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# Nothing to teach

## **Mondo with Sengyo van Leuven - Saint Thierry, in May, 2015**

**Question 1:** *The more I do zazen, the less I know what is "to do zazen ". I have the impression that, when I do zazen, things take place beyond me. That is, sometimes there are thoughts which arise, sometimes the mind is completely clear and open to everything that happens around me.*

**Sengyo van Leuven:** Yes, exactly. This is the way it is actually, it is not by our own will that things occur.

**Q. 1:** *But after, the problem is: what should we teach?*

**S.V.L.:** Nothing. Nothing, because we can teach nothing. The people have to realize by themselves. The teacher cannot realize things for the others. We teach how to take the right posture, the posture of the Awakening, how to breathe, how the posture of the mind should be, the state of mind, to let the thoughts go, not to judge, to always open our hands, the letting go, the coming back to the body, and by this constant come back, the giving up of the body, of the body-and-mind and realization of the Way.

**Q. 1:** *Yes. Sometimes we come back non-stop, again and again, we realize non-stop, again and again, but sometimes we get caught ...*

**S.V.L.:** Sometimes, we are a little bit taken by the illusions of the "Me". With the experience of the practice, we realize faster and faster that this trap exists, or that we fell inside, but the danger is not there. The danger, it is not to see it. And this is why we continue to trust a guide, a master throughout his whole life, we continue to practice with this master as long as possible. And even if this master is not there anymore, it is necessary to continue to be careful on the Way and always to question oneself. Not be satisfied with ourselves, not to be conceited, to remain modest and in fact, not to know. That it is the best answer which we can give: "I do not know ". Because actually, myself, I do not know.

But I can speak of the experiences I made. That it is my teaching. I cannot speak about somebody else, I cannot speak about something else. It is by the self-abnegation that we understand. And this realization becomes impregnated by this experience. There, we teach. Thus, if you know less and less what is zazen, it is because somewhere you are on the right track. That means that all the safeties, the convictions, the concepts begin to fall, are not so sure anymore, so definate.

That means that there is a bigger opening. It is actually it that we have to see. Thus don't worry, we are anyway never ready, we are never at the end either, it is always something to realize, to actualize, here and now. It is necessary to continue eternally, it is the wish which we made as bodhisattva. And even if this body fails, the wish continues. And that makes that, when the four aggregates put themselves together again, this wish is again present and this agglomerate which formed itself meet again the Way. And ourselves, every minute, from birth to death, on

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each moment of our life, we promise to come back, to continue the practice by taking place beyond, on the other bank.

We do not have to lead people to the other bank. We have to put ourselves on the other bank and leave from there to act for this bank. That is in fact that there is no bank, it is a Whole, there is nowhere to go, just the here and now must be actualized, it is zazen that do zazen, there is no "me" inside. Good luck, good continuation!

**Question 2:** *In Zen, there is at the same time silence and words. We go from the words, the thoughts which arise, to silence, and then there are the words of the person who leads zazen, the kusen. Which place should we give to the words, the thoughts and the silence?*

**S.V.L.:** The words of the teaching arise from the silence. It is not an intellectual masturbation. It is necessary to understand this, otherwise it doesn't mean anything. If we give comments or purely intellectual reflections, they have no value. And moreover, at that moment we could not teach any more. We can only teach what we have realized. It is that Sensei [Master Roland Rech] told me all the time. And thus the true teaching really arises from the silence. It is not my person who is speaking. It is me who is speaking, it is not somebody else, but it is not "me". You understand?

**Q. 2:** *The source of the words, it is the silence?*

**S.V.L.:** Yes, they find their origin in there, in the practice, in what we have realized at this moment and at that moment, we feel, as the barriers fall a little bit, we see better where there traps are, where somebody is stumbling. That feeds the compassion to protect and to guide, but not to punish or laugh or make nasty comments, but from a very big compassion that arises from our wishes of bodhisattva, while following the precepts as well as possible. The precepts are in our daily life there to guide us. But everything must be seen in his right value, the right light.

**Q. 2:** *Because there were many writings, for example Dogen, Buddha ...*

**S.V.L.:** Yes, absolutely. They were very prolific, but it is because the experience is so difficult to express that actually there are so many writings. Thousands of pages on the same subject.

We can read them, and reread them, and hear [the teaching] again and again; it is not going to touch us until the precise moment when everything unites. The situation is then favorable to the understanding and something we have already heard one thousand times before suddenly penetrates, and we wake up to it. And it can be only at that moment, not earlier and not later. That's it.