

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**SESSHIN LECTURE, 7<sup>th</sup> DAY: CLOSING WORDS**  
**Friday Evening**  
**February 12, 1971**  
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This lecture was the source for the chapter of *Not Always So* called "Not Sticking to Enlightenment" on p. 131.

The Sixth Patriarch<sup>1</sup> said: "To dwell on emptiness and to keep calm mind is not zazen," he said. Or he said: "Just to sit in sitting position is not Zen." But we say, you have to just sit [laughs]. If you don't understand what is our practice and stick to those words, you will be confused. But if you understand what is real Zen, it is a quite usual warning—a kind of warning for us.

Now our *sesshin* is almost at an end. Some people, maybe, go back to their home and participate or get involved in previous everyday activities. But if you practice—if you have been practicing true zazen, you may be happy to go back to your everyday life. You may be encouraged by our practice in going back to your everyday life. But if you feel hesitant to go back to your city life or everyday life, it means that you will still stick to zazen.

So that is why the Sixth Patriarch said: "If you dwell on emptiness and stick to your practice, then that is not true zazen." When you practice zazen, moment after moment, you accept what you have now and what you have in that moment, and are satisfied with everything you do, and you do not have any complaint because you just accept it, then that is zazen. Or even though you cannot do that, you know what you should do. Then sitting zazen will encourage you to do some other thing. Just as you accepted your painful legs, you accept difficult everyday life. Because city life may be more difficult than your zazen practice, so zazen practice will encourage you to have more difficulties.

If you understand in this way what is zazen, that is right understanding. If you have, especially in your seven-days practice, having some taste of real practice, without losing the taste of practice, and continue your busy activity, then that will be great encouragement. Even though it is difficult, and even though you are busy, you have always a taste of calmness of your mind, not because you stick to it but because you enjoy it. There is some difference between "to stick to it" and "to enjoy it." When you enjoy it, you don't have to stick to it [laughs, laughter]. So if you have real taste of our practice, you can enjoy it all the time, incessantly. Whatever you do, that taste is not something you have to

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<sup>1</sup> Dajian Hui-neng (Daikan Enō): 638-713.

stick to, something you have to recall. That is true enlightenment. But even though you think you attained enlightenment, when you are busy, when you are in some difficulty, and you think you need to have that experience again [laughs], that is not real enlightenment because that enlightenment is something you have to stick to it [laughs]. But real enlightenment is always with you, and there is no need for you to stick to it—there is no need even to think about it. It is always with you. So difficulty itself is enlightenment. Busy life itself is enlightened activity. That is true enlightenment.

But even though you want to have this—have a taste of true practice, it may be difficult to have it. The only way to have it is just to continue right practice, following the right instruction and right teacher. That is the only way. If you follow the right schedule in your practice, naturally or some day you may have a taste of it. Nowadays you make a date [laughing], young people are making dates, but enlightenment is not something which you can meet by date.

But if you organize your life, if you get up at some certain time and pick up a bag lunch at a certain time, and go out for work, then if you have some girlfriend or boyfriend, you will meet her without any date. There is no need for you [laughs, laughter] to make a date. At some certain time, she will come to the corner. You will usually see her. That is our way. It is rather foolish to make a phone call [laughing, laughter]. It is troublesome. And even though you meet her, if you meet her by date, by a telephone call: "Hey! I am leaving now," if she doesn't come to the corner, you will be irritated. If you do not make any date, and if she comes at some certain time to the corner, you will be really happy. That is how you attain enlightenment [laughing, loud laughter]. It is not a laughing matter. I am talking about something real. I think you will agree with me.

That is how not to stick to enlightenment. Not to make any date means not to expect enlightenment or stick to enlightenment. Being encouraged by enlightenment, by seeing her even though you don't say anything—you don't talk with her, just have a glance of her is enough. And all day long you will be happy [laughs]. But if you are demanding too much of her, then already it means that you stick to enlightenment.

That is what the Sixth Patriarch meant when he said: "Just to dwell on emptiness is not true practice." Originally he attained enlightenment by one famous statement: "Without dwelling on anything, you will have true mind." If you do so, it means that if you stick to something, you will lose your enlightenment. Even though you try hard in making an appointment or date, it doesn't work. If you attain enlightenment in that way, it may not be—most of the time it may not be true enlightenment. The enlightenment you will have in that way is

enlightenment which you will stick to, and which—and is not something which is always with you, which will always encourage you.

This point is very important. So even though we finish our *sesshin*, we should continue well-organized life and to have real enlightenment. When you practice hard according to the right instruction of your teacher, then that is how you have real enlightenment experience.

In this *sesshin*—this *sesshin* was a very fruitful *sesshin*, and some of you already had a good taste of our practice. Even though you haven't a real taste of practice, I think you have understood how you practice zazen. So what you should do from now on is to continue our true practice.

Thank you very much.

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