

# Teisho: "I Know Who You Are!"

Presented by Zen Master Anzan Hoshin  
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Oooh, you are so mysterious!

You think to yourself, "Who, me?"

Well, that's actually a rather good question but we'll come to that later. Right now the point I want to make is - you don't think you're fooling me, do you?

You can fool your family, you can fool your friends, you can even fool yourselves and you do, but you can't fool me because I've seen your kind before. In fact, everyone is your kind, but we'll get to that later. I know how you hide in thoughts and feelings and storylines, how you pretend that you are sitting there behind the eyes, in the meat, looking out at a world that has nothing to do with you.

One of the ways that you do this is by pretending that the world is all about you. But that's only because you feel so distant from it that you try this way and that to bring it closer. But of course, as soon as anything comes close: a colour, a form, a sound, you retreat. I know all about you. You sit there, looking so innocent...

[Students laugh]

...as if you're not doing anything, but you [Roshi strikes the hansaku on the floor - bang!] explode everywhere. You are not doing anything but [bang!] you explode everywhere as the ten directions and three times, as all beings and all worlds. I know what you're doing.

Well, it's not actually that you are doing it, as it is that what does you is as everyone, everywhere. And that is who you are. You're not behind the eyes. You're not within the meat. You're not anywhere to be found, first of all because whatever you believe yourself to be, that's just a belief; whatever you feel yourself to be is just a feeling. The strongest, densest, most contracted feeling of "I" - feeling of a "self" - is still just a feeling. A self that feels itself shows by this that it is not what it pretends to be. It cannot be the knower and be a known at the same time. So the jig's up. That, which presents itself as you, presents itself everywhere, as everyone, as everything. Who you are is not any one, it is not any place and it is not any thing.

"Who me"?

Yes, you.

The mystery of who you are is what this practice is about. The mystery of who you are has been the sole concern of the Buddhas and Awakened Ancestors.

Huineng said about you, "Before your mother and father were even born, what is your original face?"

Sogaku Myojin zenji wrote a little poem for you. Isn't that sweet? It says,

*Face, face, face.*

*Your mother's face, your father's face, your face.*

*Before all of these faces*

*bring forth This Face.*

So you see, we're always talking about you. Everything that we do here is all about you. Not who you think you are, not who you believe yourself to be, but who you are.

Now, I know who you are and I also know all the ways in which you pretend otherwise. That's why we do the kinds of things that we do here: zazen, kinhin, chanting, Great Bows, teisho. You see, you keep fooling yourself and so you make us go to all this trouble just for you. The things that we do here are the things that we have been doing for roughly 2,600 years. We do them in slightly different ways over time because the Dharma has moved from India to China to Japan to right here. The Dharma is not the same as Indian culture or Chinese culture or Japanese culture, although it took place in these cultures. Zen has its own culture, its own way of doing things, its own reason for doing things and this has been expressed differently in Indian culture, Chinese culture and Japanese culture.

In western culture there seems to be very little available as yet that can be used within the context of the culture of Zen Transmission and practice. It's not impossible but we need to learn how to walk first, how to stand, how to sit, how to breathe, how to hear, how to understand and how to learn, because as yet, we don't really know how to do any of these things, or at least not how to do them very well.

The forms of our practice have been Transmitted from India to China to Japan to right here. I say they have been "Transmitted" rather than merely "inherited" because something that one inherits...well, you just put it in the attic and forget about it. The forms of our practice, the different aspects of our practice, must be practised. We must make use of them and so, in making use of them, they make use of us. That is to say, they change us. We learn how to stand; we learn how to take a step; we learn how mysterious we are; we learn how rich, how dignified, how vast we are. We learn what we are not and we learn what we are.

When we practise gassho monjin, bringing the hands palm-to-palm and bowing, this is not a Japanese bow. The Japanese don't bow like this. They drop their hands to roughly mid-thigh, bob up and down. So gassho monjin is not a part of Japanese culture or Chinese culture, or Indian culture, it's part of the culture of practice. We make use of forms such as these because we need to stop; we need to stand right here, where we are, and allow ourselves to be right here. We need to allow mind to be released into the body. We need to practise the presence of this bodymind within this space of experiencing. And so we bow over and over and over again, here. Surely you've noticed by now.

[Laughter]

You meet someone in the hallway and you stop and you bring your hands to shashu and bow. You come to a doorway and you stop and if your hands were not in shashu, you bring them to shashu and you bow. When you come to the Hatto or the Kaisando or a practice interview, you enter with gassho monjin because all of these moments are extraordinary. All of these moments are priceless opportunities for you to realize who you are.

We bow not merely to honor these opportunities but to align ourselves so that we are capable of allowing ourselves to receive this opportunity. Over time these forms will definitely change. It's difficult to say how. We need to practise them and in practising them, they change. I know one thing: handshakes are out.

[Laughter]

It's kind of difficult to handshake the space of the Hatto when you enter. Beyond that, the gesture itself is repulsive. It's a matter of clasping someone else's hand and your hand being clasped to assure each other that you are not armed. I'm sorry - I'm not armed. Trust me.

So, all of our Lineage Ancestors have been doing and saying everything that they have done and said to unfold the mystery of who you are.

Shitou Xiqian said, "Those who would study the mystery, do not waste time!" and you say, "Who, me"?

Yes, you.

Please, this morning, enjoy yourselves.

[The teisho ends with three strikes of the hansaku]

[Roshi makes one last comment - "I may not be armed, but I am carrying a stick"]