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Early Afternoon Lecture by Suzuki, Roshi:

Buddhism is very philosophical, and sometimes intellectual and logical.

It is necessary to be logical and philosophical to believe in the teaching completely. If it is not logical and philosophical, you cannot believe in it. Our teaching should not be doubtful. Although intellectual and philosophical understanding of the teaching is not enough, it should at least be logical and philosophical.

Sometimes a student of Buddhism will become proud of the lofty, profound philosophical teaching. This is wrong. The philosophy is for the believer himself, not for others. — Because it is difficult for us to believe in the teaching, we should enter it from an intellectual approach. However, there is no need to be proud of the profundity of it. It is just for the student, not for others. If it is possible to believe in Buddha's teaching without philosophical understanding it may be all the better. For most of us it is quite difficult to believe in it without intellectual understanding. So philosophy is just for ourselves.

We of the Soto School have the Shobogenzo which, as you know, is very very philosophical, deep, and lofty. It takes a pretty long time to understand the teaching, even philosophically, and there are not so many people who understand Shobogenzo completely. A man may study Shobogenzo intensively and even become quite famous as a result; but by the time he understands it completely he will likely not be a religious leader any longer, but just a scholar, proud of his understanding of Shobogenzo. In the Soto School this is quite possible, so we usually do not talk about the Shobogenzo so much. Rather, we practice Dogen's way whether we have a deep understanding of our practice or not.

The Soto way may seem formal and rigid, if you do not know the background of the rituals. If you want to study it is necessary to have a strong, constant, way seeking mind. Sincerity to accept rituals, to accept the teaching without any discussion. So Dogen Zengi emphasized the straight-forward attitude which accepts the teaching as it is. Just say "hai" (yes), I will do it. That is all. That is our way. If there is some doubt in our way, you may make a philosophical or intellectual study of Shobogenzo. But we should know that Dogen's way is the result of a long intellectual effort based on his pure way-seeking mind. Buddha's teaching has two faces. One is practical and the other is philosophical. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Holy Path are practical teaching. The teaching of interdependence and transiency are the philosophical side. The practical side of the teaching is for human beings, you may say, or the teaching based on value. For human beings the teaching has some value, you know: that is the practical side of the teaching. But the teaching that everything changes and is independent is not just for human beings, it is the teaching for everything.

According to the teaching of transiency or interdependency, there is no difference between human beings and other animate and inanimate beings. It is a universal teaching for everything. However, the Eightfold Holy Path and the Four Noble Truths are for humans and the teaching we should practice. The teaching of interdependency or the teaching that everything changes gives human beings a strong faith in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Holy Path. It gives us the reason why we should practice zen or why we should behave.

These teachings are not just Buddha's invention. The teachings are based on eternal and universal truth. Buddhism has its validity or universality in the scientific world, that is why people like Buddhism. For a Buddhist there is no reason to be proud of the teaching because of its universality. But there is danger for Buddhism in its universality and profundity. Buddhism,



at the same time, is a very practical, vital, and active teaching. A Buddhist should be concentrated on his practice, rather than on philosophical study. Buddhism should not disappear into the realm of science or philosophy. This is a pretty important point in studying Buddhism and we should always be concentrated on our sincere effort and practice.

That is why we reject the idea of gaining from our practice. Gaining ideas belong to our visible world, whereas sincerity belongs to our inmost nature. Buddha's teaching is based on his inmost nature, which is called Buddha Nature. To realize our inmost nature or appease our inner most request is how we practice Buddhism. It may be difficult for a beginner to realize the inner most request, but by your practice you will realize your inmost, deeper nature and this deeper nature will encourage your practice.

Before Zen Buddhism was established, there was the idea of the pure practice of zen. The Hinayana school classified zen in four ways excluding any idea of gaining. The practice which was based on gaining was called "desire practice" (desire world practice: yokukkal-jo). When you practice zen in order to prepare for true zen, that is of course practice based on an idea of gaining. For example, before you begin zazen, you swing right and left centering yourself, or you rub your muscles. These actions are done from a gaining idea in order to prepare for practice.

The Hinayana school made provision for this kind of practice based on desire. It was not part of the four stages of pure zen. Desire-world zen is not Buddhist, is not our zen. You may call it preparatory zen which belongs to the world of desire, but not to the world of form or the world of non-form.

This early Hinayana distinction of pure-zen and desire-zen is why it is not correct to say that Zen Buddhism was established only after Bodhidharma came from the west. Although there was not a specific zen school by that name, zen ideas were clearly pointed out in the Hinayana way. If we miss this point the Zen school will become one of the many schools of Buddhism. Every school should be only Buddhism. A Buddhist should not have sectarian ideas, and there should be no sectarianism in Buddhism. If we understand this point we will be concentrated on the practice itself without any idea of gaining.

Practice without an idea of gaining is called Buddha's practice. If we become attached to enlightenment or to the profundity of the teaching, we will lose the point. When we just practice zazen as a human being without any idea of gaining we have the universality of the teaching, and also its individuality and validity. If we attach to some idea of perfection, we will lose the validity of the teaching, although we may have its universality. But this is no longer religion; it is philosophy or science. So the point is to practice our pure way as human beings with sincerity and without an idea of gaining. This is pure practice. It is not important whether it is the first stage or the second stage in the Hinayana, that is not the point. Just to practice with a pure-way-seeking-mind, that is true Zen and true Buddhism.

If you practice zazen for one or two years or more your zen will become part of your life and you may feel as if there is no need even to practice Zen. At this stage you are practicing zen properly. When you have some joy or ecstasy in your practice, that will be encouraged, but it is not good enough. This encouragement helps you to reach the realm where you do not have joy in your practice. On the other hand, if you come to think that you understand zen and that there is no need for you to study or practice zen any longer, that is a big misunderstanding. Zen should be our whole day and whole life work. We should follow this way without any idea of gaining. It does not mean to ignore the encouragement and joy in your practice; but true practice is beyond our joy or understanding.

Evening Sesshin Lecture by Roshi:

Almost all of you have not practiced Zen so long, but I think you have made great progress. This result is more than we expected. As I always say, for the beginner the most important point is posture. While you are working hard on your posture you will study many things besides your physical training. Physical training always follows mental training, even though you do not try to train your mentality. To put your mind in the right way is one interpretation of Zen. Or to resume your right mind is called Zen. Sama-pati means to resort to the right state of mind. Another interpretation is to put our mind in the right place. Physical training will result from the right orientation of your mind. If you are determined to overcome your pain your mind will follow your pain. But if your determination is not strong enough your mind will be in agitation. Zen is not struggling. When you practice zen your mind should be calm - even though you fight with your pain your mind should always be calm. It means your mind follows your pain like water, as water always follows the lower place. If your determination is strong enough, your mind becomes calm: following your physical condition and finding out many things. As long as you are struggling with your physical condition your mind will not find anything; your mind is shut; your mind is occupied so it will not be anything. When your mind is calm enough, even in your pain, you will find out many things. When your mind is in this state it is called a "well-oriented" mind. To put your mind in the right way is Zen. When your mind is calm you will find various tastes in what you eat. If your mind is not calm, you cannot eat anything you do not like.



When it is completely calm you will find various tastes, whatever you eat. So your mind will change according to circumstances, that is why old Zen masters were quite strict with disciples. If he was very strong and strict they would surrender - their minds would surrender. So you will find out many things in this kind of situation. You have to do many things which you do not like. That is a quite usual routine for us. As long as we want to stay sitting we have to find out some way to control ourselves, and soon we will find out how to control our mind.

Pickles are not something you boil. You eat pickles without boiling them. When I was a boy our master did not like to throw away food, not even pickles which became moldy. So we boiled the pickles and ate them. We tried them and said "this is not too bad": this is how to eat old moldy pickles. It was pretty good, so we served a boiled pickle to our master. He said, "What is it?" He did not know. We usually did extraordinary things so he thought "they must have done some extraordinary cooking." Anyway he did eat them. If we have surrendered to our master, we employ all our effort to control our mind so that we may exist under all conditions, extraordinary and ordinary.

This kind of training is necessary. For some of you it is time to just practice your breathing. In this activity your mind should follow your breathing in and out. We should not try to control your breathing with your mind, the mind follows the breathing. If you try to control your breathing by your mind, your mind will not be alert enough or soft enough to follow the subtle activity of your inhaling and exhaling. If your mind is soft enough to follow the subtle, delicate breathing, then you forget yourself in your breathing. So, that which exists is just your breathing. Your mind has completely become the breathing exercise. If you wish to attain this feeling, just to follow your inhaling and exhaling is the way. This is the way to do things according to our way. Follow the wave and drive the wave; follow the breathing and drive the breathing. It means to become one activity. On the other hand, if you try

to make your breathing become smooth, your breathing will not become smooth. If you just follow your breathing, your breathing will become more and more smooth, without trying to make it smooth. If you have this secret in your everyday life, you will find out many things which you did not notice before. This kind of activity will take place only with strong determination, or a strong way-seeking mind. As long as you are trying to do something, you can not do it. However, if you are determined to do it, you can do it. That determination is not working on your activity, but rather on your physical and mental existence. "I will not move whatever happens to me" - this kind of determination will work on every activity you do, and because of that determination your mind will become quite flexible. In Buddhism a flexible well trained mind is always appreciated. ①

This kind of training is called samadhi, or sama-pati in Sanskrit. In Chinese we call it dhyana or ch'an, or to-ji. To-ji is a well-balanced mind, like water, it gets through the smallest holes imaginable. So before you start practice, it is necessary to make some firm decision, by yourself. No one can force you to make this kind of decision.

As you have made pretty good progress, I want you to make this decision in your practice. It is not just for the practice of Zen, but also for enjoying your life. Without this kind of decision you cannot have a rich life. Your life will be rough and coarse if your mind is not flexible enough to accept things. We are lucky to be able to come together and practice Zen with so many persons. It is not so easy to practice with people in this way. Even though you want to do so, it is not always possible. Today we did it, but we do not know about tomorrow. If only we can make this decision there is no difficulty in our life, there is no problem. Because your determination is not strong enough you have a problem. Actually there is no problem or difficulty whatsoever in this world. Thank you very much.