

曹源一滴水

Number 85

August 2011

From Shodo Harada Roshi, Abbot of Sogenji, Okayama, Japan

Obon

Now we have been doing the Sanmon segaki ceremony where we face into the world, looking at our daily efforts in training relative to all of the pain and suffering in the world. For those who are alive and in form and for those not in form at this time, for all beings, we crystalize the energy of our daily training energy and offer this at the Sanmon segaki.

With the clear light of our eyes we offer this segaki and it is not about people who are dead. If we see with clear eyes we see that these worlds of life and of death are not two separate worlds. Life is, as it is death, and death as it is, has to be life as well. Just as the sun goes down and day becomes night, but the night is not forever. The cycles continue, the sun comes up, the nights darkness is clarified. This becomes the world of the awakening of the buddhas.

In summary, there is not a 'day' and a 'night'. If we look at it from the perspective of the whole universe when we look at the sun it is day and when we turn our back on the sun is night, but which view is life and which is death? There is no such decision rendered at this segaki. In Buddhism, day is night and night is day, life is death and death is, as it is, death. Satori and delusion, good and bad, awakened and ignorant; to see the world as two is delusion. This is the awakened way of seeing this world.

If we let go of our delusion and attachment there is no longer an unawakened person, only the awakening to our mind that we have always had but never seen. And this is not separate from our awakened world. We train to get to know our already endowed clear mind, we don't gain it from training, it has been there since the start.

A delusion is not something which appears because delusion is one. From the origin we are without extra

thinking, but obstructing thoughts arise when we do things that we name as good or bad. These were originally not there at all, and although this is true and even naming good and bad is still zen, if we get caught, then we're stuck and stopped by something called 'man' or 'woman'.

We do this segaki not for saving those who have died, that is a mistaken way of seeing this. Those who are unfortunate, who is that? It is ourselves. If we cannot save ourselves, then how is another being to be saved? If those who have died were not wise from within, still while having this death they could liberate themselves. We have to liberate ourselves, that is the truth and that is why we have this functioning; to liberate that which is not yet liberated.

The Buddha said our situation is like having a nest of poisonous serpents or a gang of wild animals in our house. If we do not take responsibility for ourselves and work hard then they will take control and ownership. This gang has to be resolved and the gang of thieves cleansed. We have to see clearly that this segaki is for our own training, and for showing us the truth of how we have to awaken ourselves.

This year on the eleventh day of March in the East of Japan there was a great tragedy when more than twenty thousand died. Of course there are many hideous ways of dying. All over the world in countless numbers people are dying. In India, the young children one after another dying from the blazing sun and the ongoing famine. In the middle east the endless violence that is forcing many, many people live in ways that are subhuman even though people want only to live in human dignity. In Afghanistan as well there are those who cannot live in peace. In these times and all over the world, not only in Japan, mankind in the truest sense of people who walk the path together, are not able to join hands and work together. Instead,

death tramples freely upon those who are weak and without power.

This is the first Obon for the victims of the Japanese earthquake in which so many died. From the time of the Buddha there has been this day of Obon or Ullambana, and we traditionally perform segaki at this time of Obon.

When we are centered in our ego we are like someone hanging upside down with all of our blood going to our head, with our feet in the air, and without even knowing that is why we are suffering. To be trapped, hanging upside down is the meaning of Ullambana or Obon. We create so much suffering when we are centered on ourselves, and we give suffering to people all around us as well. We do this so that people can let go of their egoistic view that sees everyone else as wrong and ourselves as correct. Obon is for the pain and suffering in each person's mind and releasing ourselves from this suffering of our upside down views we have Obon.

Obon is like the tray or vessel that we use to serve things. This tray receives all peoples suffering and accepts anything we place upon it.

See those people who are suffering directly and see them as ourselves and not stop in our efforts to liberate ourselves. For this we offer ourselves to society, we let go of that small self-centered egoistic self by offering and serving everyone. We let go of our heaviness and weight of our egoistic self and see the people throughout the world; their suffering and conflicts, each in the midst of it. We have to liberate ourselves from this or there is no true way of resolving this desperate situation, and this is Obon.

not with some idea of how we are a wonderful and good person saving all others but to first liberate ourselves for there is no other way of resolving this. This is the buddhist way of looking at it.

The hungry ghosts (gakis) and angry ones (ashuras) and those who are suffering and dying, do not put them someplace 'over there', but recognize them as ourselves and make deep efforts to soothe another's spirit and in the doing of that we are liberated. To live in this world as the Buddha said, it is not about

Five months that have passed since the great earthquake and tsunami hit eastern Japan and eighty

thousand people are still living in temporary shelters with no homes and only a temporary lifestyle huddled together in loose groups. These people want to have some way to offer to their ancestors even though they have no home or livelihood themselves. Their greatest insecurity is that they cannot offer to their ancestors, they want to do that more than anything. Even though they are unhappy today (perhaps we too), what they want to do most of all is offer peace to our ancestors. Not only those who are victims of the earthquake but to everyone, for everyone. This is the feeling with which we wanted to train in the first place.

We see what is happening in the world, that there are those with whom we have karma and those we don't. People who are so insecure and suffering, we want to offer them some way to not be in pain and to do this we can see them as they are. Whether we have a good or bad personality, all can be touched by offering and receiving. Do not miss a chance to do training, training is not an accessory here. Each person's mind and situation is always changing, yet we must want to do training through it all.

Our human mind cannot be seen in the present moment and that which has happened to us in the past is not clearly visible either. We want to offer to peoples pain, we just cannot stand still and do nothing. It is with this state of mind that we have come to training and with it we continue training.

Anyone can close their eyes and feel their own existence, and how we are in this world through so many karmic affiliations. Connections to our grandparents and further back, and so many other karmic affiliations and because of these connections we exist here, right now.

As humans we have deep connections in the past, in the future and invisible threads throughout society that we see with our minds-eye. We are all of these things, not just 'dumb animals' but humans, deepening our worth and awakening our potential, we see this clearly.

In the society people are mostly praying for their own good fortune and for their friends and relatives to be finished with their suffering, and to be free of the insecurity and confusion in the world. To pray for the peace, to pray for freedom from these difficulties, this desire for ultimate peace is our prayer, and this word

prayer has many varieties.

To pray for ones own good fortune, that is one kind of prayer, another kind is to make efforts for those others who are suffering and wanting to help end their suffering. If there is a form and a material substance there are things we can do to help another. But, finally there is something no one else can touch and get to, and for that there is only prayer that can help and reach that place and this is knowing and acting is humankind's most ultimate wisdom and in accordance to that do we pray!

There are all kinds of prayer but we have to see the most important prayer is to have a mind that has not one speck of dust, if there is anything, whether it is a hope or a direction then it is limited. For all of humankind to let go of all clinging and drink down everything completely is the true prayer and this prayer is zazen. As the buddha taught us, extinguish the flames of greed, anger and hate; and realize nirvana, this is the true prayer.

But this cannot be only a concept or merely a self-satisfied idea that makes us feel we are all done, that is why shi-muryoshin, the four infinite virtues are taught. With endless compassion we take away the pain of all in society with our own body. We awaken to our wisdom and offer it to all beings to take away their pain. All together is compassion. If there is even a little joy, to share that joy and together with others, to cultivate joy. Lastly, to give everything to society, to throw away all our attachments, to let go of our own possessions, and with this functioning we are at one with society. In this way, we experience in our life the wisdom of the Buddha.

This is not a concept of being nothing at all, but completely living our mind of compassion in society. If there is one person like this then people who want to live in wisdom and compassion will gather around them without fail, the buddha has taught us.

We are not doing this ceremony for someone in the past, but for each of us to complete our training even one day sooner and to regenerate society and fulfill our deep vow.

We are doing this to realize our deep awakened eye even one day sooner and use our wisdom for the awakening of all. We do this to feel their pain as our own and to not take our gaze from this; to hold

precious our mind that wants to awaken further and awaken even one day sooner; to share the joy of each person's awakening even one day sooner. For this, attachment and selfishness has to be thrown away and with that effort, with compassion and wisdom, we fulfill our vow and work in society. For this right now, we renew our deep vow and offer this incense.

Thank you for listening for so long,

Harada Roshi's Sesshin Schedule

for information check www.onedropzendo.org or contact sogenji@po.harenet.net

Newsletter Distribution Updates

You can change how you receive this newsletter at www.onedropzendo.org. If you received this newsletter by regular mail and would like to receive it via email, or if you received this newsletter via email and would like a hardcopy sent to you now and/or in the future, please update your information at the website. If you wish assistance or have a question, contact us at info@onedropzendo.org or One Drop Zendo Association, 6499 Wahl rd. Freeland, WA. 98249.



One Drop Zendo Association

6499 Wahl Road,
Freeland, WA.,
U.S.A. 98249

address correction requested