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OUR EVERYDAY LIFE IS LIKE A MOVIE
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I think most of you are rather curious about what is Zen. But Zen is actually our way of life, and zazen practice is actually like when you set your alarm clock, maybe. Unless you set your alarm, the alarm clock will not serve the purpose.

So it is necessary for us to start our activity from some standpoint—every day we must have starting point. Where to start is the most important thing. The sun rises at a certain time and is setting at a certain time. And the sun always repeats the same thing. And we do too [laughs, laughter]. But we do not feel in that way. Our life is not so organized, and we don't know even how important it is—where to start our life. Zen students start our life from zazen practice. We come back to zero and start from zero. We have various activities, and how our activity arises from zero is the most important thing to know, to feel, or to realize.

Usually, I think, most people practice zazen to attain something, to achieve something. But more important thing is to start our everyday activity—to know where to start everyday activity and to know how to practice zazen. Before you actually practice zazen, or at the moment you decided to sit, it means that you already started to set your alarm. And when you have that kind of confidence or you have made that kind of decision and start zazen, that is zero.

And during zazen, sometimes, you will hear the bird singing. That is something arise in your practice. In the same way, in our everyday life, many things will arise. But if you know from where those things happen, you will not be disturbed by it. Because [laughs] you don't know how it happens, you lose your confidence in your life. If you know how things happens to you—"Oh!"—you know. And the moment something happens you will be ready for that: "Oh, something is arising"—[laughs]—like you watch the sunrise: "Oh, the sun is just coming up."

You know, anger, for instance—sometimes you will be angry. But anger actually doesn't come all of a sudden. It comes very slowly [laughs] actually, but you feel it comes all of sudden. That is real anger. But when you know [laughing] how it comes—"Oh! Anger is coming—anger is arising in my mind"—that is not anger. May be

anger. People may say he is angry, but actually he is not angry. If you know you are almost starting to crying—"Oh, I am crying next minute, two minutes, three minutes" [laughs]—"Oh, I started crying"—that is not crying.

If you know what is zazen, what is the practice, you will accept things as you accept various images in your sitting zazen. So in our zazen the most important thing is to have big mind and to accept things in your practice. And even try not to observe things how it happens to your mind.

If you practice zazen to attain some stage or enlightenment, the man who practices that kind of zazen will be the same as a man who is using alarm without setting it. It will go anyway [laughs], go and go and go, until it comes to its end. It will go anyway [laughs], but, it doesn't make much sense.

When you sit every morning it makes sense. You know what time it is. To know what time it is is the most important thing for us in our everyday life. To know what you are doing is the most important thing. What kind of effort you are doing and what kind of situation you are in now—that is the most important thing.

Our everyday life is like a movie which is going on a wide screen [laughs]. But most people may be interested in the picture on the screen without realizing there is a screen [laughs, laughter]. So when you don't see anymore—when the movie stops, before it comes to end maybe you may say, "I must come again tomorrow evening" [laughs]. "I will come and see it." And in that way, what you are interested in is just the movie on the screen. And because you think it, it stops. Sometimes you expect something for tomorrow or you will be discouraged because you don't know the screen. But if you realize—if there is a screen, because there is screen in the movie theater—anyway—someone comes and shows you some more pictures. So, the most important thing is to have a screen in your mind [taps on something repeatedly], and that screen should be white.

If the screen is colorful [laughs], colorful enough to attract people [laughs, laughter], the screen will not serve the purpose. But the most important thing is to have a screen and to have—not colorful—to have a plain screen, white—pure white screen. That is the most important thing. But most people are not interested in a pure white screen [laughs, laughter]. It is a good thing to be excited by seeing a movie. It is good, you know. But why you can enjoy the movie is, to some extent you know that is a movie. That actually that kind of thing is not going on.

So even though you have no idea of a screen, but your interest is

based on some understanding of the screen or machine. And you know that is something artificial. So you can enjoy it. You can enjoy something which you should enjoy, not more than that. That is how we enjoy our life. If you have no idea of a screen or machine, perhaps you cannot see the movie. You will always do like this [laughs, laughter] [gestures: probably hiding face]. "Oh no, no, no!"

So zazen practice is necessary to know what kind of screen you have and to enjoy our life as if you enjoy the movie in a theater. How can you do it is because you have a screen here [taps three times]. And you are not afraid of the screen [laughs], or you do not have any particular feeling for the screen—just—that is just a white screen, that's all. So you are not afraid of your life at all, but you enjoy something to be afraid of [laughs]. You enjoy something which makes you angry—or which makes you cry. And you enjoy crying and anger too.

But if you have no idea of the screen, you will even be afraid of enlightenment. "What is it? Oh, my!" [Laughs, laughter.] If someone attained enlightenment, you may ask him what kind of experience you had when you had enlightenment. "Enlightenment is this kind of experience." "Oh, no! [Laughs.] That is not for me," you may say.

But that is just a movie, something which you should enjoy. But if you want to enjoy the movie, you should know that is the combination of film and light and white screen. And most important thing is to have plain white screen. That is actually not something which you should attain, but which you have always. But why you don't have it—you don't feel you have it, is your mind is too busy, too busy to see, to realize it.

So once in a while, you should stop all of your activity and you should make your screen white—make yourself sure that you have a white screen. That is zazen. So that is not something to attain, but something [laughs] you must find out by practice. That is the foundation of all our everyday life and the foundation of all our meditation practice. Without this kind of foundation, your practice will not work. All the instructions you have in our practice is to have a clean white screen as much as you can. Always, it is not pure white because of various attachments to it, because of some stain previously made for it.

We say to practice zazen is just to sit—just—when we practice zazen we are like a baby in her mother's bosom [laughs]. That is our zazen. You have no idea of anything. You are quite relaxed, but it is difficult to have complete relaxation in your usual posture. That is why we take some certain posture.

This kind of instruction is necessary, and this kind of instruction is the result of various experiences of many, many people in the past. And they found out this is much better than the other postures, than standing up or lying down. So under some instruction with this kind of understanding, if you practice zazen, it will work. Whatever practice it may be, it will work. But if you do not have, or if you do not trust your own pure white paper, you cannot practice. Your practice will not work.

Thank you very much.

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