

January 20, 1966  
Rev. S. Suzuki  
Thursday lecture

The purpose of zazen is to attain the freedom of our being, physically and mentally. According to Dogen Zenji...Dogen...every being...every existence is flashing into the vast phenomenal world, and each activity of the being...each existence is another understanding, or expression of the quality of the being. I say many stars in the car when I'm in the car this morning....in my car this morning. The stars I saw in the car was nothing but the light from the heavenly bodies which traveled many miles. But for me all the stars are calm and steady and peaceful being...for me at least it is not so speedy being...it is just calm and serene existence. So, we say, in calmness there should be activity...activity...in activity there should be calmness. Calmness and activity is not different. It is same thing. It is different interpretation of one fact because in our activity there is harmony. Where there is harmony there is calmness. And this harmony make the sense of...quality of the being, but quality of the being is nothing but the systematic speedy activity of the being. Because there is some harmony in the speedy activity there is some quality.

When we sit we feel very calm and serene, but actually we don't know what kind of activity we are taking inside our being...we don't know, but because there is complete harmony in our physical systematic activity we feel calmness in it. So, for us, there is no need to be bothered by calmness or activity, stillness, or movement. Movement is nothing but the quality of the being, so quality of our calm, steady, serene sitting is the quality of our immense activity. When you do something, when you take activity, you

fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, so the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. So when you are concentrated on your being...on your quality of the being you are prepared for the activity. So...everything is just flashing...just a flashing into the phenomenal world means the freedom of our activity or our being. In this way, if you sit in right manner with right understanding, you attain the freedom of yourself... your being, even though our being is just temporal existence. But this temporal existence does not change...does not move and always independent from other existences. So on each moment we may change to something else and there is no connection, strictly speaking, there is no connection between I-myself in yesterday and I-myself in this moment. There's no connection whatsoever. Dogen Zenji says that charcoal does not become ashes; ashes has its own past and future and fire...red, hot charcoal has its own past and future; charcoal and red hot fire is quite different existence. Ashes is ashes and it is independent existence. Because it is a flashing into vast phenomenal world. And even though we say, charcoal is black, that is also a flashing into vast phenomenal world. So charcoal is independent and red hot charcoal is also independent. Ashes is independent; firwood is also independent. Everything is independent of each other. So where there is black charcoal there is no red hot charcoal.

Today I am sitting in this way in Los Altos. Tomorrow morning I shall be in San Francisco. There is no connection between I in Los Altos and I in San Francisco. I am quite different being. Here we have the freedom of existence...absolute perfect freedom. That freedom will be acquired by the idea of Dogen's idea of each existence is temporal flashing into the phenomenal world. And there is no pervading existence, or quality in between you and me. When I say you there is no I. When I say I there is no you. You are independent and I am independent too, but each exists in another quite different

realm....quite different moment. But it does not mean there is...we are quite different beings. We are same being but we are same and different. It is rather paradoxical but it can't be helped. It is very paradoxical, but actually it is so. Because we are quite independent being. Each one of us is a flashing into the big phenomenal world. So when I am sitting there is no other person but it does not mean I ignore you. I am completely with every...with every existence in the phenomenal world, but...So, when I sit, you sit....everything sit with me. When you sit everything sit with you. That is our zazen. And everything is just a quality of your being. I am a part of you. I am a quality of you yourself....your being. So, in this practice we have absolute liberation...from everything else. If you understand this secret there is no difference in zen practice and in your everyday life. You can interpret your....everything as you wish.

A wonderful painting is a result of your feeling in your fingers. If you have the feeling on the brush...feeling of the thickness of the ink in your brush, there is painting already before you paint something....when you dip your brush into ink you know the result of your drawing...or else you cannot paint. So before you do something the being there, the result is there. Even though you sit...you look like sit, quietly all the activity is included, the result of your sitting is there already. You are not resting at all. All the activity is included within you. That is your being. So all the result of your practice is included in your sitting. This is our practice, our zazen.

Dogen zenji became interested in Buddhism when he saw the smoke from the incense stick and he felt the effervescence of our life. That...the feeling of the effervescence of life result in the deep philosophy and he later attained enlightenment, and he said, "There is no body or no mind". When he said no body or no mind all his being, in that moment,

became a flashing into a vast temporal flashing into the phenomenal world. He felt the effervescence of life; he felt lonely when he saw smoke from incense stick, but that lonely feeling became more and more stronger and that feeling result in understanding of existence which is just flashing...is just a flashing into the phenomenal world and which is...which include everything...which covers everything, which has immense quality in it even though it is just flashing into the phenomenal world it include all the phenomenal world and it is absolute independent existence when we become a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. That is his enlightenment. So starting from the lonely feeling of the effervescence of life he attained most powerful experience of enlightenment. This is his enlightenment. He says, "I have dropped off my mind and body". He has no mind, no body. Because we think we have body or mind we have lonely feeling, but when you realize that everything is just a flashing into the vast universe you become very strong and you become very meaningful existence. This is his enlightenment and this is our practice too.

