

68-05-19W

Sunday, May 17th 1968¹ “*Correct zazen is your home...*”

[This isn't a Sunday and May 17, 67 is taken so I chose the nearest Sunday, the 19th.-dc]

Tony Artino Notes

“Will power is something you have always.” Thinking power in zazen is not thinking anymore. It includes being in a thinking attitude, but without any object of thought. When you sit you should settle yourself as if you were never going to stand up again.

Usually our understanding of religious life is one-sided, emphasizing emotion or intellect or will— such as asceticism. This sort of understanding misses the unity of these aspects of consciousness. Dogen's religion is called “wondrous” and develops about this unity. But Dogen's religion did not develop apart from his historic and social circumstances. So, I believe some knowledge of his times and circumstances will be helpful to you in understanding his Zen— and Zen practice in America too.

Social circumstances account for 60 to 70 percent of religious life. For a Buddhist, it is very important to understand correctly the nature of one's society and culture, however, it is not necessary to make a special study of one's contemporary situation. Correct zazen will lead to discovering one's place in society and also to a true awareness of the society's makeup.

Even though many of you are young enough to copy with “the busy life,” when you learn where you are and what you are doing, the difference will be great. Zazen can lead you to this “position”— this “home.” Correct zazen is your home; it is where you came from and where you will go when you die. When you have a home and know where your home is, your problems have a place to go. And then they are not problems anymore. The only problem is when your problems have no place to go; that is why we suffer.

We come out from Buddha and we go back to Buddha nature. Your life is not so long, actually. It is very important for us to know where we are and in what direction we are exerting effort. To know our position we must be at one with the whole universe. Then, we will realize that we have no time to waste, and that what we have is our pleasure.

Some think that Dogen went to China to attain something, but actually he went there to be in harmony with his contemporary situation.

¹ Tony arrived late for this lecture, so notes are necessarily incomplete.