

Communication (I)

Without any intentional fancy way of adjusting yourself, to express yourself as you are is the most important thing. "

Communication is very important in zen practice. Because I cannot speak your language very well, I am always seeking some way of communicating with you. I think that ^this kind of effort will result in something very good. We say ^{that} if you do not understand your master's words, you are not his disciple. To understand your master's words, or your master's language, is to understand your master himself. And when you understand him, his language is not just ordinary language, but language in its wider sense. Through your master's language, you understand more than what his words actually say.

When we say something, our subjective intention or situation is always involved. So there is no perfect word; some distortion is ^always present in your statement. But nevertheless, through our master's statement we have to understand the objective fact itself - the ultimate fact. By ultimate fact we do not mean something eternal or something constant, but we mean things as they are in each moment. You may call it being or reality.

To understand reality as a direct experience is the reason we practice zazen, and the reason we study Buddhism. By the study of Buddhism, you will understand your human nature, or your intellectual faculty, or the truth present in your human activity. And you can

take this human nature of yours into consideration when you seek to understand reality. But only by the actual practice of zen, can you experience reality directly and understand various statements made by your teacher or by Buddha in their true sense. Strictly speaking, it is not possible to speak about reality. Nevertheless, if you are a zen student you have to understand it directly through your master's words.

Your master's direct statement may not be only in words; his behavior is likewise a way of expressing himself. In zen we put emphasis on demeanor or behavior. By behavior we do not mean a particular way that you ought to behave, but rather the natural expression of yourself. We emphasize straight-forwardness. You should be true to your feelings, and to your mind, expressing yourself without any reservations. This helps the listener to understand more easily.

When you listen to someone, you should give up all your preconceived ideas and your subjective opinions; you should just listen to him, just observe what his way is. ~~That is how we communicate with each other.~~ We put very little emphasis on right or wrong, or good or bad. We just see things as they are with him and accept them. This is how we communicate with each other. Usually when you listen to some statement you hear it as a kind of echo of yourself. You are actually listening to your own opinion. If it agrees with your opinion you may accept it, but if it does not, you will reject it or you may not even really hear it. That is one danger when you listen to someone. The other danger is to be caught by the ~~opinion~~.

statement. If you do not understand your master's statement in its true sense, you will be easily caught by something which is involved in your subjective opinion, or by some particular way the statement is expressed. You will take what he says only as a statement, without understanding the spirit behind the words. This kind of danger is always there.

It is difficult to have good communication between parents and their children because parents always have their own intentions. Their intentions are nearly always good, but the way they speak, or the way they express themselves is often not so free; it is usually too one-sided and not realistic. We each have our own way of expressing ourselves, and it is difficult to change that way according to the circumstances. If parents can manage to express themselves in various ways according to each situation there will be no danger in the education of their children.. This however, is rather difficult. Even a zen master has his own way. When Nyshiaru Zengi his disciples he always said, " Go away ! " His students took him literally and left the way of expressing himself. In and he said, " Go away ! " / If things. habit, you will easily misunderstand express danger is always present in our r intention. listener or a disciple, it is nec

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from these various distortions. A mind full of preconceived ideas or subjective intentions or habits is not open to things as they are. That is why we practice zazen: to clear our mind which is related to something else.

To be quite natural to ourselves, and to follow what others say or do in the most appropriate way, is quite difficult. But if we try to adjust ourselves intentionally in some way, it is impossible to be natural. If you try to adjust yourself in a certain way you will lose yourself. So without any intentional fancy way of adjusting yourself, to express yourself quite freely is the most important thing to make you happy, and to make others happy.

And you will acquire this kind of ability by practicing zazen. Zen is not some special fancy art of living. Our teaching is just to live always in reality in its exact sense; to make our effort moment after moment to do so is our way. In its exact sense, the only thing we actually can study in our life is that on which we are working in each moment. We cannot even study Buddha's words. To study Buddha's words in their exact sense means to study them through some activity which you face moment after moment. So we should be concentrated with all our ^{full} mind and body on what we do, and we should be faithful subjectively and objectively to ourselves, and especially to our feelings. Even when you do not feel so well it is better to express how you feel without any particular attachment or intention.

