

October 7, 1965  
Rev. S. Suzuki  
Thursday morning lecture

I am so glad to see you again. For two weeks I studied many things and I found that to have so many friends in this area is quite unusual. Back East they find pretty difficult to have good students. Of course there are many people who are interested in Buddhism, but quite few people are interested in pure form of Buddhism. They are interested in studying the teaching of Buddhism, or philosophy of Buddhism and they are comparing our Buddhism to another religion and they understand intellectually how Buddhism is good for intellectual mind. But whether Buddhism is philosophically deep or good or perfect is not our point. To keep our practice in its pure form is our purpose. When I felt something even blasphemous when they talk about how Buddhism is perfect as a philosophy or teaching without actually knowing what it is.

To practice zazen in this way, with group, is the most important thing for Buddhism and for us. There is nothing so important than this practice for us because this practice is the original way of life. Without knowing the origin of things we cannot appreciate the result of our effort. Our efforts must have some meaning. To find meaning of our effort is to find our original source of effort. We should not be concerned about the result of our effort so much, before we know the original source of our effort. If the origin is not clear and pure all our effort will not be pure and so the result of our effort will not satisfy you. When we resume to our original nature, and starting from the original nature, making our effort incessantly, we will find out, we will appreciate the result of our effort, moment after moment, day by day, year by year. This is how we should appreciate our life.

Those who attach to the result of our effort only will not have any chance to appreciate our effort because the result of our effort will not come forever. But if your original intention is good all what you do is good and you will satisfy with whatever you do. Zazen practice is the practice to resume to our pure way of life, beyond gaining idea, or beyond fame and profit. By practice we just keep our original nature as it is, for the pure

original nature, there is no need to intellectualize what it is, because it is beyond our intellectual understanding and there is no need to say, to appreciate because it is beyond our appreciation. So just to sit, without any gaining idea, with purest intention to remain quiet, as quiet as our original nature is, is our practice. Here in this zendo there is no fancy idea. Once in a week we just come and sit, and after communicating with each other we go home and resume to our own everyday activity as a continuity of our pure practice, enjoying our true way of life. This is very unusual.

What you study...what you...wherever you go people may ask you what is Buddhism... (with notebook). You may imagine how I feel. But here we just practice zazen, that's all what we do. And we are happy in this practice. For us there is no need to understand what is zen. We are practicing zazen. So, for us, there is no need to know what is zen, intellectually. This is, I think, very very unusual...unusual for American society. As you know, back East there are many way of, many patterns of life, according to their religion. So, it is maybe, it is quite natural to talk about what the difference is between various religions and to compare one religion to the other religion. But for us, there is no need to compare Buddhism to Christianity. Buddhism is Buddhism and Buddhism is our practice. So we don't know even what we are doing when we just practice pure mind. So we cannot compare our way to some other religion, but we don't know how to compare our religion. Some people may say Zen Buddhism is not religion. Maybe so. Anyway, Zen Buddhism is religion before religion. So it might not be religion in usual sense. But it is wonderful, even though we do not study religion, what it is intellectually, or without any cathedral or any ornament, it is possible to appreciate our original nature. This is quite unusual. This kind of unusual experience will be found out when you practice it without any gaining idea.