

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

Here we recite the sutra just once but in Zen Center we recite three times. The first one is for direct disciples of Buddha. We call them arhat. Arhat means the disciples who completed their way. Arhat. But Mahayana Buddhists called them Hinayana which means small vehicle. Small vehicle means Hinayana. They called themselves great vehicle while direct disciples of Buddha was called Hinayana or small vehicle. That is not so fair but actually they called themselves great and called other Buddhists small vehicle. But in Soto way we respect the direct disciples. So first of all we recite the sutra for the Hinayana Buddhists. This is one of the characteristics of Soto way. And our way is not Hinayana or Mahayana. Our way is Buddha's way – not small vehicle or great vehicle. There's no vehicle in Buddha's way. Our way is not only Buddha's way, but also it is, maybe, we, human beings way. So before Buddha we count seven Buddhas. Buddha is the seventh one. Buddha is not the first one. But this is another characteristic of our way. So teachers of Buddha is also...we should respect them, but...so Dogen Zenji did not like to call Zen...to call themselves Zen. He says, 'We are just disciples of Buddha'. So some people say Soto zen...zen which transcend zen is Soto zen.

But to attain this kind of Big Mind is our way and why we practice zen. Without this Big Mind various practice of Buddhism will not work. When various schools based on this practice...this great practice...every school has its own meaning, but if we have no background which is...which will cover every school, all the schools of Buddhism, the Buddhism will divide into various schools without any connection, or without any mutual understanding. So we have to acknowledge that we are Soto school...we are students of

Soto school but that does not mean we are one independent school from Buddhism. We are all Buddhists but as we are raised in some particular family, Buddhism also has many families in which many people will be raised. It is difficult to raise all the boys and girls in only in kindergarten or in grammar school. So we have to have some families. So we are Soto family but we are also...we have to go to school...public school or private school...whatever it is...we have to join some institute of human being. That is Buddhism. This kind of understanding is not only Soto way of understanding. This is original understanding of Buddhism. The most learned and bright student of Buddha, called Ananda...Ananda was the most learned and bright student. But unfortunately, or fortunately, he well in love with some girl...a beautiful girl...he was enchanted by her. And Buddha once told him...Buddha became very sympathetic with him...and told him...once Buddha told him, watching incense table in front of him...in front of Buddha...and he said, 'I see the incense table right here'. Ananda said, "Yes, I see the table with you, and I see you too. I think I have seen you. I have acknowledged you."... he said...Ananda said. You know this is...this means..."I see something. I see something and Buddha sees something, too and...in the same way." And Ananda thought the way I see something should be the same with the way of...with same as Buddha's way to see something...some special thing. That was, you know, hidden meaning. But Buddha said...Ananda said I see the same thing as you see, in the same way, and I know how you feel about it. He didn't say so, but it means I see the same thing and I see you too. And Buddha said that you see the table or the stool...stand... incense stand which I see is all right but if I don't see anything, what will you see?. He said now I see something...some particular thing, and you see some particular thing... maybe the same way...that is all right. But what will you do...what will you see if I don't see anything...when I don't see anything...when I shut my eyes?

What will you do? What will you see? But Ananda said, I see you when there is no table. When there is nothing. I see you. But Buddha did not acknowledge him. When I see something...when my not-doing something is known only by me...you know...when my not doing or inactivity I, myself know, but that inactivity will not be known to anyone else and your known activity or inactivity will be known just by you. No one knows it, so if I don't do anything, what will you do, he says. Ananda was impressed by his kind teaching, so he found out how to detach from some special experience. It is impossible...some teaching is impossible to teach you but some teaching is not possible. To stay in activity and find composure in it is also the...based on...should be based on the same understanding of teaching...or same...should be the same. Our way should not be divided two or three. Our way should be always same whether we are in activity or we are not in activity...our way...our fundamental way should be the same.

So Ananda found out that his love was not deep enough so he rather became ashamed of it. And he thought 'I understand Buddha completely' but he did not understand him completely. So our activity is various schools...various...our activity will form various schools of Buddhism, and various religious...it is the expression of deep religious experience, but when we do not express any thing...when we resume to our true nature and don't do anything...who are you? We are all the followers of the religion should be the same...But if we do not realize this fact, Buddha will point out something which is not deep enough. So Buddhism is not just religion. It is based on our...it is based on reality...how we...who you are, and who I am...who else exist. So he found out how everything exists. That is Buddha's enlightenment. How everything exists just not mean just superficially the difference between A and B. We should acknowledge the

differences but at the same time we should acknowledge the universality...the same background. This is how we understand our life. Our life is different; each one's life is different from others but at the same time each one's life is the same. Same but different. One but two. Two but one is so called middle way...Narajunas' middle way. Different but same. It is not just different but also same. So we can say A is B...just A is B. A is B is alright but at the same time A is not B. So perfect....according to Tendai school... each existence can be understood from idea of nonexistence. And it will be understood at the same time....the idea of existence...we are existent...we exist here but we don't. We don't exist but we exist. We are not permanent so we don't exist, but at the same time, in the smallest particle of time, we exist. So we are existent and not existent. This is Tendai School...true intellectual understanding of our life.

If we take the viewpoint of time...idea of time...continuity, we don't exist. But in the smallest particle of time, in the discontinuity of the time, we exist. If we could change the universe for a moment, we exist, but it is not possible. So those ideas...intellectual understanding of existence is not perfect. So we have to have superior viewpoint, which is middle way. The middle way accepts the truth...everything exists and everything does not exist. The understanding, or the viewpoint which accepts those paradox is middle way. Those paradoxical...there is no way to understand those paradoxical way of understanding. The only way is to resume to direct experience of our life, or to practice zen in...just by zen you can accept this teaching.

Intellectually you cannot...intellectual understanding will be the understanding of existence or non-existence, but in actual experience....actual experience will accept the

truth that everything is permanent and not permanent. And we are different and we are... this kind of paradox will be accepted by actual practice. This practice is the basic practice, and actually there are many ways of practice. Someone was sitting in front of fire this morning but some people ....some Buddhas who use to practice zen in front of fire, dwelling on the idea of being burned by fire, and in the midst of burning fire, I am burning. You are burning when you sit in front of burning fire. But that is not the only practice. There are many kinds of practice. To practice zazen in front of water, you are water itself and when you sit in front of fire you become fire and if you sit in front of water you become water – you become one with water is a kind of practice. But those kind of practice is based on our way transmitted from Buddha. This practice is basic practice. So without this basic practice each practice will not work. So, when you practice it is necessary to be encouraged by...to encourage with each other and it is also necessary to be independent in your practice. This is the way how you practice zen. We cannot say which is better. Actually it should be the same. It should not be different to practice zen just by yourself should be the same as to be encouraged by people, or your teacher, but to be encouraged by your teacher does not mean...is not the only way. Just to sit by yourself is also....should be also to practice. We should not be caught by the idea of difference only.

So as Buddha suggested, 'what will you do if I do not exist?' He didn't say so, but 'If I don't see anything.... If I don't do anything, what will you do? And he was enlightened. So love someone is not only to do...to have something to do is not the only way. Not to do...not to have anything to do with her is also love. This is pretty important point. There are two ways. Not to love, you may say you would go away. You maybe say that

is cruel. That is not the way to love people. You should go away if the word is different...expression is different, but love is the same... should be the same. If it is different your love is not deep enough. When the love reach to this stage we call it mercy, or great love. That is the mercy we mean.

