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NOT VERBATIM

To live in the realm of Buddha Nature means to die as a small being, moment after moment. When we lose our balance we die, and at the same time, to lose our balance, sometimes, means to develop ourselves, or to grow. If we are in perfect balance we cannot live as a small being. So whatever we see the things are changing, losing their balance. Why everything looks beautiful is because it is something out of balance, but its background is always in perfect harmony and on this perfect harmony everything exists, losing its balance. This is how everything exists in the realm of big Buddha Nature. So if you see things without knowing, without realizing Buddha Nature everything is in the form of suffering. But if you understand the background of everything, which looks like suffering, suffering itself is how we live, how we extend our life. So in Zen we, sometimes we emphasize the "out of balance" or disorder. Nowadays our Japanese painting which was developed by the spirit of Zen became pretty formulated; became formal. That is why nowadays we have more—that is why we have modern art. The painters in old time practice how to put dots out of order. Even though you try to do it what you did is always in some order. This is a kind of practice. And how to take care of things is the same thing. If you try to make them—even though you try to put them under some control, it is impossible. You cannot do that. So sometimes, if you want to control people the best way is to encourage them to be mischievous. Then they will be in control in its wider sense. So to observe—to put things—to put large, spacious meadow for your sheep, or cow is how you control people. So let them do what they want, first, and watch them, is the best policy. But let alone policy is not good. That is worst. The second worst is trying to control them. The best one is to watch them—just to watch them, without trying to control.

As you practice zazen if you obtain the perfect calmness in your practice don't be bothered various images you have in your mind. Let them come and let them go out. Then they will be under control. But his policy is not so easy. It looks easy, but it needs some different, special effort. How to make this kind of effort is the secret of practice. Suppose you are sitting under some extraordinary circumstances. If you try to calm down your mind you cannot sit, and if you try to ...try not to be disturbed by it, your effort will not be right effort. If you have to make some effort, the only effort you can do is to count your breathing or to be concentrated on your inhaling or exhaling. Why this kind of effort is necessary is that this kind of effort will help right effort in your practice. We say

concentration but to concentrate your mind on something is not the purpose...is not the true purpose of Zen. True purpose of Zen is to see things as they are, to observe things as they are, to let everything go as it goes, and to put everything under control in its widest sense. In other words, to open up our small mind, is Zen practice. So to control your mind is just an aid to obtain the big mind. So if you want to find out the true meaning of Zen in your everyday life, some...you have to study, or you have to find out the meaning of controlling your mind...the meaning of keeping your mind on your breathing, the meaning of keeping your body in right posture. This is rather difficult to explain, but your study should be more subtle and careful. And we have to find out the true meaning of Zen.

Dōgen-zenji said, "Time elapses from present to past." This is absurd, but in our practice it is true (sometimes it is true). From present to past, time goes from present to past. _____¹ was the wife of Yoshitsune, a famous samurai, just before the Kamakura period. He was so faithful to his brother until he was killed in the northern part of Japan. And before he went to northern part of the country he had to say—he had to bid farewell to his wife, and soon his wife was caught by his brother. And when she danced she danced on her own poem—long form of poem, and said, "Like spool—just like you unravel the thread from a spool, I want the past time to become present." When she said so actually she made the past time present already. In her mind the past time was now. So as Dogen-zenji said, "Time elapses from present to past." This is not true in our logical mind, but in our actual life, when we make past time present we have...there we have poem, there we have human life.

So when we find out this kind of truth it means we have found the true meaning of the time which constantly elapses from past to present and present to future. If this is true, at the same time, the time elapses from future to present and from present to past is also true. As some Zen master said, "To go Eastward one mile is to go Westward one mile." This is the vital freedom. We have to acquire this kind of vital freedom, perfect freedom.

So perfect freedom is in—is under some rules. If there are no rules, there is no freedom. As long as you have rules you have freedom. Without being aware of the rules to try to obtain freedom means nothing. This kind of freedom is...I don't know what to say. It means nothing. In Japanese we say, *muchacha*. *Muchacha* means nothing. That is why we practice zazen. We are aiming at the same thing but it looks like there is no need for us to practice anything; there is no need for us to have any rules, as some young people

¹ Possibly Kyō no Kimi, the wife of Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1189).

may say, but it is absolutely for us to have some rules. But it does not mean always to be under control. This is the secret of our life.

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