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There is big misunderstanding about the idea of naturalness. Most people who come to us believe in some freedom or naturalness, but their understanding of naturalness is so-called heretic naturalness. Heresy...a kind of heresy. We call it (ji neng den getto)? In Japanese. (Jin eng den getto ?) means something which...some idea that there is no need to be formal or to be rigid, just a kind of 'let-alone-policy', or sloppiness. That is naturalness for most people. But that is not the naturalness we mean. It is rather difficult to explain what it is, but naturalness is, I think, some feeling which is independent from everything. That is naturalness. Or some activity which is based on nothingness. Something which comes out of nothing is naturalness. Like a seed or plant comes out from the ground. When you see it that is naturalness. The seed has no idea of being some particular plant, but it has its own form and it is in perfect harmony with the ground, with the surrounding, and while it is growing, in course of time it has its...it expresses its nature. So any plants...anything do not exist in no form or no color. Whatever it is it has some form and color, and that form and color is in perfect harmony with other beings. And there is no trouble. That is so-called naturalness.

For a plant or stone to be natural is...has no problem...there is no problem. But for us there is some problem, or big problem even. So to be natural is

pretty...a kind of problem which we must work on. Some feeling...some quite new feeling...when you have...when you just come out from nothingness...for instance when you are quite hungry, to take some food is naturalness. You feel natural. But when you are expecting too much, to have some food is not natural. You have no new feeling. You have no appreciation for it. So zazen practice is...we practice zazen as if when we take of water when we are thirsty. That is true practice. There we have naturalness. It is quite natural for us to take a cup of water when we are thirsty. So when you are very, very sleepy, to take a nap is natural. Even though you are not sleepy, to take a nap just because you are lazy, as if it is the privilege for human being to take a nap....My friends...all of them...the rest of the people....when others take a nap, why shouldn't I take a nap. I must also take a nap. That is not naturalness. When we have this kind of idea or feeling...when everyone is not working why should I work so hard? We should....I must take a rest too. When they have a lot of money, why don't I have some money. This is not naturalness. Our mind is entangled with some other idea. When you do not....when it is not necessary to be bound by some other's idea, that is not naturalness. So.

So even you practice zazen, if your zazen is not natural it is not true practice. If you have true joy in it that is not true zazen. Even though you force yourself to practice zazen, if you feel something good in your practice that is zazen. It is not a matter of forcing something on you or not is not the point. Even though you have some difficulty, when you want to have it that is naturalness.

This naturalness is very difficult to explain. But if you can just sit and have the nothingness in your practice, whatever you do, coming out of the nothingness, that is the naturalness...and that is true activity, because you have true joy of practice, true joy of life in it. Everyone comes out from nothingness, moment after moment, comes out from nothingness. So moment after moment we have true joy of life. Here we have true joy. So we say, "True nothingness, true emptiness...from true emptiness the wondrous being appears (shin ku myo mu)". Shin is true, ku is emptiness, myo is wondrous, mu is being. From true emptiness wondrous being...shin ku myo mu.

So without nothingness there is no naturalness...no true being. True being comes out from nothingness, moment after moment. So nothingness is always there. From nothingness everything comes out. But usually, forgetting all about nothingness, as if you have something always, and behave with the idea based on some possessive idea or some concrete idea... that is not natural. For instance, when you listen to a lecture, you should not have any idea of yourself. You shouldn't compare...you should not have your own idea when you listen to others. You have to forget all what you have in your mind and listen to it. You have nothing in your mind and listen to it. Then you will understand what he says. That is naturalness. But if you have some idea to compare with what he says, that is not naturalness. So when you listen to it you just listen to it with empty mind. When you do something you should be completely involved in it. You

should devote yourself completely. Then you have nothing. So true emptiness...if there is no true emptiness in your activity, that is not natural.

Some people insist on some idea. Recently the young generation talks about love. Love! Love! Love! Their minds are full of love. And when they study Zen, if what I say does not accord with the idea of love that they have, they will not accept it. They are quite stubborn headed, you know. They are pretty stubborn. You may be amazed. That is not...some of them, of course, not all of them. Some of them have very, very hard attitude. That is not naturalness at all. Even though they talk about love, and freedom or naturalness, that is not naturalness. They cannot practice Zen in that way. They cannot understand what is Zen in that way. So if you want to study Zen you should just practice zazen. That is naturalness. And see what kind of experience you have in your practice. That is naturalness. Whatever you do this attitude is necessary. So sometimes we say 'soft mind'. Soft mind. Soft mind is nyu nan shin. Nyu is soft feeling. Nan is not hard. Something which is not hard is nan. Nyu is smooth, natural...mind. When you have that mind you have the joy of life. When you lose it you lose everything. You have nothing. Although you think you have, or because you think you have...you have nothing. When you think you have nothing you have nothing. Do you understand? That is what we mean by naturalness.

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