

Rev Suzuki lecture  
April 6, 1967  
Los Altos

Zazen is not one of the four activities: to walk, to stand, to sit, to lie down,, we say, are the four activities or four ways of behavior. Zazen is not one of the four ways of behavior according to Dogen-zenji , the Soto school is not one of the many schools. Chinese Soto School is one of many schools of Buddhism, but according to Dogen, his way is not one of the many schools. You may say, if it is so, why do you put emphasis on just sitting posture, or why not put emphasis on having a teacher if our way is not one of the many schools, or one of the four ways of behavior. Why do you put emphasis on just sitting, or why should you have your teacher. Why we put emphasis on sitting posture, or zazen, is because zazen is not just one of the four ways of behavior. Zazen is the practice which is one of the many and many and many activities, innumerable activities which will continue to the eternal future which was started even before Buddha. So, and this activity, at the same time, includes so many activities which were started even before Buddha and which will continue to the endless future. So this sitting posture cannot be compared with the rest of the four behaviors.

Usually people put emphasis on some particular position, or on some particular understanding of Buddhism, and they think 'this is Buddhism'. So we cannot compare our practice with the practice people normally understand or our teaching cannot be compared with the teaching on which they put emphasis. That is why we should have teacher which does not attach to any particular understanding of Buddhism. And this is originally the teaching of Buddha. The teaching of Buddha is not just one school of Buddhism. The teaching of Buddha originally includes various schools. So how to be like Buddha is our...should be our traditional effort as a Buddhist. But usually if we have no teacher and if we take pride in our in each own

understanding, we will lose the original characteristic of Buddha's teaching, which includes various teachings. Whatever it is, it was Buddha's teaching, according to Buddha. Tentatively people called his teaching Buddhism.

Because Buddha was the founder of the teaching so people called tentatively Buddhism, but actually Buddhism is not some particular teaching.

Buddhism is just Truth which includes various truths in it. Zazen practice is also the practice which includes various activities of all of us. So actually we are not putting emphasis on sitting posture only. How to sit is how to act. We study how to act by sitting and this is the most basic activity for us. So that is why we practice zazen in this way. Even though we practice zazen we should not call ourselves Zen school. We practice zazen, taking example after Buddha. That is why we practice. And Buddha taught us how to act through our practice. That is why we sit. It is not because we put emphasis on just sitting only.

To do some thing, or to live in each moment means to take temporal attitude, on activity of Buddha's activity. To sit in this way is to be Buddha as the historical Buddha was. The same thing will be true whatever you do. That is Buddha's activity. So whatever you do, or you do not, there is Buddha. Because people have no such understanding of Buddha, they think what they do is the most important thing, without knowing who is doing, actually. They think they do it but actually Buddha is doing it. Each one has each one's name, but those names are many names of one Buddha. Each one will take many activities, but those activities, for instance the four activities, are all Buddha's activities. Without knowing this people put emphasis on some activity, for instance, zazen practice. If so that is not true zazen. There is a big difference in the understanding of our practice. Even though we sit in the same way, but if you understand this sitting posture is one of the four postures, that is the wrong understanding. This posture is Buddha's posture.

If you understand this way that is right understanding of zazen posture. If you practice in this way that is Buddhism. This is very, very important point. So Dogen-zenji did not call himself Soto teacher, or Soto disciple. He said, "Who said Soto?" People say Soto school, but there is no reason for us to call ourselves Soto. You should not use the name of Soto he says.

Tentatively, as there are many schools in Japan but we are not one of the many schools which divide Buddhism in many parts. So originally each school should not just be each school. It should be just one tentative form of Buddhism. It should not be just one school. But as they do not have this understanding, so or as long as they do not accept this kind of understanding we must make our effort until all of us give up to call themselves by their particular name. I want you to make this point clear. We are not Soto school at all. We are just Buddhists. We are not Zen even; we are just Buddhists. If you understand this point we are truly Buddhists. Buddha's teaching is everywhere but people do not realize the teaching which is everywhere, and they think this is Buddhism and that is Buddhism. This is big mistake. His teaching is everywhere. Today it is raining. This is Buddha's teaching. People think their own way is Buddha's, without knowing what they hearing, or what are doing, or where they are. So religion is not any particular teaching. Religion is everywhere. We have to understand our teaching in this way. We should forget all about some particular good or bad teachings. There should not be any particular teaching. Teaching is in each moment, in every being. That is true teaching.

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Note: Title handwritten in ink "The True Teaching". Many notes similar through-out text