

Non-Duality (II)

" For zen students a weed, which for most people is worthless, is a treasure. "

A zen poem says, " After the wind stops I see a flower falling. Because of the singing bird I find the mountain calmness ". Before anything happens in the realm of calmness, we do not feel it; only when something happens within it, do we find the calmness. There is a Japanese saying, " For the moon there is the cloud. For the flower there is the wind ". When we see a part of the moon covered by a cloud, or a tree, or a weed, we feel how round the moon is. But when we see the clear moon without anything covering it, we do not feel that roundness the same way we do when we see it through something else.

When you are doing zazen, you are within the complete calmness of your mind; you do not feel anything. You just sit. But the calmness of your sitting will encourage you in your everyday life. So actually you will find the value of zen in your everyday life, rather than while you sit. But this does not mean you should neglect zazen. Even though you do not feel anything when you sit, if you do not have this zazen experience, you cannot find anything; you just find weeds, or trees, or clouds in your daily life, without the moon. That is why you are always complaining about something. But for zen students a weed which for most people is worthless is a treasure.

With this attitude whatever you do, life becomes an art.

When you practice zazen you should not try to attain anything. You should just sit in the complete calmness of your mind and not rely on anything. Just keep your body straight without leaning over or against something. To keep your body straight means not to rely on anything. In this way, physically and mentally, you will obtain complete calmness. But to rely on something or to try to do something in zazen is dualistic and not complete calmness.

In our everyday life we are usually trying to do something, trying to change something into something else, or trying to attain something. Just this trying is already in itself an expression of our true nature. The meaning lies in the effort itself. We should find out the meaning of our effort, before we attain something. So Dogen said, " We should attain enlightenment before we attain enlightenment ". It is not after attaining enlightenment that we find its true meaning. The trying to do something in itself is enlightenment. When we are in difficulty or distress, there we have enlightenment. When we are in deilement, there we should have composure. Usually we find it very difficult to live in the evanescence of life. But it is only within the evanescence of life that we can find the joy of eternal life.

By continuing your practice with this sort of understanding you can improve yourself. But if you try to attain something without this understanding you cannot work on it properly. You lose yourself in the struggle for

your goal; you achieve nothing; you just continue to suffer in your difficulties. But with right understanding you can make some progress. Then whatever you do, even though not perfect, will be based on your inmost nature, and little by little something will be achieved.

Which is more important; to attain enlightenment, or to attain enlightenment before you attain enlightenment? To make a million dollars, or to enjoy your life in your effort, little by little, even though it is impossible to make that million? To be successful, or to find some meaning in your effort to be successful? If you do not know you will not even be able to practice zazen; if you do know you will have found the true treasure of life.