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In India there were many schools. We count major school....we count six major schools, but the most....we can divide those schools into two...we can classify those schools into two. As you know there were four classes in India, and the first class was the Brahman class and they believed in some different existence which is called Atman. And our world in terms of phenomenal world was supposed to be the unfolding of divine being, and it reveals itself through sages. So in nature divine nature reveals itself through everything. It is rather pantheistic....looks like pantheism, and in human world, divine world will reveal itself through sages. This is the Brahman or (Brahman's?) teaching. But on the other hand there were public religion or public sort. They postulated many elements, and this world is the integration and disintegration of the elements.

Why I refer to these ideas is...it will give us more clear understanding of our practice. I don't want to talk about Indian thought, but the thought of public....at that time, before Buddha, of course, classified on, based on the idea of component material or elements. Nowadays we may classify being, mind and body, or spirit and...physical being and spiritual being but at that time they classified in a difficult way to understand –for scientific mind it is rather difficult. They classified air or space and wind element, and water element, and earth element...earth-like element. So their practice was to make it... make the physical element weaker and spiritual element powerful. But that...our being...human being is accumulation of spiritual and physical element, so the only way is to make physical element weak and make the spiritual element more free because physical element usually bounds the spiritual element, so they practiced aestheticism. But this aestheticism will become more and more...will make our practice more and more idealistic because there is no limit the effort to make our physical power weaker. This effort will continue until we die. If we die, that is the end of the war.

According to Indian thought, if we die we will have next life and we will resume to...we will continue our actual life we have again...we will repeat over and over again. So we will have to repeat those efforts over and over without attaining perfect enlightenment. So this kind of effort...and at the same time this kind of effort mistake the purpose for the result because even though you think you make your physical strength weak enough to make our spiritual power free, while you are practicing aestheticism...but if you resume to everyday life weak body will not work, and so you have to make your physical strength more powerful, and then you have to repeat same over and over again.

But we are laughing at them, but actually we are...some people are practicing this kind of practice. So however hard we may practice our way we will not gain any result. The purpose should be to help our everyday life is the purpose of practice. Buddha's way is quite different from this kind of practice. He is not interested in the element by which being is consisted of. He is not interested in it. At first he practiced aestheticism, according to their public opinion or public way of understanding practice. And they also...he also observed Brahman's Hinduist way of practice, too. But Buddha was not so interested in metaphysical existence, and he is not so interested in the theology or philosophy, but he was more aware of how he, himself exist in this moment. That was his point.

You make bread from flour. You know, how flour becomes bread is his main interest. If you put it in oven...how it becomes...flour becomes...paste-like thing becomes bread was his interest. So how we become enlightened (the enlightened person is some perfect, desirable character, for himself and for others). That is ideal character. How human being become god is his interest. How various sages in past time became sages was his main interest. So our way is to put paste in oven over and over again and see how it becomes bread. Once you know how the paste becomes bread, you will understand that is enlightenment. So how this physical body becomes sage is our...so we don't mind what is the flour or what is paste. Sage is sage. There's no explanation for sage. If he

has desirable character he is sage no matter whether he is Christian sage or Buddhist sage. It doesn't matter. Sage is sage. And how human being...metaphysical explanation of human nature or human basic nature is not the point. So this kind of practice cannot be too idealistic. Actual practice, repeating over and over again until you find out how to become bread. That is our way. So there is no secret in our way. Just to practice zazen and put ourselves into oven....that is our way.

This kind of tradition....traditional way from Buddha to us, through the Chinese way result various unique culture, and you can see the characteristics...of Buddhists culture. For instance, when we paint something or when our language itself is good example. For instance...Japanese language is combination of phonetics sign and character kan-ji...you know, Chinese character...mountain...river. And this is at the same time picture or symbol. So according to the person who writes the character the character express some nature...unique nature. So although character itself same, but the meaning or feeling... (In Japan we emphasize feeling or esthetic meaning, or feeling) anyway, according to the person who makes the character, it changes, but character is...mountain is mountain, so we say "mountain is mountain, river is river". That is true. But mountain is not mountain. In your language if I say 'mountain is mountain' that means nothing. Mountain is mountain. Subject and predicate should not be the same. There must be some difference, but we...the difference cannot be expressed. The statement of 'mountain is mountain'. But we understand, 'mountain is mountain'. That is good enough for us. Meaning of the...intention of the statement is involved between and mountain. Mountain is mountain. The most important thing is hidden. It is not...it doesn't take a form of statement. So when we paint something somewhere the blank place has its true meaning. So we are not too much concerned about the character itself, but the character...but the character express the meaning of the character covers all the space, and the character is already something expressed already, but in the space there's many things which is not expressed yet, so there...the secret is the blank space rather than which was written in the corner of the paper.

This kind of understanding is something like to put paste into oven. It looks like vague and purposeless practice. No one will not be so interested in cooking, everyday making the same thing over and over again. But Buddha was very much interested in how paste becomes perfect bread. So he did it over and over again until he becomes successful to make bread. That was his practice. So his practice covered all whole paper, not some corner of the paper...element of the art. But all the paper. How one sheet of paper become art. That is his way. So whether you use ink or color, black ink or color is not the point. If you can produce something beautiful, that is art. So this kind of practice have no danger in repeating it, and it will help your everyday life. No harm in it, but it is rather tedious. If you lose your spirit, spirit of repeating, it is pretty difficult, but it is not difficult if you are full of strength...vitality...it is not difficult. We cannot keep still. We have to do something anyway, so if you do something we should be very observant and careful and alert. This is our way.

So this kind of way is not idealistic way. If an artist becomes too idealistic he will commit suicide because his ideal and his actual ability between the two there is a great gap, so he will become despairing and commit suicide because there is no bridge long enough. That is usual spiritual way, but our spiritual way is not so idealistic. But in some sense we should be idealistic. At least we should be interested in something very good. Tastes good and looks good. That is our way.

