

UN-MON'S STOREROOM AND TEMPLE GATE

Model Subject No. 86 from the Hekigan Roku (Blue Cliff Records).

Translation and Commentary by Master Shunryu Suzuki.

Roku

Un-mon Bun-en (7-949) was a disciple of Sep-po and founder of the Un-mon School, one of five schools of Chinese Zen Buddhism (Rinzai, I-gyo, Un-mon, Ho-gen, and Soto). During the political confusion of the end of the T'ang Dynasty all the major schools of Chinese Buddhism (Ten-dai, Hos-so, Ritsu, and Shingon) were in decline, except Zen, which was strengthened by the persecutions and the difficulty in traveling to escape persecution and to visit various Zen Masters. The hard practice of Sep-po and Un-mon during that time has been and is still a good example for all Zen students.

Introductory Word

Introducing En-go said: To control the world without omitting a single feather, to stop all the streams of passion without losing a single drop, this is the great teacher's activity. If you open your mouth (in a dualistic sense) in his presence, you will fall into error. Hesitate and you will be lost. Who has eyes to penetrate barriers of this kind? Ponder the following.

Commentary by Master Suzuki

"Control" needs some explanation. The man who has realized the wisdom and virtue of the single-Buddha-mind in which every existence is one, does not think, speak, or act in a dualistic way because his view of things, including himself, is based on the inmost request (the activity of Buddhature, or the experience of Buddhature as the inmost request) of the self-sufficient Mind.

Things are usually viewed as either positive or negative, material or spiritual, objective or subjective. The positive materialistic way of life may be more common and naive than the so-called negative spiritual way of life, and may involve us in innocent but terrible competition. Eventually this competition requires from itself a restrictive power. At least a person in

a summer resort cannot be regarded in the same light as a deer in the mountains. In the negative way of life there may be a resistance to materialistic power or an indefinite feeling of helplessness in the face of materialistic power.

Although amicable and sweet, the more primitive materialistic man is doomed to feel criticized by himself and by others (from inside and outside his heart). Although pure and immaculate, the spiritual man will be condemned completely by material power insensitive to any spiritual subtlety; or he will become lost in a sort of materialistic merry-go-round.

Accommodation of these two opposite aspects will not satisfy our inmost desire. When such accommodation is successful it will result in depravity. When the accommodation is unsuccessful, the friction of the opposites will kindle a formidable destructive fire. It is impossible to ignore these contradictory aspects of our visible world, because they are based on our inmost request for life.

A deeper understanding transcending successful or unsuccessful accommodation of these aspects is needed. Even though everything is observed through sense organs in a necessarily dualistic way, it is possible to not be limited by the duality of the sense world. It may come through hard practice, but the ordinary observation of our world with our sense organs is at the same time holy.

In the realm of real experience beyond intellectual formulation there is no material or spiritual view. The free activity of the mind and the pursuit of material power is our inmost request. The idea of matter and spirit are intellectual formulations which are seen to be non-existent when we resume to the genuine empirical world in which there is no subjective mind or objective material. What really exists is our inmost request -- always in incessant activity. In the realm of thinking this inmost request takes the form of mind and its objects. In true living or experience, which is Zen, the activity of thinking and the everyday empirical world is one there, before reflective thinking takes place. The inmost request plus nothing is our true existence. There is nothing to control or nothing to lose.

In the next Wind Bell Master Suzuki will translate and explain the Main Subject.