these is not that true thing. Now if you say I saw the Buddha outside of myself, or I saw the Buddha inside myself, either one of these is only half of the Buddha. You’re only looking at half of the matter. But that which lives, that which makes an effort to live here, does grasp the Tathāgatha outside of itself, and in that sense feels that it has grasped the Thus-Come. And what happens is, the inside direction, the Tathāgatha on the inside is lost. So if we only get caught up in the external, the human being attains to and gets caught up in a state of dissatisfaction. What happens is the person grasps the future but does not grasp the past, and because of this the person does not realize complete time, and out of this there arises a sense of dissatisfaction.

Now this one person without position is that which does not get attached to the Buddha or to ordinary beings, is not caught up in the sacred or the profane. And now, not being caught up in either is the state of no position, and having no position, that way of being, that very way of being, is the truth. And if I explain it in this way you’ll probably get a handle on what’s being referred to here as the one True Person of No Fixed Position. But we have to be careful here. This lump of red flesh, without fail, is manifesting at the same time this one True Person of No Fixed Position where there is no outside and no inside, no sacred nor any profane. But if this incomplete self does not disappear, there is no way we will realize or manifest this one True Person of No Fixed Position that is neither sacred nor profane. As long as we say we’ve seen the Buddha, we are still caught up in the incomplete self where there is a distinction between the outside and the inside. And in this state we have yet to realize that Tathāgatha .

So as you know we do exist as the self that takes the heart/mind as its content. However Shakyamuni tells us that this is actually no-self, that what is actually going on here is the one True Person of No Fixed Position. Now a lot of the older students have heard me talk in this way many times. However, as there are some new people here I would like to extrapolate on this a little bit more.

This Dharma body is a very small thing. It can be as small as a little mustard seed. And this is the state of affairs in which you have the activity of contraction that necessarily accompanies the opposite activity of expansion. And so this whole universe does shrink down and becomes very tiny, like a little seed. And this is referred to as the “*zazen* of the diamond,” the Diamond Posture of *zazen*. It’s also referred to as the *full lotus*. Are you doing the *full lotus* *zazen*? If there’s an outside and an inside, you’re not doing it yet.

Now it is taught in Zen that at one point there is an external functioning and an internal functioning, the functioning of being and the functioning of non-being, the functioning of life and the functioning of death. And what’s taught here is that when this shrinks down even to the size of a tiny seed, there you have the unity of subject and object, or what is sometimes referred to as the unity of host and guest. And this is sometimes referred to as the Diamond Posture. And this is a state of affairs in which all opposition has disappeared. And it’s out of this that we get the *kōan* about the sound of one hand clapping. And some of you might have gotten this *kōan*, however, what this *kōan* is getting at the state where there is no outside, nor any inside. The state of affairs in which there is a unity of subject and object, the unity of outside and inside, this is referred to as the sound of one hand clapping, or Jōshu’s “Mu”. But this sound of one hand clapping is broken through and the activity of expansion emerges. There is a split and the incomplete self appears.

So Rinzai is talking about this lump of red flesh. He’s saying this because all of you indeed have heart/minds. Your heart/minds are necessarily alive and with personality. This is the manifestation of the self with personality that only sees half of the Tathāgatha. It is only seeing half of the matter. This is the world in which sentient beings live. And so this is referred to as the world of the split, of that cleavage between inside and outside, subject and object. No matter what anyone says, all of you exist in this world of the split. All of you are pulling from within and pulled from without, and, establishing relations with the inside and the outside, you all exist in a state of split.

So you’ve probably realized here what is referred to as relationship. And what Rinzai is saying here is that we are liberated from this lump of red flesh, from the split, and out of this there emerges the manifestation of the one True Person of No Fixed Position, this no-self person. Now there are a lot of Zen people who scratch their heads and try to understand what this one True Person of No Fixed Position is. What Rinzai is saying here is that this lump of red flesh, this living self with a heart/mind, inevitably manifests this one True Person of No Fixed Position.

What is not pulled by the outside or the inside, this happens without fail. Rinzai changes the expressions a little and talks about this here. What Rinzai says here is that without fail this living self, this lump of red flesh, exists from morning to night, from the first day of the year to the last, without fail it’s always existing. Something very difficult emerges here, though. It’s difficult because Rinzai uses these difficult expressions when he talks about something going in and out of the face of each and every one of you. As I said yesterday, when the incomplete self emerges and develops and matures, throughout it possesses the six sense faculties.[[4]](#endnote-4) What he says is that by possessing the six faculties we manifest this one True Person of No Fixed Position, this no-self.

What Rinzai is saying here is that this one True Person of No Fixed Position, this no-self self, is going in and out of, for example our eyes or our nose or whatever, and what he’s saying is that this does occur in the in-breath and the out-breath. This incomplete self necessarily manifests this, and what Rinzai is saying here is that the Dharma activity inevitably moves in these two directions. So the Dharma activity splits itself and manifests the incomplete self and the myriad things in the universe. This is the nature, the quality of the Dharma activity. But without fail this Dharma activity completes all these things and reunites them. And what happens here is that the sentient self, the incomplete self, the living self disappears.

Now the Dharma activity does engage in the functioning that bring about this incomplete self and inevitably brings it to its completion and reunites things. And what happens then is this complete self then moves in the opposite direction, the direction of contraction and death. So the Dharma activity gives rise to these things and then without fail brings them to the state of completion where there is no longer any need to live. And then is the converse direction, the Dharma activity moves in the other way, toward the activity of death. That’s what Rinzai is talking about here.

What Rinzai is doing here is speaking, to some extent, from the standpoint of the born self rather than the standpoint of the Dharma activity in the beginning. So this self does look at the outside and the inside; however this living self must inevitably be completed. What first must happen here is that this living self must be completed. So this living self has been born into the world of split, and out of this it must reach the state of completion. And when it exists in this world of splitting, the unity of subject and object has yet to appear. And so this is difficult. And although I’ve talked about this many times, there might be some people here who don’t fully understand it. And at the same time there are probably people who do. So if you don’t understand this you should ask other people, your other friends who are further along the way. And so the self is born here and as a living self it must move in the direction of completion in this living direction, and at the same time through the activity of death it must return to its source. And when both of these directions are fully realized, that self is liberated from life and death. It transcends them. And that is what Rinzai is talking about here.

So up until the statement, “going in and out of the face of every one of you” this is the gist of what Rinzai is getting at here. What Rinzai does here is say “Look! Look! If you’re one of those who have not realized, have not grasped how this self moves in the direction of living and goes beyond living and moves in the direction of dying and goes beyond dying where there’s no longer any need to do so.

This is a tough passage. Now I’m not sure how this has been rendered in English but I think here “looking” and “looking at” is a quite different expression from “See!” Seeing. When you really *see*, the self has disappeared. And if you say “Look” or “Look at,” it implies that there is something that is being looked at and this indicates that the self has yet to disappear.

Now I’m not sure about the nuance of English, but in the original Chinese this character does mean seeing. Seeing without an object.

(End Side 1)

(SIDE 2)

… and says, “See! See!” Everybody try this. Put your hand to your brow. You see a beautiful person in front of you. Look at that person. Look at that flower. Mm? At that time, where was the self? Right at that moment you are doing the Dharma activity. You’re not doing it. You’re not there. Let’s stop here for today. So I think you have a handle now on what Rinzai is getting at in the words in this passage.

This is an important *kōan* here and we must again and again look at the language and try to get a handle on what’s going on here. Hai!

1. *Anapana* is a Pali term meaning in-breathing and out-breathing, inhalation and exhalation. It is a basic practice of the Buddhist tradition and finds its earliest extant canonical expression in the *Anapanasati sutta* (Sutra on the Mindfulness of Breathing) from the collection, *Majjhima Nikaya*, (Middle Length Sayings) in which it is text #118. For an excellent and accessible translation see Thanissaro Bhikkhu Bodhi’s “Mindfulness of Breathing” on the website Access to Insight: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.118.than.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Tathāgatha traditionally is one of the epithets of the historical Buddha. It means “one who has Thus Come and Thus Gone.” Rōshi here uses is in a very special sense that he developed: to represent the coming and going, the arising and passing away of every moment of our conscious experience, our entire being. It is an expression of his understanding of the traditional Buddhist term, “dependent co-origination” (*pratitya-samutpada*) the fact that every moment of experience in every sentient being arises due to prior causes and conditions and then serves as a cause and condition for subsequent moments of conscious experience. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Rōshi very likely here means the Sino Japanese character 有 (Ch: *you* Jp: *yu*). It literally means “something” in contrast to “nothing” 無 (*Ch: wu* Jp: *mu*). Some translators render these characters as “being” and “nonbeing”. But they literally mean “there is” and “there is not.” [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. In the Buddhist tradition, the six sense faculties (*salaytana*) are the eyes that perceive sights, the ears that perceives sounds, the nose that perceives smells, the tongue that perceives tastes, the skin that touches tangible objects, and the mind that cognizes mental objects. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)