

September 9, 1965
Rev. S. Suzuki
Thursday morning lecture

The purpose of studying Buddhism is not to study Buddhism but to study ourselves. It is impossible to study ourselves without some teaching. If you want to know what is water, because it is impossible to know what is water, so you want science....scientist wants laboratory and in various ways they may study what is water. So it is possible to know what kind of element water has, or when wind come what kind of form water takes, and what is the nature of water, always calm, comes down but we...it is impossible to know water itself. It is same thing with ourselves. It is impossible to know what is I. That is why we have teaching. By teaching we will understand what is ourselves. But teaching is not ourselves. It is some explanation of ourselves. So if you attach to the teaching or to the teacher that is big mistake. The purpose of...to study teaching is to know yourselves...through teaching you should know yourselves. So that is why we do not attach to...even to teaching or to the teacher. The moment you meet a teacher you should leave the teacher and you should be independent. So that you can be independent you want teacher. So you study yourselves. You have teacher for yourselves not for the teacher.

In Rinzai...Rinzai analyzed how to teach his disciples in four ways. Sometimes in talk about disciple himself; sometimes he talks about teaching itself; sometimes he gives interpretation of he himself and teaching, both teaching and he himself; sometimes he does not give any instruction about the students or teaching because even though he does not speak about anything student is student. Strictly speaking there is not need to teach

him because he himself is Buddha, whether or not he is aware of it. Even though his is aware of his true nature if he attach to the awareness of his nature that is already wrong. When he is not aware of it he has everything but when he becomes aware of it he thinks what he is aware of is he himself. So that's big mistake.

So sometime teaching without teaching, when we do not hear anything – just sit – you have everything. And teaching or...will not sufficient...or awareness of yourself is not sufficient, so the purpose of practice in this place is to study ourselves. To be independent we study. But we want teacher because it is impossible to study you, yourself. By some means you have to study. But you should not make mistake. You would not take what you have learned here for yourself. It is part of your activity- your everyday activity. The study you make here is a part of your everyday life. Your incessant activity...a part of your incessant activity. In this sense there is no difference between the practice here and the everyday activity you have in everyday life. So to find out the meaning of your life here is to find out the meaning of your everyday activity. To know...to be aware of the meaning of your life you practice zazen.

Of course, when I was in Eihei-ji, everyone is just doing what they should...what he should do. That's all. It is same thing as you have wake up in the morning. That's all what we do in Eihei-ji monastery. When we have to sit, we sit. That's all. When we should bow to Buddha, we bow to Buddha. That's all. And when we are practicing there we do not feel anything special. We do not feel even that we are having monastic life.

For us monastic life is usual life, and people who come from city is unusual people. We think, we felt in that way “Oh, some unusual people came”. We thought we are quite usual. But once you go out from Eihei-ji and come back to Eihei-ji and hear the various sound of practice or hear them reciting sutra you will feel deep feeling. Some tears flowing out of your mouth and eyes and nose. It is the people, you know, who is outside of the monastery who feels about it. Those who are practicing actually do not feel anything. I think that is true for everything. When we hear the sound of the pine trees in windy day perhaps the pine tree or wind is just blowing and pine tree is just standing in the wind. That is all what they are doing. But people who listen to it will make some poem or will feel something unusual. That is, I think, the way everything goes. So, to hear, to know what is, to feel something about Buddhism is not the main point. Whether that feeling is good or bad is out of question. We don't mind whatever it is. Buddhism is not good or bad. We are doing what we should do. That is Buddhism.

So it is the same thing as you take breakfast and go to bed. This is Buddhism. Of course some encouragement is necessary, but that encouragement is just encouragement. It is not the purpose, the true aim of the practice, true purpose of practice. That is just medicine. When we become discouraged we want some medicine. So when we are in good spirits you do not want any medicine. You should not take medicine for the food. Sometimes medicine is necessary but medicine should not be our food.

So Rinzai's four ways of practice. The perfect one is not to give any student any interpretation of himself or giving any stimulation to himself. If he himself is my body,

the teaching may be our clothing. Sometimes we talk about our clothing. Sometimes we talk about our body. But body or clothing is not actually we ourselves. We ourselves are big activity. We are just taking a smallest particle of big activity, that's all. So there will not be any need to talk about we ourselves. When we realize...so that we may realize this fact, there is teaching we should talk about ourselves, but actually there is no need to talk about we ourselves are already talking about the big existence, including ourselves. So to talk about ourselves is to correct our misunderstanding, that's all, because we attach to the temporal form or color of the big activity. So, it is necessary to talk about what is our body, what is our activity, so that you may not make any mistake about it. So to talk about something is to forget about yourself. So, Dogen Zenji says, to study Buddhism is to study ourselves. So study ourselves is to forget ourselves. When you forget temporal expression of big true nature is why it is necessary to talk about or else you will think this is it. But this is not it. This is it, but this is not it. For a while this is it, for the smallest particle of time this is it. It is not always so. It is not it. So that you will realize this fact it is necessary to study Buddhism. But the purpose of studying Buddhism is to study ourselves and to forget ourselves. When you forget yourself, you resume, you will actually will take the true activity of the big existence or reality. When we realize this fact there is no problem whatsoever in this world. And you can enjoy your life without having any problems or difficulties. This is how we study Buddhism and the purpose of this meeting or practice is to be aware of this fact.

