

A lecture here in the zendō is meaningful in a way quite different from that of an ordinary public lecture. Here you are students; there you are members of an audience. The difference in attitude, and probably attentiveness is significant. If you realize the difference between listening as a student and as an audience member, you will know how to study Buddhism. Mr. Watts did a good job at his lecture. In an ordinary public lecture situation it is very difficult to speak of Buddha Nature.

The correct way to listen to my lecture is to listen with just the right amount of effort. Do not listen with a dualistic frame of mind. The correct way is just to listen—in an accepting attitude. This is different from listening with the intent to ask questions. Asking questions is to merely develop your preconceived ideas. You must give up all preconceived ideas and all feelings of "good" or "not-good". If you listen to your teacher with the attitude of a disciple, you will learn of Buddhism in the right way.

You should listen to the lecture as if you were discovering some truths within your own mind.

(From Dogen's instructions) "There are two ways to put your body in order.":

- 1) practice under a teacher's directions even if he doesn't speak to you
- 2) practice zazen.

I want you to think about this: you cannot practice zazen correctly unless you have a teacher. I do not say this just to emphasize Suzuki. Dogen said you cannot proceed in your study if you omit either the teacher or zazen.

(Dogen) "Everyone has a body; although conduct varies from strong to weak, types of actions vary, etc., yet through this body we directly enlighten the Buddha (attain enlightenment). This is called receiving the teaching."

(Suzuki): This means that if you practice under the right teacher, whatever you do is correct practice—and you will attain enlightenment.

(Dogen): "it is not necessary to change our present body and mind. It is only necessary to follow the enlightenment of a good Zen Master. This is called receiving the teaching directly."

(Suzuki): our practice is not just to follow your teacher's way, nor just to create your own. Right practice includes both...stretching your arms and legs as far as possible under the guidance of a good teacher. Your practice should not be only one or the other. This is also how your culture should develop, neither slavishly following the old ways nor totally ignoring them. That is, a plant does not develop apart from its origin. Zen is the same in this way as the other aspects of a culture.

You cannot correctly study Buddhism if you have a "gaining" idea or attitude. Trying to "gain" something is a form of attachment; and if you attach to something, you lose everything else. If you give up everything, you gain everything. The short-cut way to correctly realize Buddhism is to physically follow our way...which is to seek for everything within yourself, within your big mind.

You should do what you should do. There is no need to worry, in its true sense. Whatever you do is enlightenment, is zazen. But, if you attach to anything you are doing (e.g. pride) you go straight to the bottom of Hell. For example, it is awful for you to believe you understand Zen and feel proud of this understanding. That is why you need a teacher-because a teacher is always watching you!

When your intellectual mind finds its place within your larger mind, it is no longer dualistic.

QUESTION PERIOD

Student: What about getting attached to one's Zen teacher?

Suzuki: "You will never attach to your teacher because he is usually mean!"

According to Dogen, the first step toward the way-seeking mind is when you feel lost, with nothing to rely on, solely on your own. This leads to the way-seeking mind's becoming active-without any thoughts of gaining anything. Realizing that there is nothing particular which you can rely on, you cannot be fooled or led by anything, however enticing. Only truths will suffice you and your way-seeking mind.

As far as other people, e.g. close to you who are engaged in vain pursuits...sometimes it is better to withhold speaking until they have learned their bitter truth through and through.

Student: What about pain in zazen?

Suzuki: Pain intensity does not remain at the same level. It may increase to a particular level, and then begins to diminish again

(usually just when it seems intolerable (?)).

Buddha spoke both eternal truth and situational truths. The situational truths were those concerning living in India during his time. The eternal truths are those concerning the nature of human existence everywhere, e.g. consciousness.

The orientation of Buddha's teaching is toward applying the truths of life to human affairs and human living...how we may apply universal truths toward our human mind's development and functioning.

This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript. It is not verbatim. No tape is available. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. It was reformatted by Bill Redican (7/16/01).