

WIND BELL

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MODEL SUBJECT NO. 30
JO-SHU'S LARGE RADISHES

Commentary by Reverend Shunryu Suzuki, Roshi, Zen Center

There is no Introductory Word to Model Subject No. 30 from the Blue Cliff Records, but I will apply the following statement from A Buddhist Guide for Laymen by Sita Paulickpulla Renfrew (publisher: Cambridge Buddhist Association, Cambridge, Mass.) as an introduction.

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"According to Buddhist ethics, no person or authority can ever impose upon another any code of conduct lower in morality or humanity than the individual himself wishes. Neither can anyone make another act on a higher plane than the individual himself desires. Each individual can act only according to the level of his state of evolution, and he has to live by the consequences thereof."

Main Subject from the Blue Cliff Records

Attention! A monk asked Jo-shu, "I hear by rumour that you were at one time closely associated with Nan-sen. Is that so, or not?" Jo-shu replied, "Chin-shu produces very large radishes."

Appreciatory Word by Seccho

Chin-shu produces large radishes. Monks everywhere have taken this as a model for replies. It is obvious from ancient to modern times that one cannot ask a swan why it is white or a crow why it is black.

A rascal, a rascal! He has already twisted the monks' noses.

Notes by Master Suzuki

A student who is familiar with his own true nature will become familiar with his teacher's true nature as well as the true nature of a radish--the true nature of all existence. It is true that there should be no problem merely because one thing happens to be big and another small, or one person the teacher and another the disciple, if their true nature is the same. But what will happen if a swan is black and a crow is white? It is natural for a swan to be white and a crow to be black. This is Buddha Nature.

Do not say there is no need to practice Buddhism because we have Buddha Nature intrinsically. There is Buddha Nature (eventually there is happiness) only when a swan is white, a crow is black, a human being is a human being, and a Buddhist practices Buddha's way of life.

If a Buddhist does not behave like a Buddhist, one cannot say he is a Buddhist, or a Christian. Who is he? There is no composure. Eventually he will be unable to be aware of his true nature.

In Shobogenzo, Raihaitokuzui, Dogen Zengi says, when you meet with a right teacher, who teaches you highest wisdom, you must not consider his caste or race, nor attend to his favorable or unfavorable appearance, nor consider his shortcomings. You should be respectful of him only because of his true wisdom. You should not have a feeling of aversion, but serve him and bow to him truthfully.

If you practice Buddhism without hypocrisy but with truthfulness, this truthfulness penetrates into the innermost nature of all existence and will encourage man and nature; and the true nature of man and nature will encourage your sincere practice.

This sincerity accepts the level to which we have evolved, wakes up our slumbering moral faculties, and extends our true nature beyond the discrimination of good and bad, perfect and imperfect. You will always have a good reaction with continuous Zen practice.