

September 16, 1965
Rev. S. Suzuki
Thursday morning lectures

Change

The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transcendence or change. Everything changes is the basic teaching. And this truth is eternal truth for each existence. And no one can deny this truth. And all the teaching of Buddhism will be condensed in this teaching. This is the teaching for all of us and wherever we go this teaching is true. This teaching is also interpreted as the teaching of selflessness because our self nature of each existence is nothing but the self nature of all existence. There is no special self nature for each existence. And this teaching is also called teaching of nirvana. When we realize this truth and when we resume, when we find our composure in the everlasting truth which is everything changes, we find ourselves in nirvana. Or if we cannot accept this teaching, that everything changes, we cannot be in composure...perfect composure.

Unfortunately, although this is true, it is pretty hard for us to accept it. We do not want 'everything changes'. Also this teaching will be interpreted as the teaching, why we have suffering. Because we cannot accept this truth, we suffer. So cause of suffering is because we cannot accept this truth. So we have a kind of nature or contradictory nature to the truth. This is the other side of the teaching – why we suffer – because we cannot accept...it is difficult to accept that everything changes. So the teaching of why we suffer and teaching that everything changes is two side of one teaching. From our standpoint, teaching that everything changes is why we suffer, but as the truth it is...it may be interpreted that everything changes.

So, as Dogen Zen master says, the teaching which does not sound like forcing something on you is not true teaching. The teaching itself is true and teaching itself does not force upon you anything, but because of our nature it looks... .teaching looks like always persuading something to us. So because of our nature we accept the teaching as if the teacher force something on us, but actually because of our human nature, because of our nature, the teaching looks like force something upon us.

But whether or not, or whether we feel good or bad, the truth is truth. We have to try to accept it. This is so called selflessness. Because of our small self, it is difficult to accept it. When we find out our small self, how small our small self we will accept it, the big mind, and we will accept the truth as it is. And so things as it is, we mean, is not to accept or to do something without making any effort. That is not to accept things as it is. When we accept everything as it is we must make some effort to adjust my eye or my ear because knowing we have some tendency to observe things in our selfish way, so trying to correct ourselves is at the same time trying to accept things as it is. So Buddhism is eternal effort to accept things as it is, with effort, eternal effort. Eternal effort is wanted even though we attain enlightenment, this effort will continue. You may think after you attain there will not be any need to make effort. That is wrong understanding. As long as you have your eyes, your ears and your body it is necessary to make some effort. But difference is before you are completely persuaded with this truth you have suffering in accepting things as it is, but for a mind who accept completely this truth, or who attain enlightenment, it is pleasure to accept this truth and to make our effort to try to accept things as it is.

So in difficulty we will find joy of making effort. That is how enlightened mind accepts this truth. For self-centered mind it is suffering to accept this truth or to

know this truth. But to know this truth is the first step to enter our way. When you realize this truth you become quite sincere with your life. Because you know that you cannot escape from this truth. Wherever you go this truth will follow you. You have nowhere to escape this truth. It is impossible. Wherever you go this is the truth that everything changes. So our effort to accept as it is, is always right effort wherever we go. It is true in this world and is true too in some other world, past and future. So you may say Buddhism is the teaching which emphasizes our eternal effort to accept things as it is. And according to Buddhism it is impossible to realize...realization of the truth is not possible without some means...or without some particular existence it is impossible to express this truth. Because each existence exists this truth come true. If nothing exists this truth does not exist.

So Buddhism exists because of every...because of each particular existence. It is not absolute which is temporal, which is not permanent, which is not perfect, so we should find out the perfect existence through imperfect existence. So perfection is imperfection. Eternal...the eternal exists because of non-eternal existence. So if you seek for something besides ourselves it is heretical view. So in Buddhism we do not seek for something or we do not expect something besides this world. We should find out the truth in this world through our difficulties, through our suffering. This is also the basic teaching of Buddhism. For us, complete perfection is not different from imperfection. The pleasure is not different from difficulty. Good is not different from bad. Bad is good. Good is bad. It is one..two sides of one coin.

So enlightenment should be in practice. When we practice right practice there is enlightenment. It is not after we attain enlightenment, after we attain perfect practice we...that we attain enlightenment. So in your actual practice there is enlightenment that is right understanding of practice and right understanding of our

life. There is no other way to accept this truth that everything changes. As long as we live we have to accept this truth without knowing. Without being aware of this truth you cannot live in this world. Even though you try to escape from it your effort is in vain. So this is the basic teaching, the basic teaching to live in this world. And to accept...to find pleasure in suffering is the only way to accept this truth. If you think there is some other way to accept this eternal truth that is your delusion. Whether it is...whatever you feel you have to accept it and we have to make this kind of effort so we say there is no Buddha. Buddha practice. So until we become strong enough to accept difficulty as pleasure we have to continue this effort. Actually if you become honest enough or straight forward enough it is not so difficult to accept this truth. You can change your way of thinking a little bit. It is difficult but the difficulty I mean is not, this difficulty will not be the same according to the way you accept. Sometimes it will be difficult. Sometimes it will be not so difficult for everyone. Sometimes you think you will have relief when everything changes, when you have some difficulty. If you have difficulty you don't want the difficulty do not changes, so you have some pleasure to change. So it is quite easy to accept. So why don't you accept it some other (word not understandable). It is the same thing. So sometimes you may laugh at yourself. Finding out how selfish you are. Anyway sometimes it is very important for us to change our way of thinking. We should not be caught by.....
(tape transcription seems to end here).

