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TRUE HAPPINESS AND RENEWAL OF PRACTICE AT YEAR'S END
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Everyone seeks for true happiness, but happiness cannot be true happiness if the happiness is not followed by perfect composure. The—usually happiness does not stay long. Happiness is mostly just very short time and it will be lost in next moment when you have it. So, sometimes we will think rather not to have it because after happiness usually followed by sorrow and this is, I think, everyone experiences it in our everyday life.

Buddha, when he escaped—can you hear me?—when he escaped from his castle, he felt this kind of—he had this kind of happiness in his luxurious life in the castle, he at last forsake all of those, this kind of life, so we say he started his religious trip because of evanescence, because he felt evanescence of life. That is why he started study of Buddhism. I think we have to think about this point more. I think everyone seeks for happiness, that is all right, but the point is what kind of—how to seek for happiness is the point. But whether our way, whether the happiness we seek for is something which we can...it is something which is possible to have it.

Surely there is—we have to seek his teaching more carefully. He taught us the Four Noble Truths and first of all he taught us this world is world of suffering. When we seek for suffering—happiness—to say this world is world of suffering is very, you know—you may be very much disappointed with your teacher. World of suffering. This world anyway is world of suffering, he says. And he continues. Why we suffer is this world is world of fantasy, everything changes. When everything changes we seek for some permanent thing, we want everything to be permanent. Especially when we have something good or when we see something beautiful or we want it to be always in that way. But actually everything changes. So that is why we suffer. So if we seek for happiness even though we seek for happiness it is not possible to have it because we are expecting something to be always constant when everything changes. So naturally we must have suffering. So far, according to this teaching, we are—there is no other way for us to live in the world of suffering—that is the only way to exist in this world.

Then it is not possible to obtain eternal happiness, or eternal composure of life. Though we have some way to have eternal composure of life or happiness of life, but first of all if we want to composure of life, we have to change our view, our way of observing things. To observe things as it is, we say, but to observe things as it is for usual sense and to observe things as it is in our way is not the same. This point is not truly realized by even Buddhists. Things as it is, way as it is. What is way as it is. Usually things as it is means to observe things as if something exists in that way, constantly, forever. We say—here in incense bowl. But this is already

mistake. There is no such thing exists. This is always changing. This is bronze, but even so this is changing, and you sense in it always changing. In ten minutes there will be no more incense, but if it is very good incense you will think as if something exists—not forever—you may not think in that way, but at least you think this incense exists and fire exists in that way, but the fire is not exactly the same fire as you observe this fire. This is actually, you know—instead of combustion, it is not red—red fire as you—as you see it. It is constant repetition of combustion—like this—there is electricity, but that light is always—current back and forth, this way, and doesn't exist in that way, but we see there constantly electric light, like so. But that is not true. So we Buddhists call this kind of naïve way of looking—observing things is aspect of being because we think everything exists in this way. Aspect of being. And when you understand everything changes and everything is changing, like electric light or fire, we call this kind of view, is view of non-being. No such thing exists, so non-being. And for Buddhists, for you maybe if you seek for happiness, if someone who has view of seeking for happiness, it means that he is seeking for something which is impossible and if you have the view of non-being you will not care for anything. If you accept things in that way, you will be very—your way of life is very empty. And you will not find out any meaning of life at all. And our way of observing things is based on view of being and non-being, both. And we know that view of being is too naive, and view of non-being is too—logical. Or too critical. Or view of—true view of life should be both. View of being and view of non-being. This is our way.

But view of being and view of non-being is not—is not possible to accept. We can accept one of the two, but we cannot accept two of those viewpoints. And here there is another problem for us. But when you face—when you face this second problem, you will be said to be Buddhist. And you will give up to rely on your intellectual understanding of teaching and you will start our practice—to accept this kind of paradox.

Recently I ask you and I want you to reflect on why you seek for—why you study Buddhism. Because I think this point is—if this point is not fully understood, it may be difficult—to put whole physical and spiritual power in our practice. Usually maybe in your practice without thinking about our life more deeply and you try to if you have problem you will try to solve it by means of practice or teaching, but if you really think about whether your view of life is right or wrong, whether you are trying to obtain something which is possible to obtain or you are doing—you are trying to accomplish something which is not possible to accomplish. Then you will not be sincere enough to practice our way because you are always fascinated by some teaching or chanting. We don't know—what we study in intellectual way is very shallow, but what we actually experience is very deep.

When—after—when I came to America, I found very, you know—I found—special, some special food for me and I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it very much—that was potato. Potato was delicious to me, but I don't know if it is so for

you or not. I don't know what kind of nourishment potato has, I haven't studied anything about potato, but I like it very much. The reason why I like it is—I don't know why—when I was in Japan, of course, I liked it, but I didn't think I liked potatoes so much!

But after I came to America, having very—various foods and I haven't not much chance to eat potatoes: maybe once a month or so. When I was invited for Thanksgiving, I had mashed potatoes—that was delicious. But usually I haven't mashed potatoes, or even baked potato. At Tassajara I told Ed I like potato [laughs]. Sometimes, as we have various food—various kinds of food, so Ed cannot give me always potato. So only once in a while I had potato.

As soon as I come back from Tassajara I go to the grocery store and buy three or four potatoes. And as it takes pretty long time to cook it, I cut it and fry it. My boy doesn't like it, but I like it. My wife doesn't like it much. So I cook it just for myself. Do you know why? Potato was—when I was young I—my hometown produced a lot of potatoes, so I was eating potatoes always when I was a boy. So that is why I like it. When I was eating I didn't like it so much because I had it almost not everyday, but four times or more a week.

This kind of experience characterized our character. I think you may not like zazen so much, but you think this is good, so you may practice it. But you may not realize how much progress you made in your zazen practice. Some may do, but most of you don't, I am afraid. But that is all right. This kind of experience which is not just reading or listening to lecture and something which you experience, both physically and spiritually, without thinking about it. Without trying to find out the meaning of it, beyond our intellectual understanding, to practice our way without any gaining idea. To practice our way is valuable and you will have real power of digesting things.

In *Lotus Sūtra*, as you know, Chapter Three, Buddha told Shāriputra:

You may not know what you have done before. You will not remember what you did in your former life or even in this life. You may not remember all of it, but," he said, "you have been practicing our way for so long time. That is why now—you have been practicing our way for so long time, that is why now you have attained enlightenment. I know that, but you may not know it—why you have attained enlightenment. I ask you why you came here so many times. I think you don't know why you came here, but there is some reason why you came here. You didn't come here just by curiosity. Why you came here is, I don't think possible to figure out. But there must be some reason.

This kind of reason—you practice your way is so-called-it—there is no other way to say so we say—your buddha-nature seeks for buddha. Buddha seek

for buddha. This is very mystic way of putting it, but there is no other way to say it. So we say buddha-nature seeks buddha-nature.

We have various Buddhist philosophy, and we have a lot of teaching to study, but Buddhism is not actually philosophy or teaching. Buddhism is always within ourselves and always helping us. But we do not—when we are not—when we don't realize it, then that is so called it suffering. Or when we live in the realm of good or bad, right or wrong, we lose our meaning of life. Only when we do something we practice, with right understanding, whatever you do that is our practice. Because we are so intellectual being, it is necessary to—to be free from our reasoning or our intellect. That is necessary. And instead of being caught by intellectual mind, we should seek for something more or we have to rely on way things goes and the way we live without—without every reason—why we are practicing—Indian way or Chinese way or Japanese way—you may feel in that way. But actually there is no special way. Our way is not just for Japanese or Chinese or Indian people. This is for everyone. We sit in cross-legged position, but if you think just cross-legged position is just Zen, that is a big mistake.

If you want to practice our way, we should free our mind from intellectual or conscious activity in term of right or wrong, or good or bad. Whatever it is we should try it and we should have taste of it through direct experience. Not just feeling or thinking, but direct experience. That is zazen practice.

So many people here practicing our way. I feel a great responsibility as a teacher. If I am not here maybe you will not come here. If I am here you come here and spend all day in our practice. But if you misunderstand—if you have misunderstanding in our practice it will not work at all. It is quite natural for us to think some result or effect as long as you do something, but our practice is something different from that kind of activity. Just—we practice our way just to have ...

[Tape turned over. But nothing follows in transcript. Check SR-68-12-24 to see if it is the tail end of this lecture.—WKR]

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