

Limiting Your Activity

" Usually when someone believes in a particular religion, his attitude becomes more and more a sharp angle pointing away from himself. In our way the point of the angle is always towards you yourself. "
 OURSELVES.

In our practice we have no particular purpose of goal, nor any special object of worship. In this respect our practice is somewhat different from the usual religious practices. Jo-shu said, " A clay Buddha cannot cross water; a bronze Buddha cannot get through a furnace; a wooden Buddha cannot get through fire ". Whatever it is, if your practice is directed toward some particular object, such as a clay, a bronze, or a wooden Buddha, it will not always work. So as long as you have some particular goal in your practice, that practice will not help you completely. It may help as long as you are directed towards that goal, but when you resume your everyday life, it will not work.

You may think that if there is no purpose, or no goal in our practice we won't know what to do. But there is a way. The way to practice without having any goal is to limit your activity, or be concentrated on what you are doing in this moment. Instead of having some particular object in mind, you should limit your activity. When your mind is wandering about elsewhere you have no chance to express yourself. But if you limit your activity to what you can do just now, in this moment, then you can express fully your true nature, which is the universal

or Buddha nature. This is our way.

When we practice zazen we limit our activity to the smallest extent. Just keeping the right posture and being concentrated on sitting is how we express the universal nature. Then you become Buddha, and you express Buddha nature. So instead of having some object of worship we just concentrate on the activity which we do in each moment. When you bow, you should just bow; when you sit, you just sit; when you eat, you just eat. If you do this the universal nature is there. We call it 'ichigyo-sanmai', or one-act samadhi. 'Sanmai' or ssamadhi' is concentration. 'Ichigyo' is one practice.

I think some of you who practice zazen here may believe in some other religion, but I don't mind. Our practice has nothing to do with some particular religious belief. And for you, there is no need to hesitate to practice our way, because it has nothing to do with Christianity or Shintoism, or Hinduism. Our practice is for everyone. Usually when someone believes in a particular religion, his attitude becomes more and more a sharp angle pointing away from himself; But our way is not like this. In our way the point of the sharp angle is always toward ~~you~~ yourself, not away from yourself. So there is no need to worry about the difference between Buddhism and the religion you may believe in.

Joshu's statement about the different Buddhas concerns those who direct their practice towards some particular Buddha. One kind of Buddha will not serve your purpose completely. You will have to throw it away sometime, or at least ignore it. But if you understand the secret of

of our practice, wherever you go you yourself are the 'boss'. No matter what the situation, you cannot neglect Buddha, because you yourself are Buddha. Only this Buddha will help you completely.