

RECENT LECTURES

During the spring one of the themes of Reverend Suzuki's weekly lectures has been the role of Zen Center, especially in relation to society, and the right attitude toward practice Zen students should have. Some of his ideas are summarized below.

Zen Center is not a group of persons setting themselves apart from society, each striving

for his own personal enlightenment. All of us, including himself and Reverend Katagiri, are Americans, responsible to the society which supports us. The Bodhisattva's vow is to seek for the enlightenment of all beings before oneself, and actually, to help others is to help oneself. Without this spirit, our practice is not true Zen. (3)

To help others, however, is not to have idealistic dreams about the possibility of a perfect state of society towards which we strive. Such idealism is dangerous, for it can make men fight and kill one another, each feeling righteous. This does not mean that there is no need of effort. We must apply great effort moment by moment to allow expression of our true nature. Only through the actualization of our true nature can we truly help one another. If you practice zazen, you will begin to understand how to carry the effort and attentiveness of that practice into your everyday life.

Our daily responsibilities is the field in which we incessantly strive to actualize Buddha's way. We should be grateful for the difficulties and problems we have for the greater opportunity of practice they afford. We should not judge good and bad. In the realm of true Buddhism, there is no good and bad, and each moment we create ourselves anew.

Zen is the way of creativity. It is not the idealistic way, which remains in the realm of conscience, and of right and wrong, good and bad. We should never ignore conscience, but it is not what we should strive to follow. Rather we should follow the Great Creativity, renewing creation over and over.

That is why one cannot study Zen as one does some other religion or philosophy. Zen has no doctrine, nor formula to be mastered which guarantees enlightenment. Fundamental to the Soto Zen Buddhist approach is the truth that practice and enlightenment are one. Zen has nothing to teach. Rather its purpose is to point again and again to the truth each of us has already within ourselves.