

February 24, 1966
Rev. S. Suzuki

My master passed away when I was thirty three. So after his death I became pretty busy. I wanted to devote myself just to zen practice, but I couldn't stay at Eihieji monastery because I had to be the successor of his temple. For us, it is necessary to keep constant way...not some kind of excitement, but we should be concentrated on usual every day routine. If one become too busy and too much excitement our mind will become rough...rugged. This is not so good for us. So, if possible, try to be always calm and joyful and keep yourself from excitement. That is most important point...thing for us. But usually we are...we become more and more busy, day by day, year after year.

If I go back to Japan this summer I shall be astonished—the change they make in Japan. It cannot be helped, but if we become interested in some excitement this change will accelerate and we will be lost and we will be completely involved in busy life, but if our mind is always calm and constant we can deep our self away from noisy world even though we are in the midst of it. In the midst of the noisy world our mind will always be calm and stable. Zen is not some excitement, but people practice zen because of some curiosity. That is a kind of excitement. Zen is not zen; that is worse...if you practice zen you will make yourself worse because of zen practice. This is ridiculous. I didn't notice that, but many people practice zazen...interested in zazen just by curiosity, and make themselves worse and busier. I think if you try to come once a week here that will make you pretty busy. That is enough. Don't be too much interested in zen. Just keep your calm and keep your constant way in everyday life.

Once...young people, especially, interested in zen, they will give up schooling, and they will...some people go to some mountain or forest where they can sit. But that kind of interest is not true interest. When I was young I didn't intend to be...I didn't like to be a successor of my master but I have to...I had to. But since then, because I became my

master's successor when I was so young I had many difficulties. Too much difficulty gives me some experience but those experiences...comparing to the true, calm and serene way of life, those experiences are nothing. So if you continue the calm ordinary practice your character will be built up but if your mind is always busy there's no time to build up your character. To build up...if you want to build up...even though you want to build up your character it doesn't...you will not be successful if you work on it too hard. It should be done little by little, step by step. It is the same thing to make bread. If you make...if you give it too much heat it will burn...you will not get bread. It is the same thing...we have to do it little by little. And moderate temperature...we want, not too much temperature or excitement—little by little. And you know yourself pretty well...how much heat...temperature you want...you know exactly what you want. But if you are too much...if you have too much excitement you forget your own way and you don't know...you forget how much temperature is good for you. That's very dangerous.

Buddha says it is same thing with the good driver (driver of a cow not motor car)...cow knows how much load the cow can carry and keep the cow from being too loaded. You know your way and your state of mind. So you know how much load you can carry. Don't carry too much Buddha says. It is very good instruction. Or he says it is the same thing with a...to make a dam. If you want to make a dam, you should be careful in making the bank. If you try to do it all at once the water will leak from the bank so you have to make the bank carefully, little by little. Then you will have a fine, good bank for the lake, reservoir. This is the way he says. This is quite true with us. So, too much excitement is not good. It looks like very negative way, but it is not so. It is wise and comfortable way, or effective way...to work on ourselves. I find it...this point is very difficult for people who study zen...especially young people.