

70-12-13

LECTURE AFTER TRIP TO JAPAN. "JAPAN NOW." "ZAZEN AS OUR FOUNDATION."

December 13, 1970

In this trip I studied in Japan and I found out many things and many things happened. Many things have happened since I visited Japan four years ago. Can you hear me? Japan changed a lot. Not only various food and materials now is very high. Transportation changed and the road is pretty good now. And people they are very witty and their life is more now Western-style and busy. If you go from here, from America, you will be amazed how busy life they have in Japan. Because of the easy transportation, the area they work expanded. For instance, four years ago the station I went to was Iozu (?) Station, but nowadays I go to Shiokazo Station (?) which is three times as far, or four times as far as from to go to Iozu-so according, they have to buy something driving car four times more. It looks like Japan has no more old culture, but if you go to Kyoto you will see many Japanese young generation who are studying old temples and old traditional culture of Japan. So I think if you say Japan has completely changed that is not true. Japan-life of Japan changed a lot.

Meantime, as you may know, Yukio Mishima committed suicide. Did you know that? He is a novelist and he was one of the most famous writers, but he committed suicide in Jietai camp (?). He tried to appeal his feelings to the...not soldiers, but to the people who are working at Jietai-I don't know-self-defensive, self-defense, not army but-he expected Jietai will become sooner or later a kind of army, but Jietai didn't change. So, and he believed in...former emperor system, but Japan has no sign of changing towards emperor system, old emperor system. So he was disappointed. But on the other hand, he was a romanticist. Why he committed suicide is that nowadays people talk about many things and write many things, but what they write or talk about it's not much to do with their own life. Since they are talking about something which he feels, what they feel or what they think. That is why-but he didn't like that. What he write was what he actually wanted to do. People, you know, interesting things is-people liked his work so seriously. So maybe he wanted to know how people accept his writing. He thought if he has that kind of insurgence, people may change by writing something, but people didn't change at all. That is why he finally committed suicide. Maybe-I maybe wrong, but I feel it that way.

When I compare, nowadays, the life of Japan to the one you have in America-America has no tradition and no special culture. But they accept many cultures as Japanese people accept various culture from Western countries. But as the land is so narrow, and accordingly, as they have to work so hard, they had no time to have time to feel things, you know. While in America, people have more time to think or to feel. Japanese people, you know, are always busy and always doing things in very fast pace. But in America no one works so hard as they do. Our life is not so busy here. So you feel something from your bottom of heart. I think this point is very important. You have

time to sit and to bring your life right into your home. I think that is the meaning of sitting. So when you-it is necessary I thought for Japanese to spend their time in sitting, forgetting everything. Putting busy life aside. If they know how to sit, their life will change. I think sitting is the bottom of our life. And everyday activity or intellectual study will be the other two sides of the triangle. Japan-most people have no bottom. They have just two sides of the triangle. So the two sides are not so stable because they have no bottom. American people whether you what is zazen, you have something like-your life is what you-your life is more or less has bottom which is something like sitting meditation. In Japan even though we talk about ZEN, Zen is, you know, still two-sided triangle. They think that is something which they should study, you know, intellectually. Or something they can find out in old, old, you know, classics, or something that could be found in Eihei-ji or various monasteries.

They don't know actually what is zazen, but here you have no big traditional monasteries, but the life you have is more like with bottom of sitting meditation. When I was writing something I thought it is easy to write something in nighttime rather than daytime. I could write many pages or ten or fifteen or sometimes twenty pages at nighttime, but when I started to correct or read what I wrote again, the part I wrote at nighttime more and more became less and less. (Laughter)...The part I wrote in daytime is very constant. There was not much need to correct or to cross-to throw any out. I felt it maybe good for an artist to work in nighttime when your imagination is very strong, but for a real thinker, for religious people it may not be so good. Nighttime will not be so good a time to work. Nighttime, I thought, we should rest and daytime with people and we should work more practically.

The advantage of our life of leisure, of life with openness of our minds is very valuable. And that is what I felt, you know, in Japan, especially when I read of Yukio Mishima committing suicide. They didn't talk about his suicide so much, but people did not have so bad feeling about what he did. Of course, you know, it is not our tendency to criticize people who passed away. Although they do not agree with him, they had a kind of sympathy, but that is, you know, just superficial influence of him over Japanese people.

zazen practice is not, you know, formal practice which could be compared with some other activity. the main point of zazen is too open our life for everything and to see things as they are and to feel things as they are, as they come, without prejudice, without any special feelings,-which could be the foundation of our life-zazen practice. So practice by itself does not mean anything. But when, you know, something comes or when you face to something, it will have the tremendous, the important meaning. By itself it is just plain water, but if someone, something comes, the plain water will reflect, the calm water will reflect things as they are. If you have no zazen practice, the things you see is just a picture of something, not actual reality, but only when you have zazen mind things you have will become real. we say, "the painted cake cannot be eaten." (Laughter). You cannot eat painted cake even though it is beautiful. If you have no zazen what you see, what you see, what you eat, is painted cake. You cannot eat homemade bread, you will eat just, you know, white bread. That is, you know, why we

sit.

I felt sorry for Japanese sincere students who are studying old culture without realizing this point. Whatever they study, without zazen, is, you know, just picture. I think my trip this time was very valuable, give me very valuable experience. I was very busy in Japan and main purpose of my trip is Dick Baker's transmission ceremony which took about-more than one month. he has-had been working for that...not ceremony, but transmission, accepting transmission from me. You may ask what does it mean, but you shouldn't ask because, you know, you will have just picture of transmission. when time comes for you to receive transmission, when you realize something, that is actual transmission, so we say we have nothing to transmit. What you have is to realize-to realize what you have is actual transmission. On December 8, we finished his transmission ceremony.

Thank you very much.

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