

Model Subject #75 from the Hekigan Roku (Blue Cliff Records)

Introductory Word:

The Treasure Sword always is present (beyond oneness and duality). It is a life-taking sword and yet a life-giving sword. Sometimes it is here (in the teacher's hand) and sometimes there (in the student's hand); but this makes no difference. Gaining or losing it and its positive and negative use are at each other's disposal. Just consider! How do you make good use of the Treasure Sword without attaching to the idea of host and guest, or integration and disintegration?

Note by Reverend Suzuki:

In the last Wind Bell, in the discussion of Model Subject No. 73, I explained the Middle Way or negative aspect of life, which provides us with the full meaning of life in various circumstances. In this Introductory Word, En-go presents the same aspect under the name of Treasure Sword.

These subjects are ko-ans to which Zen students devote themselves with great effort. It is important to confront yourself with the experiences of the old Zen students by reading these stories over and over again. I shall be very glad if you will give my writing your critical attention.

Main Subject:

Attention! A monk from Jo-shu's temple came to U-kyu's place. U-kyu asked him: "Is there any difference between my way of Zen and that of Jo-shu?" The monk said: "No difference." U-kyu said: "If there is no difference, why don't you go back to Jo-shu?" and then he gave this monk a good slap. The monk said: "If your staff had an eye to see, you could not have delivered such a wanton blow." U-kyu said: "Today I have given a wonderful slap," and he gave the monk three more whacks. The monk went away.

The story to this point is perfect, but it continued in this way: As the monk was leaving, U-kyu said: "Originally a blind staff was something with which to slap someone." The monk turned back and said: "A man with a dipper is handling the situation." (This means U-kyu has taken some leadership in the situation). U-kyu said: "If you want the staff, this jungle monk will let you have it." The monk came up to U-kyu, seized the staff and gave him three blows. U-kyu said: "Oh the blind staff! The blind staff!" The monk said: "Here is someone who has been hit." U-kyu said: "This monk was hit without reason." The monk immediately made obeisance to him. U-kyu said: "Well, well! Is this all?" The monk went out with a roar of laughter. U-kyu concluded, saying: "So it is! So it is!"

Note by Reverend Suzuki:

As you know, after an unknown southerner came to the north and received the transmission from the Fifth Chinese Patriarch, Zen divided into two schools: the Southern School and the Northern School. The U-kyu of this subject was a southerner and a disciple of the Fifth Patriarch. The difference between the Northern and Southern Schools was as great as that between a dragon and a serpent. The Northern School was called the Gradual School while the Southern School was called the Sudden School.

A monk came to U-kyu's place from Jo-shu's temple hoping to study a different way of Zen. U-kyu gave the monk an unexpected question. He asked if there was any difference between his own way of Zen and the way of Jo-shu. But the monk's answer, that there is no difference, is not at all a common answer, when there is indeed a great difference. This monk might have been an extraordinary one. Only a tactful master like U-kyu, would have been able to manage him. Thus U-kyu slapped him and put him under his staff's control.

But the monk (being familiar with the ways of the Southern School), was ready for a slap and said: "If it were not for your blind staff, you could not have struck so freely." (In other words, "I fully appreciate your blind staff.") U-kyu gave him three more blows and said: "I have given of a wonderful staff today." (i.e., "This monk is worth giving slaps to.") The monk went out. U-kyu acknowledged the strength of the monk and gave him the meaningful slaps. The monk appreciated the meaning of the tactful U-kyu. There is not the slightest gap between these two master's activities.

However, in the realm of the ultimate integration of the powers of teacher and student, one goes with the other. (Refer to Chan and Zen Teaching, Second Series, p. 127, and to my interpretation of Model Subject No. 73 in the last Wind Bell.) In this realm, nothing takes its own

④ form. The absolute negative aspect is the opposite of the first part of this subject where a good teacher gave a good slap to a good monk; and in the second part, an aged U-kyu was slapped by a bad student with a blind staff. But nothing is wrong with these tactful masters. Sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes in order and sometimes reversed, their great activity has no special regulation. When such activity of two masters ceases to be curious, you will get the gist of our traditional way. All the mysterious powers and faculties depend upon this secret.

The blind staff in this Model Subject means Right Dharma -- which can be likened to an invisible wedge for the dualistic world: a wedge which gives rise to good and bad, love and hatred, favorable and adverse: the dualistic confliction of the amicable worldly affairs; and yet which keeps the strict unity of our existence.

In the second part of this subject, the situation between the master and the monk changed under the blind staff. The monk seized the staff and struck U-kyu who had offered his own staff to him. Hera U-kyu said: "Oh, the blind staff! The blind staff!" The monk said: "Here is someone who was hit by it." U-kyu said: "This fellow (U-kyu) was hit without reason." Here we see the blind staff playing the leading part of the role. U-kyu was at one with this monk, and the monk was at one with the blind staff, the symbol of the traditional way. In En-go's Introductory Word, by 'the Treasure Sword' he meant this blind staff. (See Introductory Word to this subject.)

The monk immediately made obeisance to U-kyu. U-kyu said: "Well, well! Is this all?" The monk went out with roaring laughter. U-kyu concluded the subject saying: "So it is! So it is!" This 'So it is' is not simple. Let us see Set-cho's appreciative word.

Appreciative Word:

It is easy to attract (a serpent) by calling (with a flute). It is difficult to turn it loose. Look carefully at the well-integrated power (of the two). Even though the kalpa-stone is hard, it may be worn away. Even though the ocean is deep it may be dried up. But U-kyu's way will never cease. Oh aged U-kyu! Aged U-kyu! One after another, how many variations have you in your way; if only you had not given that dipper to the monk. (Set-cho is creating a problem for us students).

The following are two remarks by Dogen Zengi, founder of the Soto Sect in Japan.

Trees, weeds, and everything on earth sheds forth the light of Dharma. The gift of the teachings is limitless and boundless.

Cherish in your own mind the shelter and protection from inside; protection from outside should not be expected.