

The Sayings of Master Rinzai
(A Selection)

TRANS: D.T. Suzuki

Those of you who wish to discipline themselves in the Buddha's Dharma must seek true understanding. When this understanding is attained you will not be defiled by birth and death. Whether walking or standing still, you will be your own master. Even when you are not trying to achieve something extraordinary, it will come to you all by itself.

O Followers of the Way, from olden times each of my predecessors had his own way of training his disciples. As to my way of leading people: all that they need is not to be deluded by others. (Be independent) and go on your way whenever you desire: have no hesitancy.

Do you know where the disease lies which keeps you learners from reaching (true understanding? It lies where you have no faith in your Self. When faith in your Self is lacking you find yourself hurried by others in every possible way. At every encounter you are no longer your master: you are driven about by others this way or that.

All that is required is all at once to cease leaving your Self in search of something external. When this is done you will find your Self no different from the Buddha or the patriarch.

Do you want to know who the Buddha or patriarch is? He is no other than the one who is, at this moment, right in front of me, listening to my talk on the Dharma. You have no faith in him and therefore you are in quest of someone else somewhere outside. And what will you find? Nothing but words and names, however excellent. You will never reach the moving spirit in the Buddha or patriarch. Make no mistake.

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An ancient doctor says that the body is dependent on its meaning, and the ground is describable by its substance. Being so, we know that Dharma-body and Dharma-ground are reflections of the (original) light. O Venerable Sirs, let us take hold of this person who handles these reflections. For he is the source of all the Buddhas and the house of truth-seekers everywhere. The body made up of the four elements does not understand how to discourse or how to listen to a discourse. Nor do the liver, the stomach, the kidneys, the bowels. Nor does the vacuity of space. That which is most unmistakably perceivable right before your eyes, though without form, yet absolutely identifiable -- this is what understands the discourse and listens to it.

When this is thoroughly seen into, there is no difference between yourselves and the old masters. Only let not your insight be interrupted through all the periods of time, and you will be at peace with whatever situation you come into. When wrong imaginations are stirred, the insight is no more immediate; when thoughts are changeable, the essence is no more the same. For this reason, we transmigrate in the triple world and suffer varieties of pain. As I view the matter in my way, deep indeed is (Reality),

