

November 17, 1965 (date changed to 18th – DC/08)

Rev. S. Suzuki

Thursday morning lectures

When you get up early in the morning by alarm, I think you don't feel so well. It is not so easy to come and sit even though...even after you started sitting at first, you have to encourage yourself to sit well. This kind of...those are the waves of our mind—just waves and in pure zazen there should not be any waves in our mind. But while you are sitting those waves will more and more become smaller and your effort change into some subtle feeling. We say 'pulling out the weed'. We make it nourishment of the plant. We pull the weed and bury the weed near the plant to make it nourishment of the plant. So even though you have some difficulty in your practice...even though you have some waves while you are sitting, those weeds itself will help you. So we should not be bothered by the weeds you have in your mind. We should be rather grateful to the weeds you have in your mind because eventually will enrich your practice.

If you have some experience how the weed you have in your mind will change into your mental nourishment in your practice your practice make remarkable progress. You feel the progress, you know. You can feel how it change into the nourishment of yourself. Of course it is not so difficult to give some philosophical interpretation to our practice but that is not enough. We must have actual experience of how our weeds change into the nourishment. Strictly speaking, the effort we make is not good because that is a kind of waves of our mind, but if you, but it is impossible to attain absolute calmness of your mind without any effort. You must make some effort, but we must forget ourselves into the effort we make. In this kind of realm you have no subjectivity or objectivity. Your mind is just calm without even any awareness. And in this unawareness every effort, and every idea and thought will vanish.

So, it is necessary for us to encourage ourselves and to make effort to the last minute where we have no effort. You have to keep your mind on your breathing, until you do not aware of your breathing, but we should try to keep our effort...continue our effort forever. And when we try to...when we continue our effort we should not expect to... expect some stage when we will forget all about it. We should just try to keep our mind on our breathing. That is actual practice. And that effort will be refined more and more while you are sitting. At first the effort we make is quite rough and impure, but by the power of practice, the effort will be more and more pure...will become more and more pure. When your effort becomes pure your body and mind becomes pure. This is the way how we practice zen. This kind of practice is not possible by ordinary activity, but once you understand our innate power to purify ourselves and our surroundings you can act properly and you will learn with each other and you will become friendly with each other. This is the merit of zen practice. But the way of practice is just to be concentrated on your breathing with right posture, with pure, great effort. This is how we practice zen.

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