

shaky. His view of life was stable, and he watched everyone's life, including his own life. He watched himself, and he watched others with the same eyes that he watched stones or plants, or anything else. He had a very scientific understanding. That was his way of life after he attained enlightenment.

When we have the traditional spirit to follow the truth as it goes, and practice our way without any egoistic idea, then we will attain enlightenment in its true sense. And when we understand this point we will make our best effort in each moment. That is true understanding of Buddhism. So our understanding of Buddhism is not just an intellectual understanding. Our understanding at the same time is its own expression, *is* the practice itself. Not by reading or contemplation of philosophy, but only through practice, actual practice, can we understand what Buddhism is. Constantly, we should practice zazen, with strong confidence in our true nature, breaking the chain of karmic activity and finding our place in the world of actual practice.

TRANSIENCY *"We should find perfect existence through imperfect existence."*

The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transiency, or change. That everything changes is the basic truth for each existence. No one can deny this truth, and all the teaching of Buddhism is condensed within it. This is the teaching for all of us. Wherever we go this teaching is true. This teaching is also understood as the teaching of selflessness. Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of all existence. There is no special, separate self-nature for each existence. This is also called the teaching of Nirvana. When we realize the

everlasting truth of "everything changes" and find our composure in it, we find ourselves in Nirvana.

Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transiency, we suffer. So the cause of suffering is our non-acceptance of this truth. The teaching of the cause of suffering and the teaching that everything changes are thus two sides of one coin. But subjectively, transiency is the cause of our suffering. Objectively this teaching is simply the basic truth that everything changes. Dogen-zenji said, "Teaching which does not sound as if it is forcing something on you is not true teaching." The teaching itself is true, and in itself does not force anything upon us, but because of our human tendency we receive the teaching as if something was being forced on us. But whether we feel good or bad about it, this truth exists. If nothing exists, this truth does not exist. Buddhism exists because of each particular existence.

We should find perfect existence through imperfect existence. We should find perfection in imperfection. For us, complete perfection is not different from imperfection. The eternal exists because of non-eternal existence. In Buddhism it is a heretical view to expect something outside this world. We do not seek for something besides ourselves. We should find the truth in this world, through our difficulties, through our suffering. This is the basic teaching of Buddhism. Pleasure is not different from difficulty. Good is not different from bad. Bad is good; good is bad. They are two sides of one coin. So enlightenment should be in practice. That is the right understanding of practice, and the right understanding of our life. So to find pleasure in suffering is the only way to accept the truth of transiency. Without realizing how to accept this truth you cannot live in this world. Even though you try to escape from it, your effort will be in vain. If you think there is some other way to accept the eternal truth

that everything changes, that is your delusion. This is the basic teaching of how to live in this world. Whatever you may feel about it, you have to accept it. You have to make this kind of effort.

So until we become strong enough to accept difficulty as pleasure, we have to continue this effort. Actually, if you become honest enough, or straightforward enough, it is not so difficult to accept this truth. You can change your way of thinking a little bit. It is difficult, but this difficulty will not always be the same. Sometimes it will be difficult, and sometimes it will not be so difficult. If you are suffering, you will have some pleasure in the teaching that everything changes. When you are in trouble, it is quite easy to accept the teaching. So why not accept it at other times? It is the same thing. Sometimes you may laugh at yourself, discovering how selfish you are. But no matter how you feel about this teaching, it is very important for you to change your way of thinking and accept the truth of transiency.

THE QUALITY OF BEING *"When you do something, if you fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. When you are concentrated on the quality of your being, you are prepared for the activity."*

The purpose of zazen is to attain the freedom of our being, physically and mentally. According to Dogen-zenji, every existence is a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Each existence is another expression of the quality of being itself. I often see many stars early in the morning. The stars are nothing but the light which has traveled at great speed many miles from the heavenly bodies. But for me the stars are not speedy beings, but calm, steady, and peaceful beings. We say, "In calmness there should be activity; in activity there

should be calmness." Actually, they are the same thing; to say "calmness" or to say "activity" is just to express two different interpretations of one fact. There is harmony in our activity, and where there is harmony there is calmness. This harmony is the quality of being. But the quality of being is also nothing but its speedy activity.

When we sit we feel very calm and serene, but actually we do not know what kind of activity is going on inside our being. There is complete harmony in the activity of our physical system, so we feel the calmness in it. Even if we do not feel it, the quality is there. So for us there is no need to be bothered by calmness or activity, stillness or movement. When you do something, if you fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. When you are concentrated on the quality of your being, you are prepared for the activity. Movement is nothing but the quality of our being. When we do zazen, the quality of our calm, steady, serene sitting is the quality of the immense activity of being itself.

"Everything is just a flashing into the vast phenomenal world" means the freedom of our activity and of our being. If you sit in the right manner, with the right understanding, you attain the freedom of your being, even though you are just a temporal existence. Within this moment, this temporal existence does not change, does not move, and is always independent from other existences. In the next moment another existence arises; we may change to something else. Strictly speaking, there is no connection between I myself yesterday and I myself in this moment; there is no connection whatsoever. Dogen-zenji said, "Charcoal does not become ashes." Ashes are ashes; they do not belong to charcoal. They have their own past and future. They are an independent existence because they are a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. And charcoal and red-hot fire are quite different existences. Black charcoal is also a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Where there is black charcoal there is not red-hot charcoal. So black charcoal is