

from Ann

(Mitchell)

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Dear Elsie:

I don't think I have much to add, but your letter raised interesting points, and ones which it is important for us to consider, since over a period of time ^{our groups} ~~we~~ will surely have ^{many} similar problems ~~with~~.

Intense zazen with asceticism -- I ^{only} know ~~only~~ ^{as far as I can judge} one woman who is trying that, and ~~I think~~ unsuccessfully, but whether this is due to the asceticism, or to her own nature or past experiences, I can't estimate. I think that if I tried it, and if it meant not being involved in an active interchange with other people, ^{at least one} ~~at least one~~ vital, interacting relationship, I would ~~get~~ ^{get right} out of balance as a human being. But perhaps another person or another type of person could manage it ~~successfully~~. So many of the young ones who come through here have a dream of isolating themselves, a monastery or a mountain top will provide all the answers -- and Bob is always telling them of the importance of ~~finding zen at one's fingertips~~ ^{finding zen at one's fingertips}, quite literally, in all the working trivia and activities of our daily lives. It's not something they really like to hear! and yet they keep coming.

In our zendo we offer two things they need, as ~~it~~ seems to me. One is a place to come and be ~~a~~ part of a sangha, ~~and yet be quite free to come or go~~ ^{effort} and yet be quite free to come or go; the other is the prick of a stimulus that is both goad and encouragement, with the occasional sharing of difficulties. ~~SINCE~~ Tai San ~~has been gone~~ left, Bob read from certain books, ^{After} (mostly Hakuin Zenji) and made some comments on the passages, in place of the talk Tai San used to give, and lately he has been ~~g~~ giving short talks, very good ones I think, with emphasis on practical things. This ~~part~~ of our meeting

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seems to ~~BE~~ meet a real need.

We will be so interested to know ~~how things~~
~~develop with you~~ what develops from your visit
with Reverend Suzuki. ~~There are~~
~~perhaps~~ Perhaps the elements involved can
resolve themselves into a new pattern, as ours seem to
have -- all of a sudden ~~quite~~ moving along quite peacefully
after ~~the~~ a rather dreadful period of apparent chaos and
black discouragement.

How is John now -- has he quite recovered
from the ~~very~~ serious problems of last spring? Please
give him our warm regards.