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Tassajara

I'm afraid I will—I am making you hotter [laughs] because I cough and my lecture is maybe pretty difficult to understand because of my English especially. Last night I was trying to—my skeleton of lecture was like this [laughs]. Can you read it?

The first teaching—the—we—we have four or three series of Buddhist teaching. The teaching—the teaching that [laughter]—the teaching that everything is changing—in Japanese, *shogyō-mujō*¹—or Chinese *shogyō-mujō*—teaching that everything is changing. This teaching can be—could be understand in two ways: the one—the teaching as the law of the truth. This teaching is always true, you know, whether we observe it or not. The—so—if everything is changing, that means non-substantiality. There is no substantial being, you know. We are only composed being from various elements. So we are non-substantial being. (a) Non-substantiality.

(b) As a—as the presupposed teaching of the teaching of the selflessness. Teaching of selflessness is the teaching that everything changes. And teaching of selflessness, the second one, is two of the four important teachings. The four teaching are: teaching that everything changes, and teaching of selflessness, and teaching of suffering, and teaching of nirvāna. Those are the four important teaching of Buddhism. So we call it "four seals of Buddhist teaching."

And this teaching is presupposed teaching for the second teaching of the selflessness, because everything is composed being. So there is nothing which is understood to be "self." That is a teaching of selflessness. Usually if we say selflessness, you may understand that that is the teaching, you know, of a few [?] human being who are very selfish, you know.

But actually, not only human being but also everything it—has no self. So—and the actual, you know, teaching for human being could be this teaching of selfless—no, everything is changing could be applied for the human life: (a) to be free from attachment. If, you know, everything is changing, then [there is] nothing which we can attach to, actually. So this is for human being the teaching of attachment—non-attachment. (b) idea of fate—free from idea of fate. And (c) to make best effort in each moment. So only way for us is to make best effort in each moment because that which actually exist is we in this moment, you

¹ *Shogyō-mujō-ge*: A sūtra verse on impermanence (e.g., in *Nirvāna-sūtra*): "All things are impermanent; they appear and disappear. When an end is put to this appearance and disappearance, then the bliss of *nirvāna* is realized."

know, because we will change into something else in another minute. So the only way to reach the reality is to make best effort in each moment. This is the—actually the framework—fundamental framework of Buddhist teaching.

And the second teaching is extended teaching from the teaching that everything is changing. And this is the teaching of selflessness. (a) in time span; (b) in space span. In time span, because we are changing moment after moment, so there is nothing to be called self. In space span, you know, we are interrelated to many things. We cannot be completely independent from other being. So this—in space span, it is—we should understand that everything has no self.

(a)—(b)—(c):² the way of change—in the way of change, nothing permanent involved. It means that, you know, in some religion, you know, something create us, you know. We do not understand in that way. Everything is changing. Then you may ask some—who make us, you know, change? But we do not have any idea of something like God, who make everything changes. So we have no idea of somethingness whatsoever. So [we are] including everything, you know [laughs]. Everything changes. There is nothing which does not change. So that is why people called Buddhist non- [partial word]—"atheist," you know. We have no idea of [a] God which is absolutely permanent and which has almighty power. We have no such idea. So here—in way of change, nothing permanent or absolute is not involved. So, in short, we do not have any idea of deity which is permanent.

This is the teaching, you know—teaching of selflessness as a true law of the truth. And when we apply this teaching to our everyday life, it is also non-attachment—teaching of non-attachment or teaching of emptiness. We studied about this for pretty long time: emptiness, emptiness, emptiness. "Emptiness is form, and form is emptiness." And then put emphasis on this emptiness. And this is what we were study—studying in hot weather [laughs, laughter] last night. And I was making my best effort, drinking so many—so much, oh!—so many cups of water.

I think let's take it easy [laughter] this morning [?].

The third teaching is—third teaching is actually—this is pretty hot teaching too. Teaching of suffering. Everything suffers. Even it is not so hot, we suffer. Why we suffer—and if we know why we suffer, we will find—we will have some way to—to be free from suffering. This is important, you know. Because we believe in the theory of cause and effect, you know, so if we, you know—if we can get rid of cause of suffering, actually we will have—we will be free from suffering because suffering has some cause for it. And there is, you know, complete

² It sounds like Suzuki-rōshi is counting down a list from (a) to (c).

relationship between cause and effect. We cannot change the result. If we have some certain cause, we will have—its effects accordingly. This is our belief. No one can change the law of cause and effect. If you don't, you know—if you eat too much, you will have stomachache, you know. No one can change it. And if you have bad karma in previous life or past life or in past time, you will have bad result. This is Buddhist belief. But anyway, here we should know why we suffer—the teaching of suffering. And when we know why we suffer we will know how to get rid of the cause. And how we change—we will know how to change—how we improve—how we could improve our life.

Why we suffer is, actually, you know—we—we—the reason why we suffer or cause of suffering is ignorance—ignorance. Ignorance means we do not know the true teaching that everything changes and that everything has no self. Because we do not know anything about those teaching, we suffer. Actually everything changes, but, you know, we expect things not to change.

For an instance, I am changing, you know, every day. So—but I'm not anymore young. But I feel as if [laughs] I am quite young, and I expect you to treat me as a young boy [laughs, laughter]. But, you know, I am not young at all, and next year I shall be much older, you know. But I feel as if I am always young like this or like, you know, I was 40 or 45 years old. As I expect you to treat me, you know, as a young boy, or I—as I expect me to be always young when I see my—the mirror—myself into the mirror, I shall be very discouraged. [Laughs, laughter.] That is suffering. [Loud laughter.] You don't know this kind of suffering because you are too young. But for you, there is particular suffering. That suffering is suffering because you have too much energy [laughs]. To have too much energy is also suffering.

There are many suffering, but cause of suffering is—we—we actually don't know not much about that. Jane [Schneider?] said this morning, to me, Alan Watts, you know—he is very famous, as you know—[said] ignorance means ignore—ignore-ance, to ignore. Intellectually we know everything changes. But actually we don't like things [1-2 words] change. To ignore the truth is ignorance. Maybe so. I thought he said, "ignore ants." [Laughs, laughter.] There are many ants. So I though he said to "Don't kill ants! Ignore ants!" But ignorance.

We should ignore, you know, the truth. And we—we know that we should not ignore the truth, but still, you know, we ignore—we are always trying to ignore the truth. Truth, we think, should be true without us, not with me. That is usually how I feel—how we feel. The matter of birth and death is inevitable for human being. But we know the truth of birth and death. But we think as if that truth is for someone else, not with me, you know. With me, I feel as if I live forever. Even though someone die—even though we see someone die—

someone is dying, we don't feel that matter of birth and death is universal suffering for us. And someone may feel, "Oh, this is terrible," you know, when your friend die. "Oh, this is terrible," you know, for you. But someone may not feel so seriously even though your friend died. But if your direct relative die, you will feel—you will be shocked. But someone will not—even your direct relative die, you may not feel so bad. But when you feel—when you are dying, you will feel terrible. [Laughs.] That is the human way, and that is true for almost all human being.

So we count suffering—four—four suffering or eight suffering. If we count the suffering of birth and death, suffering of illness, suffering of old age. I think birth and death, so it is two, actually. So suffering of birth. Birth should be a great suffering, you know, for us, even though we do not remember. It should be a great suffering for the baby and for the mother. So suffering of birth, suffering of illness, suffering of old age, you know, suffering of old age [laughter], and suffering of death. Next suffering for me will be suffering of death. That is four.

And there is—there are some more. We count just four. But actually there are many, many suffering. The suffering of separating—separated—being separated from someone who you love. That is one. The suffering you meet who you don't love. That is actually [laughs]—actually very true. I don't know why, but if you think over and over you will find out why—who is—who should you blame [?] for. Anyway, we suffer. You know, for meeting someone you hate—you don't like, that is next one. And suffering you cannot gain which you want. This is very true too. That is, you know, if you think over it, over and over about it, you will find out why. It is because, in short, because you expect things, you know, too much. And you expect something which is not permanent to be permanent. That is another reason, maybe. In this way, you will find out many reasons why you cannot gain what you want. And the last one is we suffer because of our own vitality, or unbalance of the vitality, or difficult—difficulty to control our desires and vitality.

Those are the four—another four suffering. So we say four suffering—sufferings, or eight sufferings. So suffering of birth, suffering of illness, suffering of old age, suffering of death, and suffering of separating from—separated—being separated from someone who loved, and suffering of to meet someone who you do not love, and suffering which you not gain which you want—suffering that you cannot have what you want, and suffering of unbalance of the vitality. Those are eight sufferings.

But in short, those sufferings comes from ignorance. The fundamental suffering is caused by the idea of self. Self which—which we have subjectively and which we have objectively. We think, you know,

everything is substantial, everything exist just as you see it. But actually it is not so.

Something you see is created by yourself, you know. If you do not see anything, there is nothing actually. Because you see something, there is something. So in one sense, we are creating things by our eyes or by your ears, by your five sense organs. There is nothing which is purely subjective or objective—something which ex- [partial word]—something exist is subjective being and also objective being. This is very true. You may say that is not true, but actually it is so.

You may say objective being is something which really exist, and subjective being is something which you yourself created. But actually, you know, for us something exist is very subjective—maybe 80% or 90% subjective. And it means that, at the same time, ignorance—our ignorance create, you know, or subjective ignorance—because of ignorance, we—our subjective function of five sense organs create things. We don't know why, you know, but human being creates many things—not only space ship [laughs] but always we are creating something.

I have a scroll done by famous Zen master.³ It says, "a piece of stone in the air." It say—"piece"—"a stone in the air." Actually there is no stone in the air, you know. You may find some electric bombs, but there is no stone in the air. But we see many stones. Something subjective, you know—something which we—we create, you know, in the air. That is something which we see. This is very true even though your scientific mind will not accept it, but actually there many things—many difficulties which we create.

So I say "homemade" difficulty [laughs, laughter]: difficulties created by yourself. "This is the cookies I made. Please have it. This is very good." [Laughs.] I don't know if everyone think that is good. At least you think this is very good. Maybe so, maybe not so. I don't know. That is very true.

But you think the cookie—cookies you made is best. [Laughs.] And there is no "just cookie." Cookie—cookie is something—maybe always best cookie, whatever cookie is. The cookie is always best cookie, especially when you made—make it. [Laughs, laughter.] When someone else makes—make it, especially someone who you don't like make it, that is always bad cookies. So cookies are always "good cookies" or "bad cookies." [Laughter.] No—the cookie—no "just cookie" doesn't exist.

So "cookie" are very subjective, you know [laughs, laughter]—subjective view. Maybe 1% of it objective cookie, but most cookie are—

³ Kishizawa Ian-zenji. [Discussed in *Crooked Cucumber*, p. 382.]

99% of cookies [laughter] [are] objective [subjective?] cookies. I think Buddha was very wise to say it, you know: "We create things, and all the being is created by ignorance." We ignore the truth, you know. You may ask, then, "Who created that ignorance?" The phenomenology of ignorance is—which you—which was created endless—no, beginningless time. We don't know when it was created and who created. We have—we don't suppose to—suppose something who—someone who create it, you know. We have no idea of—we are not interested in who created or how created. Yes we are interested in how things are created, but we don't say who created. This is the difference between Christianity and Buddhism.

So as a Buddhist, it is all right to say, "I don't know. I don't know who created the ignorance." That is quite all right for us. If you are Christian, you—you shouldn't say so [laughs, laughter]. If you say so you are not Christian anymore. You should say, "God created it." And then you will ask why he created it. [Laughs, laughter.] There is no end.

So it may be better to say, "I don't know." [Laughs, laughter.] And I may ask you, you know, "Why do you ask such a question?" you know. That will be my question for the—for someone who ask me. This kind of discussion should be continued sometime which is not so hot—what I was talking about.

Anyway, because of ignorance everything exist. This is, you know, another translation of the teaching of selflessness. That you ask, you know, why we have ignorance means you, you know, try to figure out some substantial being must have created ignorance, you know. We Buddhists are more interested in how everything is going on like science, not who created. How everything is actually going on is the main point of Buddhist teaching.

But we do not seek for what exist besides our—besides the things we see, besides phenomenal world. In Western thought, there is idea of absolute. But actually we don't have the idea of things like you understand by absolute. For us, the word "absolute" is another interpretation of the each phenomenal being. So absolute and phenomena—phenomenal being is two side of one coin.

There is no absolute beyond our phenomenal world. This is the—also the point you should always remember. When you study Eastern thought, you should put this point always in your mind, or else you will not pass kōan [laughs]. You will always fail to pass kōan because you stick to the idea of absolute, absolute, absolute, absolute, and ignore the reality—ignore your human life.

We say "ignorance," you know, but ignorance—to know that we are ignorant is wisdom. To know what is ignorance is wisdom. And that you don't know what is wisdom is ignorance. If you know we are ignorance—ignorant, and we are creating things because of our ... *[Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.]* ... enlightened. With this wisdom, you will have—we will reach the stage of **kendo**. **Kendo** means the first stage—the stage [in which] you have right understanding of reality or real life.

And so real life we mean is life of ignorance, you know, and life of wisdom. And wisdom and ignorance is also two side of one coin. So we say if you know the cause of suffering, which is ignorance, you know, you will know how to attain perfect understanding.

Buddha said, "Because this arise," you know—"A arise, B arise. And because A exist, B exist." Because A arise, B arise, you may say. Actually he says B extinguish, but the same thing. It is the truth of cause and effect in time span. Because, you know, I arise here, I will die some day. Because A arise, B extinguish. And because I exist, you exist at the same time. If I don't exist, you don't exist. For you, if you don't exist, I don't exist.

Actually we cannot be separated completely from you [laughs], physically and spiritually. If I say something you will understand it. So in space-time span, we are related crossing. We cannot be independent. So this teaching is called interdependency—teaching of interdependency. Vertically and horizontally we are closely related, and we are all interdependent being. That is another interpretation of how we exist and how we suffer. And actually it is the teaching of everything changes and selflessness. Nothing to be called "self" particular, you know, because we are related—completely related with each other. So in Mahāyāna, teaching conclude this sort—in this way: "One is all, all are one." One is all, you know. That I exist here, everything exist. That everything exist means I exist here. So I or everything else is another interpretation of one reality. So in—in reality, one is all and all is one.

So far is maybe intellectual understanding of the truth, because actually even though we understand in this way, we ignore [laughs] our understanding and stick to self, idea of self. "I—I—I," you know, we always say, "I—I—I," ignore—ignoring how everyone else will be. That is actually true. I am sorry to say so, for me and for you, but it can't be helped.

If you have this kind of wisdom, you will completely understand why we suffer and how we could get free from suffering. To know, you know, the cause of suffering is to attain the way to free from suffering, way to get of—get rid of suffering. And Buddha conclude in this way: "There is

no other way to get out of suffering for us. The only to get out of suffering is to know, to have wisdom, or to know what is the cause of suffering." Before Buddha, you know, people offer sacrifice, you know, to divine being and to have—sometime to be born in some wonderful world. But, you know, there is no—to sacrifice something—the act of sacrifice something cannot result, you know, for us to be born in s-[partial word]—in some other world. If we kill some animal, the animal may suffer, you know, and we—we will suffer too. That is true. That is true course of cause and effect.

And we, you know, offer some money to Buddha and to have—to improve our health, you know [laughs]. "Buddha help me. I—I will offer a million dollar to you. [Laughs.] So please help me." But it cannot be—we cannot be helped in that way because the cause of—course of cause and effect is wrong. So only way to get free from suffering is to know real cause of suffering and to get—to get rid of the —no, knowing what is the cause of suffering, trying not to do something which will cause suffering. That is the only way to get out of the suffering, according to Buddhist. So we have no miracle at all [laughs] because we believe in the truth of cause and effect, and we are strictly observe true course of cause and effect. And if we mix—mix up the cause—course of cause and effect, that is so-called-it "to violate the—one of the precepts," *kaigon suke*.

That is the teaching—teaching of suffering. I think next time, or tomorrow,⁴ I must explain the teaching of Four Noble Truths.

So we—tonight we studied what is suffering, and what is cause of suffering, and we refer to the teaching of interdependency. Teaching of interdependency is arising from conditional causation. Everything arise from conditions and not being spontaneous. Or self-condition has no separate and independent nature. Nothing has no independent nature. This is, you know, the teaching of interdependency.

Oh. [Laughs, laughter.] I have no time to drink. [Laughter.] Excuse me.

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Sara Hunsaker and Bill Redican (3/5/01).

⁴ Lecture SR-69-08-03.