

HELPING OTHERS

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First of all, our practice, our sincere practice, is not practice just for himself. This is not so difficult to understand. Bodhisattva practice is not just to help himself, but to help others. We put more stress to help others, that is Bodhisattva practice. I think because you are not so considerate in your everyday life, you have that question, why we have to practice zazen, or what is sincere practice. If you find out how difficult it is to help others, with Bodhisattva mind, with mind of selflessness, you may imagine how difficult it is to practice to help others. And actually, all the problems we human beings have, caused by our carelessness, careless activity or selfish activity. That is, you know, those small careless activities one by one accumulated will cause a big trouble for our society. If we realize this point, we find out the reason why we must practice zazen. I think you have, you must have read, some of you must have read *Zuimonki*. In *Zuimonki* Dogen Zenji discusses about this everyday problems we have, and he, you know, explain what is Bodhisattva mind. Ah, last night, Yoshimura Sensei was asked to help someone's schedule of trip-he had to sit until half past twelve. He knows, you know, of course, we have sesshin. Even though he may sleep today, today's sesshin, knowing that he has to help someone who making trip-this is, you know, already a big problem to discuss. Whether he should help others, sacrificing his sesshin, or whether he should refuse it because practice of zazen is more important than making trip. Now what would you do? When you are asked to please help me, you know? Without knowing how important it is to practice zazen, what will you do? Ah, this is, you know, maybe very difficult. We cannot say, you should refuse it or you shouldn't refuse it. The point is, if you refuse it because you have strong confidence in our practice, then you should refuse it. But, even the slightest, you now, no doubt, but slightest selfish idea is involved in his word, maybe he shouldn't. Sometimes we refuse things because of some reason, because of making some excuse, but mostly those excuses is just for himself, you know, based on his selfish idea. So, you say if you come and sit here that is our practice. If you think so, that is, you know, too easy understanding of our practice. To practice zazen, refusing everything, without doing anything, asking someone else what he should do, and making time for himself, and practice here, is, you know, when you practice here you have a big responsibility. If you feel very good, you know, asking everything for your wife or your friend, and feel good to practice here, that is too selfish practice, that is not our practice. Here, you see, you may find out what is sincere practice. Because he couldn't refuse it, he sat up until half past twelve. So accordingly, he maybe sleeping on cushion today. Do you think that is, you know, bad practice? It is very difficult to say, whether our practice is good or bad. If you think, you know, the real meaning of practice, you cannot easily criticize someone's practice. Of course, if he sleeps, you now, he will get a big slap, from even student. But, *kyosaku* symbolize Buddha's mercy, which is not involved in right or wrong, good or bad. Just to help someone's practice, there we have Buddha's *kyosaku*. But most people mix up ordinary criticism with Buddha's *kyosaku*. Buddha's *kyosaku* should be very strict, it should be

like a sword, but our mind, Buddha's mind should be actually the most generous and merciful, ready to help everyone, as much as possible. Originally, we cannot rely on moral code, or idea of right or wrong. Because we cannot rely on any rules or morals, we must practice zazen, so that we can be both very strict and very generous, always ready to help others. So our zazen is not just matter of (can't make out word). The spirit we practice is the most important.

In *Zuimonki*, Dogen Zenji is talking about when we are asked to do something-for instance when we are asked to write a letter for your friend, about something, when he needs some help, about money, you should ask someone about some legal thing, and at that time if he cannot write the letter you should write letter of introduction, you should introduce your friend to lawyer or some businessman. But, you may say, I am a monk, I have no time to be involved in worldly things like that. You may easily say so. But think, reflect on your feeling at that time. It is good reason, but, Dogen Zenji says, you cannot say there is not the slightest idea of selfishness involved in me when I say. You may not be able to say so so easily. So perhaps you should write a letter for him. Then, his disciple, Ejo Zenji, asked Dogen Zenji again. You maybe alright if you write a letter for him, but it will create big trouble for the lawyer or the businessman-he will have a big trouble, I think, he said. Still, you should write a letter, or not? Dogen Zenji said, yes, even so, you should. But whether businessman, you know, will help him or not is his problem. So, if you think that will create some problem for them, you should wrote. It may create some problem for you, but whether you should help or not should be decided by you. I am helping him, I am just writing letter of introduction. So, think this point clearly, and if possible please help him. So if you think, you know, if you very careful in your everyday life, it is not so simple, to help others. But usually, making various excuse for himself and trying not to help others, that is what is going on in this society. If we become very careful, on one hand we will have more trouble, but on the other hand this society will be for everyone of us. Actually, this society is for someone who has various ability. This society is not actually for the disabled people, so that is why we must have some welfare system. We say welfare, that is, welfare is excuse. That's mere excuse. Very cold. Or very careless excuse, created by human lazy cold nature. If we become more careful about each one's situation, instead of having strong welfare system, we can enjoy our life with each other. The joy of someone who has ability will be appreciated when he help others, and when he sees someone who is helped by him actually, sincerely, he will appreciate his life, and he will appreciate his talent. But nowadays, you know, we are, someone who has ability is busy working on machine and paper. He has not much, you know, joy in his life, even though he can produce beautiful art, they ar working for, you now, for the publisher, for the businessman, and he cannot produce what he wants to, actually, what he wants to do. That is what is going in this world. Even though he wants to paint, in some way-if he is an architect, if he wants to design in his own way, you know, because of manager's order, his design should be straight, simple lines as much as possible, and building should be always square, so that the building doesn't cost so much money. So all the talent and ability of human being is sacrificed because of this kind of careless, cold excuse. In Zen word, a man of immense ability, immense power, should not be fooled by clever words, a man of great ability should not be fooled by clever words. So that we

can be free from those clever excuse, we should practice zazen. There is no other way to acquire, to be free from this kind of superficial understanding of our human life. Newspaper, magazine, television, you know, all those publications, if you think this point, easily fool you, you know. it is quite easy for them to fool us. Sometimes even various, sociology, psychology, various cultural study...(Tape ended, turned over)...

We are not fooled by it, when we can use it, to help others, it is, those studies will give us a great advantage for human life. But because we have spirit of, you may say, Zen, we are enslaved by those studies. If you think those points carefully, things which is happening near at hand, you will realize what is way-seeking mind in its true sense, and what is sincerity, what is the spirit of Zen. Our spirit of Zen, especially, Dogen's spirit of practice is based on everyday life, problems we have in everyday life. If you think this point, just to spend, just to share, just to spare our valuable time for zazen, is not zazen. If you practice zazen, you should pay full respect to the people who is not sitting, who is busy in his work, in their work. When you think about what they are doing, you know, you cannot goof off. This is my favorite word. On your cushion, you cannot waste time, you know, when you have this kind of respect, you can practice real zazen.

Thank you very much.

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