

Great Doubt

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From a question-and-answer session at Shin Won Sah, February 9th 1990.

Question: What is great doubt? ...

DSSN: Everybody thinks about “great doubt”. You know, that’s don’t-know mind.

A long time ago in New Haven Zen Center, there was this young university teacher, who was teaching music in Yale University. In the morning during YMJJ time, he said, “Soen Sa Nim, I have a problem.”

“What kind of problem?”

“You are teaching me don’t-know. That is very, very wonderful, so I want to keep don’t-know mind all the time. But when I am teaching music, I have a problem appear. I want to keep don’t-know mind, then I cannot teach music correctly. I want to teach music correctly and keep don’t-know mind, but that’s not possible. If don’t-know mind becomes clear, I cannot teach music correctly; if I’m teaching music correctly, don’t-know mind is already gone. Not there! Only music! So I have a problem. I want to teach music correctly and keep don’t-know mind.”

So I asked him: “What is don’t-know mind?”

Then he hit the floor.

“Only that?”

“No. Wall is white, floor is yellow.”

“Correct. When you are teaching music, just teach music. That means don’t know. 100% only teaching music.”

So you think about great doubt. What is great doubt? Great doubt’s name is “Don’t Know”. 100% don’t know means great doubt. So great doubt becomes clear means: when you are doing something, just do it. That’s all! If you say, “I am doing something and I want to keep don’t-know mind”, then you have a problem. That is wanting something, already: “I want something: keeping clear”; “100% keep don’t-know mind”; that’s already odd. “I want to keep don’t-know and try mind, do-it mind.”

Do-it mind and don’t know mind: which one is correct? (Laughter) So don’t-know mind is do-it mind, do-it mind is don’t-know mind. Not special. So

moment to moment become clear, means: already that is the great doubt, that is the don't-know mind. ...

Q: ...so never think that great doubt is not necessary?

DSSN: Don't make great doubt. Then already great doubt helps you.

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