

August 28, 1965
Rev. S. Suzuki
Thursday morning lecture (26th – DC note 2008)

In zen poem says, ‘after the wind stop I see the flower falling....I see a flower falling. Because of the singing bird I find the mountain...mountain calmness’. When something happens in the realm of calmness we find the calmness. Before anything happens to the calmness we do not feel the calmness. In Japanese saying it says, ‘for the moon there is the cloud. For the flower we have wind’. Actually....usually it means the effervescence of life which we find it very difficult to live in it – effervescence of life. But in effervescence of life we should find....we can find the joy of eternal life. When you see the moon covered by cloud...a part of it covered by cloud...you will find the roundness of the moon. If you...when you see the moon...clear moon without any cloud over... anything...trees or sun or weed...you do not feel the moon so round as you see it through something.

When you sit you do not feel anything. You just sit. You are in the complete calmness of your mind. But in everyday life, you will find...you will be encouraged by the calmness of the sitting. So actually the value...you will find the value of zen in everyday life rather than when you sit. Even though you find the value of zen in everyday life we should not neglect zazen. Even though you do not feel anything when you sit if you do not have the experience of zen you cannot anything. You just find weed or trees or cloud. Cloud without moon. Weed without moon means nothing. That’s just weed. That is why you are always complaining about something.

For zen students weed which people do not care for so much is treasure. In this way we have art of life, artistic life. Whatever you do that is art of life. For zen student.

So when you practice zazen you should not try to attain something. You should just sit in the complete calmness. You should not rely on something. Your body should be straight and your spine should be straight without leaning over or leaning against something... .lying against something. You should just keep your body straight. It means you do not rely on anything. You just sit. In this way, physically and mentally you will obtain the complete calmness. When you rely on something or when you try to do something in zazen, it is dualistic. That is not complete calmness. This is very valuable experience and this experience will encourage your effort in your everyday life. In our everyday life we usually try to do something or try to change something into some other things. Or you try to attain something. But try to attain something is already the art of or expression of our true nature. Try to change something into some other thing is already...is the art of life. We should find out the meaning of our effort itself before we attain something.

So, Dogen zen master said, “We should obtain the enlightenment before we attain enlightenment”. Before we attain enlightenment we should obtain it. When you try to do something itself it is enlightenment. It is expression of our true nature. It is not after attaining enlightenment that we find the true meaning of enlightenment. When we are in difficulty, there we have enlightenment. When we are in distress, there we have enlightenment. So he says, “Before we attain enlightenment, we should attain enlightenment”. When we are defilement we should attain the compose, he says...we

should have the composure. In the defilement the composure will be experienced only in our defilement. This point is very very important. By continuing this kind of effort you can improve yourself even though it is little by little. You can improve yourself. But if you just try to attain something, or to make some contrivance to acquire something you cannot work on it properly because you have no art of...technique. You lose yourself in your effort. That is why you cannot achieve anything and you just suffer in your difficulties. But if you find out, if you do it in appropriate way, based on your inmost nature, whatever you do even though it is not perfect, but you can achieve it, little by little. You can make some progress.

So he says... Dogen zen master says, "You should attain enlightenment before you attain enlightenment." Which is important, to attain enlightenment or to obtain enlightenment before you attain enlightenment? Which is important, to make your effort to save million dollars or to enjoy your life in your effort little by little even though it is impossible for you to save million dollars. You can enjoy your everyday life, which is important to us, to be successful or to find some meaning in our effort to be successful. If you do not realize this point you cannot even practice zazen. But if you have this point, you will have the treasure...the true treasure of life.

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