

Mistakes In Practice

By Shunryu Suzuki

Another mistake will be to practice for the sake of the joy you find in it. Actually, when your practice is involved in a feeling of joy, it is not in very good shape either. Of course this is not poor practice, but compared to the true practice it is not so good. In Hinayana Buddhism, practice is classified in four ways. The best way is just to do it without having any joy in it, not even spiritual joy. This way is just to do it, forgetting your physical and mental feeling, forgetting all about yourself in your practice. This is the fourth stage, or the highest stage. The next highest stage is to have just physical joy in your practice. At this stage you find some pleasure in practice, and you will practice because of the pleasure you find in it. In the second stage you have both mental and physical joy, or good feeling. These two middle stages are stages in which you practice zazen [Zen meditation] because you feel good in your practice. The first stage is when you have no thinking and no curiosity in your practice.