

One student may say it will cover the whole state, and another may say it will cover the whole earth, but I would rather say, as Nanyo Echu said, "Any stone will be good enough." Even a small stone can be good enough for me. You know, which do you like—the whole world or a small stone? I rather prefer a small stone which we can carry or move. The small stone is you yourself which covers everything. If you think the whole big universe is yourself, you will be lost. It does not make any sense. You need one small room for yourself. That is very true. When you find yourself really in the small room, as one of your rooms, then there is you yourself and the whole universe is there. The whole universe makes sense to you. Without your room, the whole universe does not make any sense.

So what you need now is the small room, and what you will need after your death is a small stone maybe. This is very true. This is actual reality which is always true with everyone. So do not talk about the whole universe or some mysterious experience, but just find yourself in the small room or in the rigid practice of Zen. "You should not go that way, you should go this way. You should cross your legs this way." Under this kind of limitation, you will find yourself. Real self is here you know. But because you discuss whether this room is good or bad, big or small, you lose your real self. Before you discuss, before you are caught by discriminating and thinking mind, you own your room.

To find true joy under some limitation is the only way to realize the whole universe. There is no other way for us to approach the whole universe. When

you exist right here, the whole universe makes sense to you. Before you think about it. You must give up your foolish discrimination, your foolish idea of freedom. In this way we should practice our way. If the rules are provided on a big scale, you may feel very good, but you will find it very difficult to follow that kind of complicated big-scale rule. The simpler the better, and the stricter the better. Actually it is so. But we must be careful not to make the rules too strict or you will rely on them, or find them too easy and just goof off. It is easy to follow strict rules. But if you do exactly what your teacher says, it works. That is all.

Our rules were formed by Hyakujo Zenji. He made them not too big and not too small. He and many others have thought about the various rules that patriarchs and Zen Masters have followed. That is how Zen rules originated and since then we try to improve our rules according to the circumstances under which we practice. You can trust our rules because they are the improvement of many Zen Masters. Of course I think we should improve our rules, or have more appropriate rules for us, but not from a scientific attitude or by generalization. The point is, the spirit is, to follow or understand why we must follow our way, why we must have some rules in our practice.

We should come to the point where we can give up superficial self or universal self, a self that you can replace for someone else's self. We enjoy some universal medicine which is good for everyone, but if so it will not actually help you much. Do you trust some medicine which is for everyone? Medicine should be just for you, prescribed for our practice and for each circumstance. Not medicine we can sell to many people. This is real medicine. It is better to stick to one thing rather than to try to understand many things. It is better to appreciate things one by one, rather than to try to put everything into your pocket where you will not see it. We put emphasis on validity, on direct effect on each one of us.

Why you practice zazen is to be filled with the spirit of the Bodhisattva and the real feeling of your being. Being which transcends our thinking mind and emotional activity. As long as you do not give up your thinking mind, it is not possible to make your, to have your enlightenment happen to you. That experience may happen to you in various ways. You say big enlightenment, small enlightenment, but actually there is no small enlightenment or big enlightenment. After you are dead do you need a big stone or a small stone? It doesn't make much sense. Anyway you need something. Any stone will do. That's all. You need something. And better to have smaller one, you know. Better to have very narrow rigid practice. It is easier for you to follow.