

70-01-31

## SUZUKI-ROSHI LECTURE

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Our effort in our practice is quite different than you make in our usual life. This point should be very clear for you, or else you know, your practice doesn't work. An spiritual effort is, at the same time is very poisonous for us. Spiritual attainment is very...sometimes like a, will result ecstasy or sometimes will result arrogance. And in this kind of spiritual arrogance or ecstasy is worse than materialistic arrogance. And you can easily fooled by people by talking about something spiritual, so called it "spiritual," you know. "This is very spiritual thing"...if you say so, that is already very powerful. And there is no need for you to give any evidence for it, you know: "this is spiritual thing. If you practice zazen you will understand it or else you cannot understand it. I practiced zazen for many years so I understand it but you may not understand it. But this is truth." This kind of danger is always with us. So in Buddhism, Buddhist is very strict with this point. That is why, maybe why we practice something difficult.

The usual materialistic world in our usual life, materialistic world, we have enough difficulties so in spiritual world there should be more difficulties because we have to, not only we have to make effort to make progress in our practice, but also we have to keep ourselves from various pitfall, various danger. So we have maybe much more difficulties in our spiritual effort. But if you do it step by step, little by little, then there is not much danger. The effort we make in spiritual life if you do it step by step, little by little as if you save money: 3.05, 3.10...as if you walk from here to down town step by step, then there is not much danger. When you want to achieve something all at once you have various danger. We say spiritual effort or materialistic effort but it is not different thing. Especially in Buddhism, we deny materialistic world; we deny it. Why we deny it is to find out new meaning in materialistic world.

Buddhism started by Buddha. He started his practice when he saw our human world which is very restless, which is very evanescent, where you cannot rely on anything so he deny it. It looks like very good but actually it is not so good. This world is not so good. I think most of us, most of the students here realized this point and came to Zen Center and started our practice. The main interest for you is because you cannot...the main reason for you to come is because you gave up or you resigned to make effort in this world. it doesn't make much sense, you felt, so you wanted to find out some meaning in our life. That is why you came here. And this is, you know, you came here denying this world, usual world. But to deny this world does not mean to escape from this world. That is not possible for you. As long as you are human being, as long as you are physical body that is not possible, even though you make a space trip, that is not possible. You cannot escape from this world. But still you deny it. You don't satisfied with it. This kind of dissatisfaction bring you to find out new meaning of life. So materialistic understanding of life, when you took...we say you resigned but actually it is not possible to resign from materialistic world. And to find out some world means to find out another new meaning to materialistic world. So actually what you will do is the same but meaning of it is different. To find new meaning in our life we practice zazen. And

that is the Buddhist thought. The teaching of "Everything changes," you know, means because everything changes and you cannot rely on it and realizing that we still make same effort and still live in the same world. But difference is before you were attached to materialistic world. And why you strive for in materialistic world was just to acquire or just to attain material success in life. Before that was your effort. But after you realize, after realizing the teaching "Every thing changes" and you cannot rely on materialistic result, what you will do will be the same because you have to eat; you have to sleep; so, nearly the same. Difference is you don't any more attach to the success in the materialistic world. And enjoying materialistic world when it was given to you moment after moment, you know, to enjoy your life will be your purpose, your effort. Your effort, point of effort will change. Before you sacrificed this moment for the next, for the future result, that kind of result, after you don't attach to it, you will never sacrifice your present life for future result. That is more Buddhistic way of life. So Buddhists say "eternal present." You know, "Eternal Present," moment after moment our life is continuity of present, eternal present...present, present, present without sacrificing anything.

And that is more Buddhistic effort, how to enjoy our present life without sacrificing present is why we practice zazen. Do you understand? Does it make sense?

Here, you know, we are practicing zazen. But why we practice zazen is, of course, you may say, to attain enlightenment. What is enlightenment? Usually you may say enlightenment...you practice zazen to attain enlightenment. So even though it is painful I must sit because someday I will attain enlightenment so I must sit because someday I will attain enlightenment so I must sit with painful legs." If that is your practice I don't think that is Buddhist practice. It is like if I become a millionaire, you know: "I will buy you whatever you want, after I become a millionaire." "When you become a millionaire?" If someone asks, "I don't know when." That kind of practice is not our practice.

Here I must continue not so interesting story to make clear our practice. Why we do not real practice...why we cannot practice real practice is because we are so deeply deluded by our materialistic way of effort. Whatever we do, even though you make spiritual effort, the effort you make is actually materialistic way. This is our very unfortunate destiny, maybe. Even when we practice Zen, you know, we are practicing our way with...by wrong idea.

Before I explain this point clearly I want you, I want to make, I want you to make your confidence sure. That is maybe the more appropriate. I tell you, you know...most of you will not have enlightenment experience. You may have but i don't know,...one in about ten or out of hundred will attain enlightenment, will have so-called-it "enlightenment" experience. But if you continue our practice, even though you don't know, you make a big progress in your practice and your character will change. That is one thing I can assure you. So anyway I want you to continue zazen practice. Don't give up zazen practice. You know, zazen practice cannot be materialistic practice. So when you want to give up your practice it means that your practice became already materialistic. You are involved in materialistic idea of practice. So because you cannot see any progress

by your five senses because you are not conscious of your progress, you think it is better to give up. It means that danger is there.

So when you...that is a big warning for you. So when you think: "Oh, maybe better to give up," you know, you should know that "My practice is involved in very materialistic practice," which you denied and started a spiritual practice.

And another things is try to do everything in this zendo without waiting for someone's instruction. You should find out what you should do here. That is our way of practice. We do not give you instruction so much. And by yourself you should find out what you should do. This is very, maybe difficult for you to understand but there is reason why you should not depend on some other's instruction. You should know; you should find out your way by yourself or else you will be involved in wrong practice. Maybe, without knowing what to do, to come to Zen Center five months, six months looks like waste of time you may say. But actually it is not so. And try hard how you should practice zazen.

My master, for instance, had...didn't have so many students. But he did not give me any suggestions and he didn't give us any lecture. What he did was, when he became irritated he scolded us, that's all. Only when he became impatient. So we, you know, we liked his scolding voice very much because we know immediately what we should do. It is very embarrassing, you know, to be with him without knowing what to do, especially when we visit to observe memorial service fro someone and when many visitors are there following him without knowing what to do, where to sit, how to recite sutra or how to hit bell. Anyway in front of us there were bell or *Mokugyo* , although we don't know what to do with tit. And if we don't know how to start, how to say, "*Ma ka Hannya Haramita Shingyo*", he himself will start it: "*Ma ka Hannya Haramita Shingyo*" he says, he started, and look at us. "What are you doing?" We don't know HOW to manage bell or *Mokugyo* and if I don't he...he is very impulsive! If none is watching us it is only...if it is only our teacher and us it is all right. Between us that is usual routine so...it was all right. But if many people are watching us it is very embarrassing. But he didn't mind at all. If I can...if we cannot do it: "Give me bell and *Mokugyo*!" He hit...juts sitting behind him. (Roshi is laughing some words are inaudible). And we didn't know what kind of sutra he may recite. So immediately after, before, when we start he said: "Take this sutra." So at that time we..."Oh. This sutra we will recite today." But we don't. So he recalls almost by himself. We, you know, first one or two page we could follow and three, four page, we don't know what to say so, as much as possible we followed without voice. But that is not possible at all so we, eventually we will give up. We will give up. But when we go home they may give us envelope. It is very bashful to receive envelope without reciting sutra and without doing anything. They may say "Dozo." Very formal, you know, but it was very difficult to receive it. But we have to receive it so we did, that's all. That kind of thing was what I did when I was small. A novice.

I think this kind of experience was very valuable and helped me a lot. So it may not be so good habit, but I don't prepare so much for something I will do tomorrow or next year. And I, I can find out what to do. I have some confidence to find out what I should do there when the day comes.

For instance, when I come to America, you know, I didn't collect any information about Sokoji or America or San Francisco. I just came to San Francisco without knowing anything. And I didn't...I wasn't afraid of anything; I was, I felt very good making airplane trip and seeing San Francisco. And when I arrived at airport many people were there to see me and I went to Sokoji Temple. Because I didn't expect anything, because I did not have any picture of Sokoji in my mind so what...I felt very good anyway. "Oh this is Sokoji. This is Japanese restaurant." The first floor is parking place, and stepping up the high stair, we went to restaurant. "Oh, this is American restaurant." Usually, in Japan, first floor is dining room. But here, you know, first floor is parking place. And an old, old lady appeared and said, half English and half Japanese, said something to me. "Oh this is Japanese people in America." Everything was interesting. And I could easily find out how to become friendly with those people. So because I had not much preconceived idea of America, so I didn't care Japanese people or Caucasian...you know, I didn't mind at all because I didn't have any idea of what we will do here. This kind of attitude is very important. That is how you live in each moment, to accept things as it is. So naturally, in your practice some day, sometimes your practice will be very good. Sometimes very drowsy and sometimes very stiff. But that is zazen. There is no other zazen for you.

If you say enlightenment...someone has enlightenment experience, "That is his zazen not my zazen; my zazen is painful zazen. That is my own zazen. It is rather foolish to compare my own zazen to someone's zazen." When you, you know, detached; when you free from the ordinary materialistic way of life, you will find your own way of life, which will be materialistic...maybe so. But that is, when that is your own practice, you know, that is not any more materialistic or spiritual practice. It is both spiritual and materialistic. Only when you say, when, only when you analyze your practice it maybe materialistic or spiritualistic or you analyze, criticize someone's practice. You may say: "His practice is materialistic or very spiritual." That is only when you talk about someone's practice which doesn't make much sense to you. We do not emphasize nothingness or emptiness. We do not deny or...yes deny someone's because we have some, some good practice instead. We deny someone's practice or our own practice. We are not, we cannot be satisfied with our practice or someone's practice and we will be critical with our practice. But that is not because we want to, we have some good practice instead.

It is very easy to criticize someone's practice. Most people do it. But if he asks you, "Then, what is your practice?", then, you have nothing. What you have is painful practice or drowsy practice or stiff. So we, sometimes we should deny our practice to make some progress. That is all right, to make some progress. But just to be critical without practice and to give up our practice...to become very critical without practice is very foolish. Don't you think so?

To criticize someone's practice when you have no power of giving advice or when you are ready to help him...(Turn over tape, words lost) in everything...new meaning in everything. So anyway, the most important point is to live on each moment in the area,

in some given area, in the area you live in. You should live with things you have right now and to find new meaning in it. That is our actual practice. A good example is our two-day sesshin. In that way we continue our everyday life. Buddhist when we started, when Buddha started our practice, do not concern things which we cannot see. We are doing everything within the, within our reach. That is world for us.

There is no other world for us. You may say "this world or the other world;" this world or future world, but there is no such world. Because you say "this world or that world," Mahayanist Buddhist started to talk about what is the result of delusive substantial idea. You think as if there are something else, where something else which you cannot see. But we do not talk about, we do not put any consideration something like that. When we say "whole world," whole world maybe this room or zendo. That is whole world. Sometimes maybe this country or this Earth or this universe. According to the situation, "whole world" will be different, but when we say "whole world," the world we live is the whole world. We are not philosopher, you know; Buddhist is not philosopher. We are just...our practice, our life is concentrated on this world which we see or which we hear. And within our reach we do everything. So when you practice zazen, black cushion is your world and no more world and nowhere to go. With that understanding we should practice zazen. Then your practice will work. That is to say to live in each moment or eternal present. This kind of world will continue eternally. Big world, small world; painful world, happy world... one after another our world continues. And there is no connection between this world and the other world. Because there is no connection we should sacrifice our life for future life, and we should make our best effort in each world. That is our way of life.

So there is no me or no you. Right now, black cushion is very colorful. But when you go back to zendo your cushion is black. And that is, this is one whole cushion on which you are sitting. For you this is cushion; for me this is cushion. But you may say this is, this cushion is common property. But it is not so. This cushion, big cushion is for each, only for you, each one of you, not common property but for each one of you. If you really understand what we are doing here. That is how you extend zazen in everyday life. What time do you start next zazen?

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