

Alan Marlow

Straight Back Still Mind

one day I complained to Suzuki Roshi that my mind would not be still, but chattered at me constantly during Zazen.

"When your back gets straight your mind will become quiet," he answered.

on another occasion, while serving as his anja, I came to his cabin at Tassajara and found him sitting in his underwear scrubbing out the toilet. "I should be doing that," I said, with some embarrassment. "Sit down and have some tea," he answered. I sat down in my robes and prepared two cups of green tea at his table. "Roshi, what is the difference between you and I?" I asked. "I have students and you don't," he answered without hesitation.

one day while working on the editing of a transcription of his first lecture on the San Do Kai, I came on the phrase "things as it is" and asked Suzuki Roshi if perhaps he had not meant to say things as they are, which I thought to be proper syntax. "No" he said, "what I meant is things as it is."

So much for Syntax

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