

December 23, 1965
Rev. S. Suzuki

In our practice we have no special object of worship. If so, our practice is something different from the usual practice. If we say we have no purpose in our practice, you will not know what to do. If there is no purpose, no goal, in our practice we don't know what to do. But there is way. Joshu said, "Clay Buddha cannot cross water; bronze Buddha cannot get through furnace; wooden Buddha cannot get through fire because it will burn away." So whatever object you have, if your practice is directed toward some particular object, that practice will not work ...like clay Buddha, bronze Buddha, or wooden Buddha. So as long as we have some particular goal in our practice, our practice will not help you completely. Your practice will help you as long as you are directed to the goal....it will help you....but when you resume to your everyday life it will not work. Then, how to practice our practice without having any goal is to limit our activity, or to be concentrated on what we are doing at that moment. Instead of having some particular object, we should have....we should limit our activity. If you limit your activity to the extent you can do it just now, in this moment, then you can express fully the universal nature, the universal truth. When you're wandering about you cannot....you have no chance to express yourself, but when you are concentrated on some particular...when you limit yourself....when you limit your expression of the universal nature, then there we have the way to practice. This is our way.

If you....so, when we practice zazen we limit our activity....our practice in the smallest extent....just to keep right posture and to be concentrated on sitting...this is how we express the universal nature, or true nature. Then, you become...you, yourself become

Buddha, you yourself express Buddha nature, or true nature, or universal nature. So instead of having some object of worship we limit....we concentrate our activity on some activity which we tackle. So when you bow you should just bow. When you sit you have to sit. When you eat you eat. If you do so, the universal nature is there. We call it Samadhi. We say ichigyo sanmai. Samadhi is concentration. Ichigyo...one practice...one practice Samadhi.

Joshu's statement, "Clay Buddha, or bronze Buddha, or wooden Buddha" is some Buddha to which our practice is directed. That is bronze Buddha. It will not serve your purpose completely. You have to throw away sometime, or you have to ignore it. But this kind of Buddha will not serve your purpose. But if you realize....if you understand the secret of our practice, wherever you go you are the boss. So, wherever you go you cannot neglect Buddha because you yourself is Buddha. So that Buddha will help you completely. This kind of Buddha, or practice, is the basic understanding of Buddhist literature or Buddhist art. So ones talk can be a Buddhist work. Just to sit, or work, is our practice. When you are satisfied with your activity, that is Buddha's activity.

So, I think some of you who practice zazen here are maybe...may believe in some other religion, but I don't mind, you know, whatever you believe in. Our practice has nothing to do with some particular religious belief. And for you, there's no need to hesitate to practice our practice, because there's nothing to do with Christianity or Shintoism or Hinduism. Our practice is for everyone. Usually when you believe in some religion your thought and attitude will be, more and more, become sharp...sharp angle, like this (demonstrating) but our way is not like this. Our way, you know....the point of the

sharp angle is here...(pointing to himself) not this (pointing away from himself). So there's no need to worry about the difference of the religion you believe in. One of my good friends did not feel so good to attend Buddhist ceremony because he believes in Shintoism. And when you attend Buddhist ceremony the priest....almost all the priests treat him like he is...as if he is one of the Buddhists. So he has to bow exactly as they do. And so he always said, "It is not fair for Buddhist to force their way." I understand what he meant but it has nothing to do with me. My way is not....even though you don't bow it is all right. When you sit you just sit. When you don't want to bow...
(demonstrating by folding his arms and scowling stubbornly). But if you know the purpose...if you know why we practice this kind of practice....even though you practice some particular way, it does not mean to bound yourself by the practice you do.

