

# Where Are You Running?

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## Synopsis

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Many of us are haunted by the past. We try to make painful memories go away by numbing ourselves with food, alcohol, and entertainment, but the past is still there and it's still eating away at us. Ironically, our obsessive thoughts about the past occur because we haven't fully processed it yet. We need to go back to the root, to clean out the dusty corners that keep us from truly being ourselves and truly being free. This process takes a great deal of honesty and patience, but the results will allow us to see the world with fresh eyes. If you can come home to the present moment's cup of tea, you can come home to everything; when we let go of yesterday's matter, there is only the great matter of right now.

Zen Buddhism emphasizes zazen, or seated meditation, as the means to study the self and understand who we truly are. Dharma talks are an essential aspect of Zen training and take place in the context of zazen. Said to be "dark to the mind and radiant to the heart", a dharma talk is one of the ways in which a teacher points directly to the heart of the teachings of the Buddha. In our meditation practice, it is easy to get lost in self-doubt, fantasy, numbness, and emotional agitation. Dharma talks help to ground our practice, providing inspiration and an essential recognition of exactly where we find ourselves, so that we can learn to face difficulties and obstacles with a free and flexible mind. This talk was given at Zen Mountain Monastery or the Zen Center of New York City of the Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism, founded in 1980 by the late American Zen Master John Daido Looi, Roshi (1931-2009).

## Reader's comments

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