

CITY PRACTICE

SUZUKI-ROSHI: It may be a mistake to think it is easy to practice zazen when we have a complete building with a nice Buddha Hall and zendo. I know how difficult it is to practice in this kind of building. Because the building is so good there are difficulties. You know that to practice our way is not easy; it is difficult.

Our practice should be related to our life in the city and to the lives of our neighbors, too. This is a city zendo, where everyone may come and practice our way—not only old students but also people from outside of Zen Center. There are big difficulties, for new students and for old students alike. Old students will have double duty and new students will have difficulties which they do not even dream of. So the old students must make practice easier for the new ones. The old students should lead the new students so they can practice our way more easily, but without telling them this way or that way, you should do this or you shouldn't do that. And our daily life in this building—extended from our zazen practice—should have a good relationship with our neighbors, too. Even though someone's nose is beautiful it should not be fixed upside down.

We say our practice is the ornament of Buddha. Even though students don't know what Buddhism is, if they come to some beautiful Buddha Hall then they will naturally have some feeling. But essentially, for Zen Buddhists, the ornaments of the Buddha Hall are the people who practice there. Each one of us is, should be, a beautiful flower. And each one of us should be Buddha himself, who leads people in our practice.



SUZUKI-ROSHI: Our practice is to help people, and how to help people is to practice our way in each moment. That is how to live in this world and how to practice zazen. To have absolute refuge, we do not have emotional activity or thinking activity in our practice. To stop thinking, to be free from emotional activity when we sit does not mean just to be concentrated, but to have complete reliance on ourselves, also. We are just like a baby who is on the lap of its mother. That is zazen practice, and that is how we should extend our practice to our everyday life.

Of course, there are no special rules on how to treat things or how to be friendly with others. How we find the way in each moment is to think about how to help people practice a religious way. If you don't forget this point, you will find out how to treat people, how to treat things, how to behave yourself; and that is at the same time the so-called Bodhisattva way.