Shunryu Suzuki

BRANCHING STREAMS FLOW IN THE DARKNESS

参同契

Zen Talks on the *Sandokai*

By the author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

BRANCHING STREAMS
FLOW IN THE DARKNESS

Sekitō Kisen
(Shitou Xiqian)

Shunryu Suzuki

BRANCHING STREAMS FLOW IN THE DARKNESS

ZEN TALKS ON THE *SANDOKAI*

Edited by Mel Weitsman and Michael Wenger

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Illustration credits: The frontispiece is a traditional Chinese woodcut of Sekitō Kisen. The endpiece shows Suzuki Roshi and his wife, Mitsu (Okusan) Suzuki Sensei, at Tassajara in June 1970, at the wedding of Ed Brown and Meg Gawler; photo by Alan Marlowe.

The Chinese version of the *Sandōkai* is from Junjirō Takakusu and Kaigyoku Watanabe, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932), vol. 51, p. 459.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our everyday meal chant at the San Francisco Zen Center begins, "Innumerable labors brought us this food. We should know how it comes to us."

The same can be said for this book, though we are sure that in acknowledging the laborers we may have missed some.

We will start with Sekito Kisen, the great Chinese Ancestor who wrote the original text. To the many who preserved and handed down this text, which is over 1200 years young, we give thanks.

We offer our grateful appreciation to Shunryu Suzuki, whose lectures created this commentary on the poem, and to all who taught and influenced him.

To the many people who helped him build and pay for Tassajara, the first intensive Zen training center outside of Asia, which formed the environment for these lectures.

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And lastly to you, the reader. May you appreciate the teachings in this book, embody them, and keep them alive.

Mel Weitsman
Michael Wenger

April 8, 1999
Buddha's Birthday

INTRODUCTION

Mel Weitsman

In the summer of 1970 Suzuki Roshi gave these talks on the *Sandokai* of Sekito Kisen. Suzuki Roshi had come to America in 1959, leaving Rinso-in, his temple in Yaizu, Japan, to serve as priest for the Japanese-American congregation at Sokoji temple at 1881 Bush Street in San Francisco. During those years a large number of people came to practice with him, and San Francisco Zen Center was born. Suzuki Roshi became surrounded by so many enthusiastic American Zen students that in 1969 he and his students moved to a large building at 300 Page Street and established Beginner's Mind Temple. Two years earlier, Zen Center had acquired the Tassajara resort and hot springs, which is at the end of a fourteen-mile dirt road that winds through the rugged mountains of the Los Padres National Forest near the central coast of California. He and his students created the first Zen Buddhist monastery in America, Zenshinji (Zen Mind/Heart Temple). We were starting from scratch under Suzuki Roshi's guidance.

Each year Tassajara Zen Mountain Center has two inten-

sive practice-period retreats: October through December, and January through March. These two practice periods include many hours of zazen (cross-legged seated meditation) each day, lectures, study, and physical work. The students are there for the entire time. In the spring and summer months (May through August), Tassajara provides a guest season for people who are attracted by the hot mineral baths and the quiet atmosphere. In this way the guest season provides support for Tassajara and the students. In the summer period the students sit zazen each morning and evening, and the rest of their time is devoted to work practice.

During the summer of 1970, when these talks were given, the students were attending services and zazen several times a day, preparing meals, and working on the many tasks of building and maintenance. During the day, Suzuki Roshi, small and seemingly frail, was busy putting large stones in place on the side of the creek to prevent erosion. At night he lectured. Those of us who were fortunate enough to work with him were always amazed at his energy and ability even when he was old and not well. He worked all day in the hundred-degree-plus heat. His tremendous spirit was communicated through his work. We might spend all day putting a large stone in place, and if it wasn't right he would take it out and start all over the next day.

At that time I was Suzuki Roshi's personal attendant. At the beginning of our formal daily practice of zazen and service, I would follow him into the zendo with an incense offering. In the heat of the day, I would sometimes place a water-soaked

washcloth on top of his shaved head to cool him off. His wife, Mitsu-san, came down from San Francisco in that summer of 1970 and was very worried about him. She knew he was very ill and thought he was working too hard. Sometimes when she would pass by he would pretend that he was resting and then go back to moving stones. She once chastised him, using the familiar name for an abbot: "Hojo-san! You are cutting your life short!" He replied, "If I don't cut my life short, my students will not grow."

Although there was much to be done, he was never in a hurry. He was centered both in balance and in time. He always gave me the feeling that he was completely within the activity of the moment. He would take the time to do everything thoroughly. One day he showed me how to wash a kimono, inching around the entire perimeter using the part held in one hand to scrub the part held in the other, until the whole thing was finished. One time he said, "You have a saying, 'to kill two birds with one stone,' but our way is to kill just one bird with one stone."

In 1969, the students had built the stone kitchen with great care. Stones and rocks of all shapes and sizes are everywhere at Tassajara. We cut off the roof of an old car and used it as a sled to haul large stones. We became adept at building stone walls and steps. Our carpentry crew was headed by a young carpenter named Paul Discoe, who later studied in Japan and became a master in Japanese carpentry. Edward Espe Brown's *Tassajara Bread Book* and *Tassajara Cooking* were generated from that time, as well as Bill Shurtleff's classic books on tofu,

miso, and tempeh. There was a wonderful feeling of pioneering. Zen was sitting meditation, but it was also serving and work. The combination gave the practice a feeling of wholesomeness. We were in the mountains building this monastery with our bare hands. We felt gratitude toward this place, toward each other, and toward our teacher, as well as toward all the people who were supporting our effort. We also felt that we were doing something for others, not just for ourselves.

Although Suzuki Roshi had studied the English language for many years in Japan, it took several years before he could communicate fluently here in America. During his twelve years here, his command of the language became better and better. Though he often had to grope for just the right expression, he usually found it. But even when searching for the right expression he was always eloquent. In fact, someone who heard him give a talk in Japanese and a talk in English on the same day found the English talk far more innovative and compelling—perhaps even helped by the fact that English was not his native language.

Suzuki Roshi gave hundreds of talks. Strictly speaking, a talk is more of an informative kind of presentation, while a *teisho* offers the teacher's own dharma or direct understanding, often using a koan or a text. Suzuki Roshi rarely used a text, although he frequently made reference to one. Often a Soto teacher's talks are mixed, with the teacher both lecturing and expressing his or her own understanding of a particular text, as Suzuki Roshi does here. During the talk, students sit with crossed legs, in zazen posture, not leaning on anything,

with straight backs and open minds. It is customary for the teacher to give a talk weekly, and sometimes more often. During long retreats called *sesshins,* Suzuki Roshi spoke every day and sometimes twice a day.

Suzuki Roshi was in the lineage stream of Zen master Dogen (1200–1253) and was committed to introducing Dogen's way of practice to the West. Although he recommended studying the many written works of Dogen (few of which were translated into English at that time), it was the spirit of Dogen that was most vital for him. Like Dogen, he did not consider Zen a teaching or practice separate from buddha dharma, or that the Soto school of Zen was either superior or inferior to any other school. He characterized our way as Hinayana (Narrow Vehicle) practice with a Mahayana (Wide Vehicle) mind.

In the mid-sixties, we started recording Suzuki Roshi's talks. By that time he was visiting Zen Center's small affiliated Zen groups in Mill Valley, Berkeley, and Los Altos. It was decided to turn some of his Los Altos talks into the basis of a book so more people could be exposed to his teaching. This became the raw material for the well-known book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,* which has been translated into many languages and has gone through almost forty printings to date. In these freely flowing talks he covers much ground. But essentially his message is how to let go of our self-centeredness and settle ourselves on *dai-shin* (big mind or big self), how to practice zazen in a formal way, and how to extend and find our practice in the informality of our daily lives. "Beginner's

mind" in the title refers to the unassuming attitude of just being present in each moment, accepting the non-dual reality of each moment with openness and clarity, being careful not to fall into partiality based on opinions and false views, and being open to all possibilities.

The talks were recorded and transcribed by Marian Derby, who was the head of the Los Altos Zen group and who first conceived of the book. The transcriptions were edited by Trudy Dixon, a close disciple, and Richard Baker, who succeeded Suzuki Roshi as the second abbot of Zen Center. The editors of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* gleaned the most interesting and unique parts of those Los Altos talks and edited them into short chapters. Each chapter is a little gem of wisdom.

The *Sandokai* talks, on the other hand, present a completely different teaching context and consequently have a different feeling. Here we have Suzuki Roshi lecturing on an ancient Chinese poem, line by line, word by word, over a period of about six weeks (May 27 to July 6, 1970). The *Sandokai* of Sekito Kisen is chanted in the liturgy at Zen Center as well as Japanese Soto Zen monasteries. Suzuki Roshi wanted to make its meaning clear to us. This was an enjoyable undertaking for him. He set up a blackboard next to his seat and wrote and explained the Chinese characters as he went along. (For the sake of smoother reading, we have deleted most of Suzuki Roshi's detailed explanation of each Chinese character.) These evening talks were given in the zendo. It was still hot enough in the evenings that our cushions were soaked with perspiration when we got up.

Suzuki Roshi gave a total of twelve talks to Tassajara stu-

dents on the *Sandokai*. We have included one more that he delivered to Tassajara students and a group of visiting philosophy students, which took the form of a general summary or overview. Also included is a short talk about zazen that he gave during the sitting one morning.

Because these talks were sequential, editing them was more difficult than was the case for *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. The voice in the *Sandokai* talks doesn't always sound like the voice of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,* partly because Suzuki Roshi is speaking about a text here, but also because of the editors' approach in presenting his voice. Originally we wanted to keep the text as close as possible to the original, but as we continued to go over the talks it became clear that a verbatim account sometimes had to give way to consistency. Suzuki Roshi occasionally revisited the same topics during the series of talks, but not always with the same approach. So often the editors would have to choose between different ways the same phrase was stated on different occasions. Sometimes we would have to bridge the gaps in statements that were indistinct or not clearly expressed. And rather often we would have to choose whether or not to leave intact a statement that was characteristic of Suzuki Roshi's way of speaking or to change it for the sake of written clarity and consistency.

Suzuki Roshi also made up phrases of his own in order to express himself in a more non-dualistic way. For instance, he often used the phrase "things-as-it-is" to mean the fundamental nature of reality, something beyond words. But he also used "things-as-they-are" to refer to our usual discriminating, dualistic way of thinking and perceiving (good/bad, right/

wrong). He was well aware of the difference. In "things-as-it-is," his use of the singular and plural in the same phrase stretches our ordinary way of thinking.

He also made up the word "independency," which he uses to express the dependent and at the same time independent nature of our lives. When I asked him about this once, I said that English has the words "independent," "dependent," and "interdependent," but I had never heard the word "independency." He laughed and said that he had made it up. He explained that we are completely independent and at the same time completely dependent. If you think you are just independent, that is wrong. If you think you are just dependent, that is not right either. "Interdependent" might seem like the correct word here, but Suzuki Roshi used "independency" to express that ambivalent quality. He said that the secret of Soto Zen is "yes, but."

We have tried to make Suzuki Roshi's language as clear and fluid as possible without losing or compromising his personal mode of expression. In a Zen lecture or a *teisho* the speaker's presence contributes powerfully to the student's experience. Working with just words, the editors must be careful not to overlook that quality when it comes through, and not eliminate it in favor of a perfectly grammatical presentation. Often his slightly offbeat expressions have more impact than if he were speaking "properly."

We have retained Suzuki Roshi's use of masculine pronouns in several instances in this text. Coming from a culture that traditionally favors men, Suzuki Roshi was unusual in that he

made a great effort to respect the practice of men and women equally and without discrimination. He also respected time-honored values of the interdependent relationship between women and men. Although in his talks he would typically refer to a student as "he," this usage was simply the convention of the time. He often said that whether you are a man or a woman, you should be yourself completely—that when you are you, Zen is Zen.

Suzuki Roshi died on December 4, 1971, of cancer, a year and a half after delivering this teaching on the *Sandokai*. He was sixty-seven. He must have had a premonition of his coming death when he said that Zen teachers in the Soto tradition often lecture on the *Sandokai* toward the ends of their lives.

SEKITO KISEN AND THE *SANDOKAI*

Michael Wenger

Sekito Kisen (Ch. Shitou Xiqian, 700–790), author of the *Sandokai*, was born in Guangdong Province in southern China in the beginning of the eighth century. This was a formative era in which Zen was growing in popularity and was first articulated as a unique school and lineage. Questions about the nature and origins of Zen and the earliest surviving accounts of the First Chinese Zen Ancestor, Bodhidharma (c. 470–543), date from this time.

It was also during this period that Zen became known for its emphasis on the direct experience of reality and the practice of seated meditation. But sectarian disputes arose between the Northern school of Zen, which taught a doctrine of gradual, step-ladder practice, and the Southern school, which taught that attaining enlightenment is sudden and immediate. Debates flourished over which lineage was superior. From today's perspective, the differences between the two schools seem exaggerated, as both schools emphasized sudden attainment as well as constant cultivation, primarily through

seated meditation. Indeed, the Northern school originally was very popular and influential, but after several generations its influence and identity as a separate school faded.

Not much is known about Sekito's life. The first recorded event is an encounter, at the age of twelve, with the Sixth Ancestor, Daikan Eno (Ch. Dajian Huineng, 638–713). When the precocious youth approached Eno, the master jokingly said, "If you become my disciple you'll start to look [ugly] like me." Sekito smiled and said, "Fine." Two years later he was one of the disciples present at Eno's deathbed.

Sekito seems to have practiced basically alone for the next fifteen years, after which he settled down to study with one of Eno's main disciples, Seigen Gyoshi (Ch. Qingyuan Xingsi, 660–740). After their first dialogue, Seigen said of his new disciple: "I have many horned animals in my assembly. One unicorn is all I need."

In 742, Sekito built a hut on a large stone ledge on Mount Heng in what is now Hunan Province. His name Sekito, "stone head," derives from his sitting zazen on this stone ledge. Eihei Dogen, who brought Soto Zen to Japan five centuries later, wrote the following about Sekito:

> Great Master Shitou [Sekito] did zazen on a large rock where he had a thatched hut. He sat continuously without sleeping day or night. Although he did not ignore work, he did not fail to do zazen throughout the day. Nowadays the descendants of his teacher Qingyuan [Seigen] are spread throughout China, benefiting humans and devas. This is all due to the solid continuous practice and the great determination of Shitou [Sekito].

Several exchanges between Sekito and students have been preserved. In one such encounter, Sekito's disciple Tenno Dogo (Ch. Tianhuang Daowu, 748–827) asked his teacher who was the rightful heir of the Sixth Ancestor.

"Who obtained the essential teaching of the Sixth Ancestor?"

Sekito replied: "He who understands buddha dharma obtained it."

"Did you obtain it?" Dogo asked.

"I don't understand buddha dharma," Sekito replied.

On another occasion a monk asked Sekito: "How does one get emancipation?"

Sekito: "Who has put you in bondage?"

Monk: "What is the Pure Land?"

Sekito: "Who has defiled you?"

Monk: "What is nirvana?"

Sekito: "Who has placed you in birth-and-death?"

It was said that a monk remained ignorant unless he visited both South of the Lake with Master Sekito and West of the River with Master Baso (Ch. Mazu, 709–788). The five schools of Zen developed from these two great teachers who, during their time, truly embodied the way of Zen. While there is no record of them having met in person, each sent his students to study with the other.

Here is an example of the way they interacted with Yakusan Igen (Ch. Yaoshan Weiyan, 745–828), who later became one of Sekito's successors. Yakusan visited Sekito and asked

him: "I understand the scriptural teachings of Buddhism, but I hear that in the south they [Zen practitioners] directly point to the human mind. They see their natures and become buddhas. This is still not clear to me. I humbly ask you to explain it."

Sekito said: "This way won't do and not this way won't do, and both this way and not this way won't do. How about you?"

Yakusan was dumbfounded.

Sekito said: "You should go see Baso."

So Yakusan paid his respects to Baso and asked the same question.

Baso said: "Sometimes I make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink, sometimes I do not make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink. Sometimes raising the eyebrows and blinking is all right, sometimes raising the eyebrows and blinking is not all right. How about you?"

Hearing these words, Yakusan was greatly awakened, and he bowed.

Baso asked: "What truth have you seen that makes you bow?"

Yakusan replied: "When I was with Sekito, it was like a mosquito climbing on an iron ox."

Baso said: "Since you have realized the truth, you must guard it well. But still, your master is Sekito."

Another exchange between Sekito and Yakusan demonstrates a true meeting of teacher and student. One day, seeing Yakusan sitting zazen, Sekito asked him: "What are you doing here?"

Yakusan answered: "I'm not doing anything at all."

Sekito said: "In that case, you are sitting idly."

Yakusan replied: "If I were sitting idly, then I would be doing something."

Sekito asked: "You say you are not doing anything. What is this 'not doing'?"

Yakusan replied: "Not even the ten thousand sages know."

The *Sandokai* (Ch. *Cantongqi*) addresses the division between the Northern and Southern schools as well as other dichotomies such as one and many, light and dark, sameness and difference. (In today's scientific climate, Sekito might well have written of wave and particle.) Made up of twenty-two couplets (forty-four lines), the poem often follows a pattern of distinguishing first discontinuity, then continuity, and finally complementarity.

An earlier Daoist text on the *Yijing* bore the title *Sandokai*, and Sekito's poem alludes to Daoist themes of nature and change. It also shows the influence of Kegon philosophy (the Huayen or Flower Garland school of Buddhism), which teaches the equality of all things and the dependence of all things on one another.

The importance of the *Sandokai* to the Soto Zen lineage is clearly of the first order. The poem is chanted every day in Soto Zen temples throughout the world, and almost always when a memorial service is held for the founder of a temple.

Three generations after Sekito, Tozan Ryokai (Ch. Dongshan Liangjie, 807–869) wrote the *Hokyo Zammai* (Ch. *Baojing Sanmei*), which developed ideas from the *Sandokai*. The teaching of the five ranks also grew out of the *Sandokai*.

I conclude with the last couplet of the *Sandokai*, the sentiments of which are often written on the *han*, the wooden board struck to announce meditation in Zen temples and monasteries: "I respectfully urge you who study the mystery, do not pass your days and nights in vain."

Suzuki Roshi used several English translations of the *Sandokai* that were available at that time—mainly those by R. H. Blyth and Reiho Masunaga—and he translated directly from the Chinese characters as well. So his commentary does not fit with or match any one translation exactly. We have included in this text (page 20) the English translation from the Soto-Shu (Soto-School) Liturgy Conference held at Green Gulch Farm, Sausalito, California in 1997, with some revisions. We have also found no perfect translation for the title of the *Sandokai*. The title proposed by the Soto-Shu Liturgy Conference is "The Harmony of Difference and Equality." The problems inherent in any translation of such a profound work bring to mind a line from the *Hokyo Zammai:* "The meaning is not in the words, but it responds to the inquiring impulse."

Although Suzuki Roshi did not compose his own complete translation of the *Sandokai,* in these talks he did offer an ongoing character-by-character translation of the poem. We have sifted through these talks as well as sources not included in

the present work (e.g., private discussions with students) and created a composite English version of the *Sandokai,* to be found at the back of this book. Suzuki Roshi offered more than one translation of some characters and phrases, depending on the context of his talk, so our composite version must remain only an approximation of what Suzuki Roshi might have written.

Chinese teachers mentioned in this book are introduced with the Japanese equivalents of their Chinese names, followed by the original Chinese names in parentheses. Chinese characters have been romanized using the pinyin system. Thus, the name of the author of the poem, Sekito Kisen, is "Shitou Xiqian" using the pinyin system. The earlier Wade-Giles system would have given his name as "Shih-tou Hsi-chien." To help the reader keep track of the various teachers and lineages mentioned in the text, we have included a lineage chart at the back of the book.

The romanized Japanese transliteration of the *Sandokai* on page 22 was kindly and expertly provided by Kazuaki Tanahashi. The Chinese version of the *Sandokai,* also on page 22, is reproduced from *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō,* an edition of the complete Sino-Japanese Buddhist canon, edited by Junjirō Takakusu and Kaigyoku Watanabe.

For ease of reading, we have opted to remove macrons (long-vowel accent marks) from most Japanese terms in the body of the text. However, we have preserved them in the full Japanese version of the poem on page 22, in the lineage chart, and in bibliographic citations.

THE *SANDOKAI*

The Harmony of Difference and Equality

The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately transmitted from west to east.
While human faculties are sharp or dull,
the way has no Northern or Southern Ancestors.
The spiritual source shines clear in the light;
the branching streams flow on in the dark.
Grasping at things is surely delusion;
according with sameness is still not enlightenment.
All the objects of the senses
interact and yet do not.
Interacting brings involvement.
Otherwise, each keeps its place.
Sights vary in quality and form,
sounds differ as pleasing or harsh.
Refined and common speech come together in the dark,
clear and murky phrases are distinguished in the light.
The four elements return to their natures
just as a child turns to its mother.
Fire heats, wind moves,
water wets, earth is solid.
Eye and sight, ear and sound,
nose and smell, tongue and taste.
Thus for each and every thing,
depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth.

Trunk and branches share the essence;
revered and common, each has its speech.
In the light there is darkness.
but don't take it as darkness;
In the dark there is light,
but don't see it as light.
Light and dark oppose one another
like front and back foot in walking.
Each of the myriad things has its merit,
expressed according to function and place.
Phenomena exist, like box and lid joining;
principle accords, like arrow points meeting.
Hearing the words, understand the meaning;
don't set up standards of your own.
If you don't understand the way right before you,
how will you know the path as you walk?
Practice is not a matter of far or near,
but if you are confused, mountains and rivers block
your way.
I respectfully urge you who study the mystery,
don't pass your days and nights in vain.

Translation by Soto-Shu Liturgy Conference,
Green Gulch Farm, 1997, with minor revisions

Sandōkai	參同契
Chikudo daisen no shin,	竺土大仙心
tōzai mitsuni aifusu.	東西密相付
Ninkon ni ridon ari,	人根有利鈍
dō ni namboku no so nashi.	道無南北祖
Reigen myōni kōkettari.	靈源明皎潔
Shiha anni ruchūsu.	枝派暗流注
Ji wo shūsuru mo moto kore mayoi.	執事元是迷
Ri ni kanō mo mata satori ni ara zu.	契理亦非悟
Mommon issai no kyō,	門門一切境
ego to fuego to.	迴互不迴互
Eshite sarani aiwataru.	迴而更相涉
Shikara zare ba kurai ni yotte jūsu.	不爾依位住
Shiki moto shitsuzō wo kotonishi,	色本殊質象
shō moto rakku wo kotonisu.	聲元異樂苦
An wa jōchū no koto ni kanai,	暗合上中言
mei wa seidaku no ku wo wakatsu.	明明清濁句
Shidai no shō onozukara fukusu,	四大性自復
ko no sono haha wo uru ga gotoshi.	如子得其母
Hi wa nesshi kaze wa dōyō,	火熱風動搖
mizu wa uruoi chi wa kengo.	水濕地堅固
Manako wa iro, mimi wa onjō,	眼色耳音聲
hana wa ka, shita wa kanso.	鼻香舌鹹醋
Shikamo ichi-ichi no hō ni oite,	然依一一法
ne ni yotte ha bumpusu.	依根葉分布

Hommatsu subekaraku shū ni kisu beshi.	本末須歸宗
Sompi sono go wo mochiu.	尊卑用其語
Meichū ni atatte an ari,	當明中有暗
ansō wo motte ō koto nakare.	勿以暗相遇
Anchū ni atatte mei ari,	當暗中有明
meisō wo motte miru koto nakare.	勿以明相覩
Meian ono-ono aitaishi te,	明暗各相對
hisuru ni zengo no ayumi no gotoshi.	比如前後步
Bammotsu onozukara kō ari,	萬物自有功
masani yō to sho to wo iu beshi.	當言用及處
Ji sonsure ba kangai gasshi,	事存函蓋合
ri ōzure ba sempō sasō.	理應箭鋒拄
Koto wo uke te wa subekaraku shū wo esu beshi.	承言須會宗
Mizukara kiku wo rissuru koto nakare.	勿自立規矩
Sokumoku dō wo ese zumba,	觸目不會道
ashi wo hakobu mo izukunzo michi wo shiran.	運足焉知路
Ayumi wo susumure ba gonnon ni ara zu,	進步非近遠
mayōte senga no ko wo hedatsu.	迷隔山河固
Tsutsushin de sangen no hito ni mōsu,	謹白參玄人
kōin munashiku wataru koto nakare.	光陰莫虛度

Transliteration by Kazuaki Tanahashi

FIRST TALK

Things-As-It-Is

The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately transmitted from west to east.

I am very grateful for this opportunity to talk about the *Sandokai*, one of our most important teachings. Its mode of expression is so smooth that you may not feel its deep meaning when you read it. The author of this poem, Sekito Kisen (or Sekito Musai Daishin, his posthumous name), is the dharma grandson of the Sixth Chinese Ancestor, Daikan Eno (in Chinese, Dajian Huineng), and the direct descendent of Seigen Gyoshi (Ch. Qingyuan Xingsi), who is considered the Seventh Ancestor. Among the Sixth Ancestor's many disciples, the most prominent were Seigen Gyoshi and Nangaku Ejo. Later, Master Tozan Ryokai continued Seigen's lineage as the Soto school, and Master Rinzai Gigen (Ch. Linji Yixuan) continued Nangaku's lineage as the Rinzai school. Soto and Rinzai eventually became the dominant schools of Zen.

The way of Seigen and Sekito has a more gentle quality than Nangaku's way. In Japan we call this the elder brother's way. Nangaku is more like the second or third son, who is often rather naughty. The elder brother may not be so able or so

bright, but he is very gentle. This is our understanding when we talk about Soto and Rinzai. Sometimes Soto Zen is called *memmitsu no kafu*—"a very careful and considerate style." Seigen's way is to find everything within himself. It is to realize the great mind that includes everything and to practice accordingly.

Our effort in Zen is to observe everything as-it-is. Yet even though we say so, we are not necessarily observing everything as-it-is. We say, "Here is my friend, over there is the mountain, and way up there is the moon." But your friend is not only your friend, the mountain is not only the mountain, and the moon is not only the moon. If we think, "I am here and the mountain is over there," that is a dualistic way of observing things. To go to San Francisco, we have to cross over the Tassajara mountains. That is our usual understanding. But that is not the Buddhist way of observing things. We find the mountain or the moon or our friend or San Francisco within ourselves. Right here. That is big mind within which everything exists.

Now, let's look at the title, *Sandokai*. *San* literally means "three," but here it means "things." *Do* is sameness. To identify one thing with another is *do*. It also refers to "oneness" or "one's whole being," which here means "great mind" or "big mind." So our understanding is that there is one whole being that includes everything, and that the many things are found in one whole being. Although we say "many beings," they are actually the many parts of one whole being that includes everything. If you say "many" it is many, and if you say "one" it is one. "Many" and "one" are different ways of

describing one whole being. To completely understand the relationship between one great whole being and the many facets of that one great whole being is *kai*. *Kai* means to shake hands. You have a feeling of friendship. You feel that the two of you are one. In the same way, this one great whole being and the many things are good friends, or more than good friends because they are originally one. Therefore like shaking hands we say *kai*. "Hi, how are you?" This is the meaning of the poem's title. What is many? What is one? And what is the oneness of one and many?

Originally, *Sandokai* was the title of a Daoist book. Sekito used the same title for his poem, which describes Buddha's teaching. What is the difference between Daoist teachings and Buddhist teachings? There are many similarities. When a Buddhist reads it, it is a Buddhist text, and when a Daoist reads it, it is a Daoist text. Yet it is actually the same thing. When a Buddhist eats a vegetable it is Buddhist food, and when a vegetarian eats it, it is vegetarian food. Still it is just food.

As Buddhists, we do not eat a particular vegetable just because it has some special nourishing quality, or choose it because it is *yin* or *yang*, acid or alkaline. Simply to eat food is our practice. We don't eat just to support ourselves. As we say in our meal chant, "To practice our way, we eat this food." This is how big mind is included in our practice. To think "this is just a vegetable" is not our understanding. We must treat things as part of ourselves, within our practice and within big mind. Small mind is the mind that is under the limitation of desires or some particular emotional covering or the discrimination of good and bad. So, for the most part, even though

we think we are observing things-as-it-is, actually we are not. Why? Because of our discrimination, or our desires. The Buddhist way is to try hard to let go of this kind of emotional discrimination of good and bad, to let go of our prejudices, and to see things-as-it-is.

When I say to see things-as-it-is, what I mean is to practice hard with our desires—not to get rid of desires, but to take them into account. If you have a computer, you must enter all the data: this much desire, this much nourishment, this kind of color, this much weight. We must include our desires as one of the many factors in order to see things-as-it-is. We don't always reflect on our desires. Without stopping to reflect on our selfish judgment we say "He is good" or "He is bad." But someone who is bad to me is not necessarily always bad. To someone else, he may be a good person. Reflecting in this way we can see things-as-it-is. This is buddha mind.

The poem begins *Chikudo daisen no shin*, which means "the mind of the great sage of India." That is Buddha's big mind that includes everything. The mind we have when we practice zazen is the great mind: We don't try to see anything; we stop conceptual thinking; we stop emotional activity; we just sit. Whatever happens to us, we are not bothered. We just sit. It is like something happening in the great sky. Whatever kind of bird flies through it, the sky doesn't care. That is the mind transmitted from Buddha to us.

Many things happen as you sit. You may hear the sound of the stream. You may think of something, but your mind doesn't care. Your great mind is just there sitting. Even when

you are not aware of seeing, hearing, or thinking, something is going on in big mind. We observe things. Without saying "good" or "bad," we just sit. We enjoy things but have no special attachment to them. We have full appreciation of them at this time, that's all. After zazen we say, "Oh, good morning!" In that way, one after another, things will happen to us and we can fully appreciate them. That is the mind transmitted from Buddha. And that is the way we practice zazen.

If you practice zazen in this way, you are less likely to have trouble when you are enjoying some event. Do you understand? You may have a special experience and think, "This is it. This is how it should be." If someone opposes you, you will be angry. "No, it should be like this, not like that. Zen Center should be like this." Maybe so. But it is not always so. If times change and we lose Tassajara and move to another mountain, the way we have here cannot be the same way we will have there. So, without sticking to some particular way, we open our minds to observe things-as-it-is and to accept things-as-it-is. Without this basis, when you say "this is the mountain," or "this is my friend," or "this is the moon," the mountain will not be the mountain, my friend will not be my friend, and the moon will not be the moon itself. That is the difference between sticking to something and Buddha's way.

Buddha's way is the study and teaching of human nature, including how foolish we are, what kinds of desires we have, our preferences and tendencies. Without sticking to something, I try to remember to use the expression "liable to." We are liable to, or we have a tendency to do something. This is my motto.

When I was preparing this lecture someone asked me, "What is self-respect, and how can we obtain it?" Self-respect is not something that you can feel you have. When you feel "I have self-respect," that is not self-respect anymore. When you are just you, without thinking or trying to say something special, just saying what is on your mind and how you feel, then there is naturally self-respect. When I am closely related to all of you and to everything, then I am a part of one big whole being. When I feel something, I'm almost a part of it, but not quite. When you do something without any feeling of having done something, then that is you, yourself. You're completely with everyone and you don't feel self-conscious. That is self-respect.

When you feel that you are somebody, you have to practice zazen harder. As you know, it is difficult to sit without thinking or feeling. When you don't think or feel, you usually fall asleep. But without sleeping and without thinking, just to be yourself is our practice. When you can do that, you will be able to speak without thinking too much, and without having any special purpose. When you speak or act it will be just to express yourself. That is complete self-respect. To practice zazen is to attain this kind of self-respect. You must be strict with yourself and especially with your tendencies. We each have our own unique personal tendencies. But if you try to get rid of them, or if you try not to think or not to hear the sound of the stream during zazen, it is not possible. Let your ears hear without trying to hear. Let the mind think without trying to think and without trying to stop it. That is practice.

More and more, you will have this rhythm or strength as

the power of practice. If you practice hard you will be like a child. While we were talking about self-respect a bird was singing outside. *Peep-peep-peep*. That's self-respect. *Peep-peep-peep*. It doesn't mean anything. Maybe he was just singing. Maybe without trying to think he was just singing, *peep-peep-peep*. When we heard it we couldn't stop smiling. We cannot say that it is just a bird. It controls the whole mountain, the whole world. That is self-respect.

In order to have this everyday practice, we study hard. When we reach this place, there is no need to say "one whole being" or "bird" or "many things which include one whole being." It could be just a bird or a mountain or the *Sandokai*. If you understand this, there will be no need to recite the *Sandokai*. Although we recite it in this Japanese-Chinese form, it is not a matter of Japanese or Chinese. It is just a poem, or a bird, and this is just my talk. It does not mean much. We say that Zen is not something to talk about. It is what you experience in a true sense. It is difficult. But anyway this is a difficult world, so don't worry. Wherever you go you have problems. You should confront your problems. It may be much better to have these problems of practice rather than some other mixed-up kinds of problems.

DISCUSSION

Student: The other day when I was beating the *mokugyo*,* a small spider crawled across the top of it. There was nothing

* A wooden drum struck to provide a rhythm for chanting.

I could do to avoid the spider. I veered a little off to the side to avoid him, but he went right into the striker. It was too powerful for him to escape.

Suzuki Roshi: You didn't kill him.

Student: Something did! [Laughter.]

Suzuki Roshi: By mistake. It happened in that way.

Student: Yeah, but I couldn't stop.

Suzuki Roshi: Yeah. You know, it can't be helped. Buddha killed him! [Laughter.] He may be very happy.

To live in this world is not so easy. When you see children playing by a stream or on a bridge, you may be really worried. "The cars are going *zoom, zoom, zoom* on the highway nearby. What if there is an accident?" If something happens, that's all. If you stop and think, you will be terrified. Did you hear about the 165-year-old man who has more than two hundred children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren? If he thought about each one of them, he would be scared of losing one.

Our practice can be a very strict practice. You should be ready to kill something even if you are a Buddhist. Whether it is good or bad, you should do that sometime. It is impossible to survive without killing anything. We cannot live depending just on our feelings. Our practice must be deeper than that. That is the strict side of our practice. On the other hand, if it is absolutely necessary, you should stop hitting the *mokugyo* even though it throws everything into confusion. Not so easy.

Student: Would you explain more what you mean by "strict practice"?

Suzuki Roshi: Strict practice? Things are already going in a very strict way. There is no exception. Wherever there is something, there is some rule or truth behind it that is always strictly controlling it, without any exception. We think we care for freedom, but the other side of freedom is strict rule. Within the strict rule there is complete freedom. Freedom and strict rule are not two separate things. Originally we are supported by strict rules or truths. That is the other side of absolute freedom.

Student: Could you give us more examples that apply to our individual lives?

Suzuki Roshi: When you get up you should just get up. When everyone sleeps you should sleep. That is my example.

Student: My responsibility is such that it's very easy for me to follow the strict way, because it goes with my position. Other people have somewhat different responsibilities. Sometimes, because my inclination is to follow strictly, we have some differences, and sometimes I think it's okay for them to do things differently than I do. Is that right?

Suzuki Roshi: Yeah. Sometimes you should shut your eyes.

[Laughing.] Sometimes it may be unfortunate to see something. If you see it, you have to say something, so it may help you to practice without looking around. That is the best way, actually. If you look around, then, if you see the people on this side of the zendo, the people on the other side will sleep. So it's better not to see anything! [Laughter.] They won't know what you are doing. "He may not be sleeping, so all of us will stay awake." If you see something, that's all. The rest will be ignored. If you don't see anything, you cannot ignore anything. That is the big mind that includes everything. If someone moves, you will notice. Even though you don't try to hear it, if some sound comes you will catch it. If you focus on one person, the rest of the people will be very happy! [Laughter.] If you don't catch anyone, no one can move.

SECOND TALK

Warm Hand to Warm Hand

The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately transmitted from west to east.
While human faculties are sharp or dull,
the way has no Northern or Southern Ancestors.

In my first talk I explained the meaning of the title, *Sandokai*, and the first line, "The mind of the great sage of India." I would like to tell you about the background of this poem and why the Eighth Ancestor in China, Sekito Musai Daishin, wrote it.

When Daiman Konin, the Fifth Ancestor, announced that he was going to give dharma transmission to someone, all the monks thought that, among them, of course Jinshu would be the one to receive the transmission. Jinshu was a great scholar, and he later went to northern China and became a great teacher. But actually Eno, who was pounding rice in the corner of the temple, received the transmission and became the Sixth Ancestor. Jinshu's school was called Hoku Zen, or Northern Zen, and Eno's school spread to the south and was called Nan Zen, or Southern Zen. Later, after Jinshu's death, Northern Zen became weaker while Southern Zen became stronger. But in Sekito's time Northern Zen was still powerful.

The Sixth Ancestor, Eno, had many disciples. We can count

fifty, but there must have been more. The youngest was Kataku Jinne (Ch. Heze Shenhui), a very alert and active person who denounced Jinshu's Zen pretty strongly. We cannot completely accept his teaching. If you have studied the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor*, you know that Jinshu's teaching is harshly denounced there. The sutra may have been compiled by someone under the influence of Kataku Jinne. Anyway, there was some conflict between Eno's Southern Zen and Jinshu's Northern Zen. Sekito wanted to clarify this dispute from his own viewpoint. This is why he wrote the *Sandokai*.

The poem begins, "The mind of the great sage of India is intimately transmitted from west to east." Sekito's understanding is that the true teaching of the great sage, Shakyamuni Buddha, includes both the Southern school and the Northern school without any contradiction. Although the teaching of the great sage may not be completely understood, still it reaches everywhere. If you have the eyes to see or the mind to understand the teaching, you will see that it is not necessary to be involved in such a dispute. Because some of the descendants of Eno and Jinshu didn't completely understand the teaching of Buddha they got into a dispute. From Sekito's point of view there is no need for contention.

"Is intimately transmitted." *Mitsuni* literally means "exactly, without a gap between the two." The main purpose of the *Sandokai* is to explain reality from two sides. As I said, *san* means "many"; *do* means "one." What is many? What is one? Many are one; one is many. Even though you say "many," the many

things do not exist separately from each other. They are closely related. If so, they are one. But even though they are one, the one appears to be many. So "many" is right, and "one" is right. Even though we say "one," we cannot ignore the various beings like stars and moons, animals and fish. From this point of view we say that they are interdependent. When we discuss the meaning of each being, we may have "many" things to discuss. When we conclude that reality is in fact just oneness, the whole discussion will take place in this understanding of the unity of one and many.

Another way to explain reality is by differentiation. Differentiation is equality, and things have equal value because they are different. If men and women are the same, then the distinctions between men and women have no value. Because men and women are different, men are valuable as men and women are valuable as women. To be different is to have value. In this sense all things have equal, absolute value. Each thing has absolute value and thus is equal to everything else. We are normally involved with standards of evaluation: exchange value, material value, spiritual value, and moral value. Because you have some standard you can say "he is good" or "he is not so good." The moral standard defines the value of people. But the moral standard is always changing; a virtuous person is not always virtuous. If you compare him with someone like Buddha, he is not so good. Good or bad is arrived at by some standard of evaluation. But because each thing is different, each thing has its own value. That value is absolute. The mountain is not more valuable because it is high; the river

is not less valuable because it is low. On the other hand, because a mountain is high, it is a mountain, and it has absolute value; because water runs low in the valley, water is water and it has absolute value. The quality of the mountain and the quality of the river are completely different; because they are different they have equal value; and equal value means absolute value.

According to Buddhism equality is differentiation, and differentiation is equality. The usual understanding is that differentiation is the opposite of equality, but our understanding is that they are the same thing. One and many are the same. If you only see from the perspective that says one is different from many, your understanding is too materialistic and superficial.

The next line is "While human faculties are sharp or dull." It is difficult to translate this passage. It refers to the dispute between the Northern school and the Southern school. The clever ones do not always have an advantage in studying or accepting Buddhism, and it is not always the dull person who has difficulty. A dull person is good because he is dull; a sharp person is good because he is sharp. Even though you compare, you cannot say which is best.

I am not so sharp, so I understand this pretty well. My master [Gyokujun So-on] always addressed me as "You crooked cucumber!" I was his last disciple, but I became the first one because all the good cucumbers ran away. Maybe they were too smart. Anyway, I was not smart enough to run away so I was caught. For studying Buddhism my dullness was an ad-

vantage. When all the others went away and I was left alone with my master, I was very sad. If I had been a smart fellow I would have run away too. But I had left home by my own choice. My parents said, "You are too young. You should stay here." But I had to go. After leaving my parents, I felt I couldn't go back home. I could have, but I thought I couldn't. So I had nowhere to go. That is one reason why I didn't run away. Another reason was that I wasn't smart enough. A smart person does not always have the advantage, and a dull person is good because he is dull. This is our understanding.

Actually there is no dull person or smart person. Either way it is not so easy. There is some difficulty for both the smart person and the dull person. For instance, because he is not so smart, the dull person must study hard and read one book over and over again. A smart person forgets quite easily. He may learn quickly, but what he learns may not stay so long. For the dull person, it takes time to remember something, but if he reads it over and over and remembers it, it will not go away so soon. Smart or dull may not make so much difference.

"While human faculties are sharp or dull"—*Ninkon ni ridon ari*. In the *Sandokai* this point is not so important, but it is interesting to understand what human potentiality is in Buddhism in order to explain further our understanding of practice and why it is necessary to practice zazen. *Nin* is "human," *kon* is "root" or "potentiality"; so *ninkon* is "human potentiality." *Ri* here means "someone who has an advantage," and *don* means "someone who has a disadvantage." So the root of human potentiality is our advantage as well as disadvantage.

The capacity of the human mind has three aspects: potentiality, interrelationship, and appropriateness. We have the potentiality to be a buddha. It is like a bow and arrow. Because a bow and arrow have potentiality, if you use them the arrow will fly. If you don't use them the arrow won't fly. You are ready to be a buddha, but if you don't practice zazen, or Buddha doesn't help you, you cannot be a buddha even though you have potentiality.

Potentiality has two meanings. One is "possibility." From the viewpoint of our nature, we have the possibility to be buddhas. On the other hand, if you observe me in terms of time, even though I have the potentiality, if someone doesn't help me I cannot be a buddha. From the viewpoint of time, potentiality means something like "future possibility." This is the other meaning.

When we understand potentiality in terms of nature, we should be very kind and generous to everyone because everyone naturally has the possibility to be a buddha. But when we think in terms of "when," we should be very strict. Do you understand? If you miss this time, if you do not make a good effort this week or this year, if you always say "tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow," you will miss a chance to attain enlightenment, even though you have the possibility.

It is the same with your practice. When you don't think about time, you can be very generous with everyone, you can treat people very well. But if you think about time, about today and tomorrow, you cannot be so generous because you will lose time. So we say, "You do this and I will do that," and

"You help this person and I will help that person." In this way we should be very strict with ourselves. That is why we analyze *ki*, potentiality, as both "possibility" and "future possibility." When you understand potentiality in this way, you can work and practice very well, sometimes in a very generous way and sometimes in a very strict way. We have to have two sides to our practice, or to our understanding of *ki*. This is the first meaning of *ki*—potentiality.

Ki also means "interrelationship"—here, the interrelationship between a buddha and someone with a good nature, and between a buddha and someone with a bad nature. I am sorry to say "bad nature," but tentatively I must use those words. We should encourage people who have a good nature, giving them some joy of practice. And when we practice with someone who apparently is not so good, we should suffer with that person. That is our understanding. So *ki* sometimes means the "interrelationship between someone who helps and someone who is helped." This is also called *jihi*. *Ji* here means to encourage someone. *Hi* means to give happiness. *Jihi* is usually translated "love." Love has two sides. One is to give joy, *yoraku*, and the other is to lessen suffering, *bakku*. To lessen someone's suffering we suffer with them, we share their suffering. That is love.

So if someone is very good, we can share the joy of practice with them by giving them a good cushion, a good zendo, or something like that. But a zendo doesn't mean anything to someone who is suffering too much; whatever you give may not be accepted. Someone may say, "I don't need it. I'm suf-

fering too much. I don't know why. Right now to get out of the suffering is the most important thing for me. You can't help me, nothing can help me." When you hear this, you should be like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva—you should become like the one who is suffering, and you should suffer as that person suffers. Because of your innate love, your instinctive love, you share the suffering. That is love in its true sense. So *ki* may mean not only "potentiality" or "possibility," but also "interrelationship."

The third meaning of *ki* is "good means" or "appropriate use," like finding the right cover for a pot. The traditional Japanese bath is a wooden tub, and after finishing our bath we cover it with a big wooden lid. That cover cannot be used for a pot. It is too big. So the pot must have its own cover. In this sense *ki* means "appropriate use." If you see people who are suffering because of ignorance, because they don't know what they are doing, you weep, you suffer with them. When you see people who enjoy their true nature, you should share their joy and give them encouragement. This is to have a good, appropriate relationship.

Next the poem says, "The way has no Northern or Southern Ancestors." That is very true. Jinshu's teaching is good, and the Sixth Ancestor Eno's teaching is good. Jinshu's way is good for someone who studies things slowly and deliberately, and the Sixth Ancestor's way is good for a quick, sharp-minded person. One teacher may explain Buddha's teaching in detail so that the student can understand it word for word. But for another student it is not necessary to make the point

using so many words. It depends on the person. A great teacher's way of explaining the teaching will be unique. But there is no difference in true understanding.

People become confused because of the way they evaluate things, discriminating between the dull and the keen; but from the standpoint of the Ancestors they are the same. All the Ancestors understood this point. So there is no Northern Ancestor or Southern Ancestor. That is Sekito's understanding.

By the way, Sekito was actually the Sixth Ancestor's disciple, but after the Sixth Ancestor passed away, Sekito became the disciple of Seigen, the Seventh Ancestor. That kind of thing happens very often. I have some disciples here, but if I die, those who couldn't complete their training as my disciples will be disciples of my disciples. Studying Buddhism is not like studying other things. It may take time before you can accept the teaching completely. The most important factor is you yourself, rather than your teacher. When you study hard, what you receive from your teacher is the spirit of study. That spirit will be transmitted from warm hand to warm hand. You should do it! That's all. There is nothing to transmit to you. And what you learn may be from books or from other teachers, so that is why we have other teachers as well as a master. Some of you are my disciples. We call a master's disciples *deshi*. Those of you who are not my disciples are called *zuishin*. A *zuishin* is a follower. One may stay quite a long time under some teacher, sometimes longer than the period one stays with one's master. When I was thirty-two my master passed away, so after that I studied under Kishizawa Roshi,

and most of the understanding I have is from Kishizawa Roshi. But my master was Gyokujun So-on. Anyway, the true way has no Ancestor of North of South. The true way is one.

To practice is not to collect things and put them in your basket, but rather to find something in your sleeve. It's just that before you study hard, you don't know what you have in your sleeve. "Buddha and I have the same thing. Oh! That's amazing!" That is the spirit we must have. No matter what I say you should study hard. If you don't like what I say, you shouldn't accept it. That is okay. Eventually you may accept it. If you say, "No!" I will say, "Okay, but go ahead and try hard!" I think that is the characteristic of Buddhism. Our approach is very wide, and as a Buddhist you have enormous freedom in your study. Whatever you say is okay. So there is no Ancestor of South or North.

DISCUSSION

Student: Roshi, couldn't we just work from the Japanese and forget the English translation?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. I am trying hard to follow the order of the characters. If you translate the poem into fluent English, I may find it difficult to explain. The original poem is full of technical terms, and you cannot change that. If you try to change it, you will lose something and it will not make much sense. Because I want you to understand completely I want to follow the original text faithfully, even though it is difficult.

THIRD TALK

Buddha Is Always Here

The spiritual source shines clear in the light;
the branching streams flow on in the dark.
Grasping at things is surely delusion;
according with sameness is still not enlightenment.

"The spiritual source shines clear in the light." The source is something wonderful, something beyond description, beyond our words. What Buddha talked about is the source of the teaching, beyond discrimination of right and wrong. This is important. Whatever your mind can conceive is not the source itself. The source is something that only a buddha knows. Only when you practice zazen do you have it. Yet whether you practice or not, whether you realize it or not, something exists, even before our realization of it, that is the source. It is not something you can taste. The true source is neither tasty nor tasteless.

In the last of these four lines Sekito says, "According with sameness is still not enlightenment." So to recognize the truth is not enlightenment either. Often we feel that the truth is something we should be able to see or figure out. But in Buddhism that is not the truth. The truth is something beyond our ability to describe, beyond our thinking. Truth can also mean "the wonderful source," wonderful beyond our description. This is the source of all being.

By the way, when we say "being," "being" includes our

thoughts as well as the many things we see. Usually when we say "truth," we mean some underlying principle. That the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, or that the earth turns in a certain direction is truth. But in Buddhism that is not ultimate truth; it is also "being," being that is included in big mind. Whatever is in our mind—big or small, right or wrong—that is being. If you think about something in terms of right or wrong you may say, "This is eternal truth." But for us that idea of eternal truth is also on the side of being, because it exists simply in our mind.

We do not make much distinction between things that exist outside and things that exist within ourselves. You may say something exists outside of yourself, you may feel that it does, but it isn't true. When you say, "There is the river," the river is already in your mind. A hasty person may say, "The river is over there," but if you think more about it you will find that the river is in your mind as a kind of thought. That things exist outside of ourselves is a dualistic, primitive, shallow understanding of things.

So the characters of the first line, *Reigen myoni kokettari*, refer to *ri*, the source of the teaching beyond words. The true source, *ri*, is beyond our thinking; it is pure and stainless. When you describe it, you put a limitation on it. That is, you stain the truth or put a mark on it. In the *Heart Sutra* it says, "no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no objects of mind," and so forth. That is *ri*.

The next line reads *Shiha anni ruchusu*—"the branching streams flow on in the dark." *Shiha* means "branch stream." Sekito says *shiha* for poetic reasons: to make these two lines of

the poem beautiful and to contrast *shiha* with *reigen*, "source." *Reigen* is more noumenal, and *shiha* is more phenomenal. To say "noumenal" or "phenomenal" is not exactly right, but tentatively I have to say so. That is why it is good to remember the more technical terms *ri* and *ji* here. *Ji*, which is used in the third line here, refers to the phenomenal—to something you can see, hear, smell, or taste as well as to objects of thought or ideas. Whatever can be introduced into our consciousness is *ji*. Something that is beyond our consciousness—the noumenal—is *ri*.

In the darkness the branching streams flow everywhere, like water. Even when you are not aware of water, there is water. Water is inside our physical body and in plants too; there is water all over. In the same way the pure source is everywhere. Each being is itself pure source, and pure source is nothing but each being. They are not two things. There is no difference between *ri* and *ji*, pure source and stream. The stream is pure source, and pure source is the stream. The pure source is flowing all over, even though you don't know it. This "don't know" is what we call "dark," and it is very important.

"Grasping at things is surely delusion." "Grasping at things" means to stick to the many things you see. Understanding that each being is different, you see each one as something special, and usually you will then stick to something. Yet even if you recognize the truth that everything is one, that is not always enlightenment. It may be enlightenment, but not always. It is just intellectual understanding. An enlightened person does not ignore things and does not stick to things, not even to the truth. There is no truth that is different from what each being is. Each being is itself the truth. You may think that there is

some truth that is controlling each being. This truth, you may think, is like the truth of gravitation. If the apple is each being, then behind the apple is some truth working on the apple, like gravitation. To understand things in that way is not enlightenment. To stick to beings, ideas, even Buddha's teaching, saying, "Buddha's teaching is something like this," is to stick to *ji*. This is the backbone of the *Sandokai*.

"According with sameness is still not enlightenment." To recognize the truth is not enlightenment either. It may be better not to say anything. If I translate *ri* into English, it is already *ji*. Enlightenment is not something you can experience, actually. It is beyond our experience. If someone says, "I have attained enlightenment," that is wrong. It means that person sticks to some explanation of enlightenment. That is delusion. At the same time, if you think that enlightenment is beyond our experience, something that you cannot experience, even so, enlightenment is there. So you cannot say that there is no enlightenment or that there is enlightenment. Enlightenment is not something about which you can say there is or there is not. And at the same time, something that you can experience is enlightenment too.

In the last talk I referred to the big dispute in Sekito's time about sudden enlightenment and gradual enlightenment. The *Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor* denounces Jinshu's way as a way of gradual attainment, while declaring that the Sixth Ancestor's way is sudden enlightenment. According to the *Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor,* it seems that just to sit is not true practice.

But maybe that was not the Sixth Ancestor's own idea. There is actually not much difference between Jinshu's way

and the Sixth Ancestor's way. The *Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor* was compiled right after the Sixth Ancestor's death, and maybe fifty years later the criticism of Jinshu's school of gradual attainment was added by Kataku Jinne—a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor—or by a disciple of Kataku Jinne after he had passed away. Kataku Jinne was a great Zen master. He was very active, and he was critical of Jinshu's practice, but probably not as harshly as the words in the sutra convey.

Kataku Jinne or his disciple may also have added this poem: "There is no bodhi tree; there is no mirror. There is no stand for the mirror; there is nothing. How is it possible to wipe the mirror?"* Because this is not such a good poem, many people criticize it and think that it cannot be the Sixth Ancestor's poem.

* The Fifth Ancestor Daiman Konin wanted to find his successor. He asked the monks to write a poem to express their understanding. Jinshu, the head monk, wrote the following poem on the wall in the middle of the night:

Our body is the bodhi tree,
our mind a mirror bright.
Carefully wipe them hour by hour,
and let no dust alight.

When Eno saw this the next day, he said to the monk standing next to him, "I too have a poem. Since I am illiterate, would you write it down for me?"

There is no bodhi tree,
nor stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is void,
where can the dust alight?

When Konin saw this, he knew the author had the understanding he was looking for, and he recognized Eno as his dharma heir and hence the Sixth Ancestor.

In those days it was an honor to own a copy of the *Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor*. There are many versions of it, and the oldest ones do not include this poem or any criticism of the Jinshu school.

So one aim of the *Sandokai* is to clarify this wrong understanding concerning Jinshu, who is made to look as if he sticks to rituals or scholarly work. Scholarly study belongs to *ji*. *Ri* is something you can experience through practice. You may think that scholarly work is *ri*, but for us it is not so. To realize or have complete understanding of *ri*, to accept *ri*, is our practice. But even though you practice zazen and think that is *ri*, or the attainment or realization of *ri*, that is not always so, according to Sekito. If you understand this much you already understand the whole *Sandokai*.

The first lines of the poem are the introduction: "The mind of the great sage of India is intimately transmitted from west to east." Here "great sage" can also mean hermit. In Sekito's time, there were many Daoist hermits who were proud of their supernatural powers and who were seeking some elixir to prolong life. They were not much interested in Buddhist practice, and they couldn't understand why practicing zazen was so necessary. This was also a question for Dogen Zenji.* If all of us have buddha nature, why is it necessary to practice? Dogen suffered over this point. He couldn't resolve this problem through intellectual study.

* "Zenji" is an honorific Japanese Buddhist title meaning "Zen master."

When you really know yourself, you will realize how important it is to practice zazen. Before you know what you are doing, you don't know why we practice. You think you are quite free, that whatever you do is your choice, but actually you are creating karma for yourself and others. You don't know what you're doing, so you don't think there is any need to practice zazen. But we have to pay our own debts; no one else can pay our debts. That is why it is necessary to practice. To fulfill our responsibility we practice. We have to. If you don't practice, you don't feel so good, and you also create some problems for others. But not knowing this you will say, "Why is it necessary to practice Zen?" Moreover, when you say, "We have buddha nature," you may think buddha nature is something like a diamond in your sleeve. But true buddha nature is not like this. A diamond is *ji*, not *ri*. We are always involved with the world of *ji* without realizing *ri*.

There is something else I am very much interested in. Traditionally, as you may know, Buddhists say that Buddhism will not last forever. The sutras give various lengths of time, but usually they say it will perish 1500 years after Buddha's death.

According to tradition, in the first five hundred years, in the time of Buddha's direct disciples or grand-disciples, there would be great sages like Buddha. This is *shobo,* the time of Buddha. In the next five hundred years there would be people who practice zazen and study Buddhism. This is *zobo,* the time of dharma imitation. In *mappo,* the last period, beginning one thousand years after Buddha's death, people would not observe the precepts; they would read and chant sutras, but they would

not be interested in zazen; people who practice zazen and understand the teaching would be difficult to find. This is true, actually. People today do not observe the precepts.

And in *mappo,* people would be involved in the ideas of emptiness and being, but they would not understand what is really meant by them. We talk about emptiness, and you may think you understand it; but even though you can explain it pretty well, it is *ji* not *ri*. Real emptiness will be experienced—not experienced, but realized—by good practice. So the purpose of the *Sandokai* is to make clear what emptiness is, what being is, what darkness is, what clarity is, what the true source of the teaching is, and who the various beings are who are supported by the true source of the teaching.

I borrowed a book from Gary Snyder's wife, Masa, about Sangaikyo, a small Tantric school in Japan. In that book it says that people 1000 years after the Buddha's death may be classified in two ways: innocent and shameless. This book explains what people are doing both here and in Japan. In a strict sense, neither the Japanese nor the Americans observe the precepts. In both countries we eat fish and kill animals. But in America you are very innocent. You don't know what you are actually doing when you violate the precepts. In Japan we are shameless because we know what we are doing and we still violate the precepts. Innocent people appear shameless, but it is not real shamelessness.

So you may ask, "What is the real teaching of Buddha?" If you don't understand it you will keep asking, "What is it? What is it? What does it mean?" You are just seeking for

something that you can understand. That is a mistake. We don't exist in that way. Dogen Zenji says, "There is no bird who flies knowing the limit of the sky. There is no fish who swims knowing the end of the ocean." We exist in the limitless universe. Sentient beings are numberless and our desires are limitless, but we still have to continue making our effort just as a fish swims and a bird flies. So Dogen Zenji says, "A bird flies like a bird; a fish swims like a fish." That is the bodhisattva's way, and that is how we observe our practice.

When we understand things in this way, according to Dogen, we are not people in *mappo,* the last period; our practice is not disturbed by any framework of time or space. Dogen said, "Buddha is always here." In some way, still, Buddhism exists, and when we really understand what Buddha meant, we are in Buddha's time.

FOURTH TALK

The Blue Jay Will Come Right into Your Heart

All the objects of the senses
interact and yet do not.
Interacting brings involvement.
Otherwise, each keeps its place.

In the last talk I explained how people stick to *ji*, "things." That is usual. The characteristic of Buddha's teaching is to go beyond things—beyond various beings, ideas, and material things. When we say "truth," we usually mean something we can figure out. The truth that we can figure out or think about is *ji*. When we go beyond subjective and objective worlds, we come to the understanding of the oneness of everything, the oneness of subjectivity and objectivity, the oneness of inside and outside.

For instance, when you sit zazen you are not thinking about anything or watching anything. Your focus is four or five feet ahead of you, but you do not watch anything. Even though many ideas come, we do not think about them—they come in and go out, that's all. We do not entertain various ideas—we do not invite them to stay or serve them food or anything. If they come in, okay, and if they go out, okay. That's all. That is zazen. When we practice in this way, even though we do not try, our mind includes everything. We are not concerned

about, nor do we expect, something that may exist beyond our reach.

Whatever we talk about at any moment is within our mind. Everything is within our mind. But usually we think there are many things: there is this, and this, and this out there. In the cosmos there are many stars, but right now we can only reach the moon. In a few years we may reach some other planets, and eventually we may reach some other solar system. In Buddhism, mind and being are one, not different. As there is no limit to cosmic being, there is no limit to our mind; our mind reaches everywhere. It already includes the stars, so our mind is not just our mind. It is something greater than the small mind that we think is our mind. This is our understanding.

Our mind and things are one. So if you think, "All this is mind," that is so. If you think, "Over there is some other being," that is also so. But more to the point, when Buddhists say "this" or "that" or "I," that "this" or "that" or "I" includes everything. Listen to the tone of it rather than just the words.

Sound is different from noise. Sound is something that comes from your practice. Noise is something more objective, something that can bother you. If you strike a drum, the sound you make is the sound of your own subjective practice, and it is also the sound that encourages all of us. Sound is both subjective and objective.

In Japan we say *hibiki*. *Hibiki* means "something that goes back and forth like an echo." If I say something, I will get feedback—back and forth. That is sound. Buddhists understand a sound as something created in our mind. I may think, "The

bird is singing over there." But when I hear the bird, the bird is me already. Actually, I am not listening to the bird. The bird is here in my mind already, and I am singing with the bird. *Peep-peep-peep*. If you think while you are studying, "The blue jay is singing above my roof, but its voice is not so good," that thought is noise. When you are not disturbed by blue jays, blue jays will come right into your heart, and you will be a blue jay, and the blue jay will be reading something, and then the blue jay will not disturb your reading. When we think, "The blue jay over my roof should not be there," that thought is a more primitive understanding of being. Because of our lack of practice, we understand things in that way.

The more you practice zazen, the more you will be able to accept something as your own, whatever it is. That is the teaching of *jiji muge* from the Kegon (Ch. Huayen) school. *Jiji* means "being that has no barrier, no disturbance." Because things are interrelated, it is difficult to say, "This is a bird and this is me." It is difficult to separate the blue jay from me. That is *jiji muge*.

The text says, "All the objects of the senses interact and yet do not." Although things are interrelated, everyone—every being—can be the boss. Each one of us can be a boss because we are so closely related. If I say "Mel," Mel is already not just Mel. He is one of Zen Center's students, so to see Mel is to see Zen Center. If you see Mel you understand what Zen Center is. But if you think, "Oh, he is just Mel," then your understanding is not good enough. You don't know who Mel is. If you have a good understanding of things themselves, you

will understand the whole world through things. Each one of us is the boss of the whole world. And when you have this understanding, you will realize that things are interrelated, yet they are also independent. Each one of us is completely and absolutely independent. There is nothing to compare. You are just you.

We have to understand things in two ways. One way is to understand things as interrelated. The other way is to understand ourselves as quite independent from everything. When we include everything as ourselves, we are completely independent because there is nothing with which to compare ourselves. If there is only one thing, how can you compare anything to it? Because there is nothing to compare yourself to, this is absolute independence—not interrelated, absolutely independent.

Now the text says, "All the objects of the senses." The senses—our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body—are gates, and sense objects enter the gates. They are interrelated and at the same time independent. For eyes there is something to see, for ears there is something to hear, for the nose something to smell, for the tongue something to taste, for the body something to touch. There are five kinds of sense objects for the five sense organs. This is Buddhist common sense. Referring to them here in the poem is just a way of saying "everything." It is the same as saying "flowers and trees, birds and stars, streams and mountains," but instead we say "each sense and its objects."

So the various beings that we see and hear are interrelated,

but at the same time, each being is absolutely independent and has its own value. This value we call *ri*. *Ri* is that which makes something meaningful, not just theoretical. Even though you don't attain enlightenment, we say you already have enlightenment. That enlightenment we call *ri*. The fact that something exists here means there is some reason for it. I don't know the reason. No one knows. Everything must have its own value. It is very strange that no two things are the same. There is nothing to compare yourself to, so you have your own value. That value is not a comparative value or an exchange value; it is more than that. When you are just sitting zazen on the cushion you have your own value. Although that value is related to everything, that value is also absolute. Maybe it is better not to say too much.

"Interacting brings involvement." A bird comes from the south in spring and goes back in the fall, crossing various mountains, rivers, and oceans. In this way, things are interrelated endlessly, everywhere.

"Otherwise, each keeps its place." This means that even though the bird stays in some place, at some lake, for instance, his home is not only the lake but also the whole world. That is how a bird lives.

In Zen sometimes we say that each one of us is steep like a cliff. No one can scale us. We are completely independent. But when you hear me say so, you should understand the other side too—that we are endlessly interrelated. If you only understand one side of the truth, you can't hear what I'm saying. If you don't understand Zen words, you don't understand

Zen, you are not yet a Zen student. Zen words are different from usual words. Like a double-edged sword, they cut both ways. You may think I am only cutting forward, but no, actually I am also cutting backward. Watch out for my stick. Do you understand? Sometimes I scold a disciple—"No!" The other students think, "Oh, he has been scolded," but it is not actually so. Because I cannot scold the one over there, I have to scold the one who is near me. But most people think, "Oh, that poor guy is being scolded." If you think like that you are not a Zen student. If someone is scolded you should listen; you should be alert enough to know who is being scolded. This is how we train.

When I was quite a young disciple, my dharma brothers and I went somewhere with our teacher and came back pretty late. There are many venomous snakes in Japan. My teacher said, "You are wearing *tabi* [white socks worn with sandals], and I am not. A snake may bite me, so you go ahead." We agreed and walked ahead of him. As soon as we reached the temple he said to us, "All of you sit down." We didn't know what had happened, but we all sat down in front of him. "What inconsiderate boys you are," he said. "When I am not wearing *tabi*, why do you wear *tabi?* I gave you a warning: 'I am not wearing *tabi*.' You should have understood and taken off your *tabi* too, but instead you kept them on and walked ahead of me. What silly boys you are."

We should be alert enough to hear the meaning behind the words. That's all. We should realize something more than what is said.

One night, when I was a student at Eiheiji monastery,* I opened the right side of the sliding *shoji* door—because it is customary to open that side—but I was scolded. "Don't open that side!" one of the senior monks said. So the next morning I opened the left side, and I was scolded again: "Why do you open that side?" I didn't know what to do. When I opened the right side I was scolded, and when I opened the left side I was scolded again. I couldn't figure out why. But at last I noticed that the first time, a guest had been on the right side, and the second time, a guest had been on the left side. So both times I had opened a side so that a guest had been exposed. That was why I was scolded. At Eiheiji they never told us why, they just scolded us. Their words were double-edged.

The *Sandokai's* words are also double-edged. One side is interdependence (*ego*) and one side is absolute independence (*fuego*). This interdependency goes on and on everywhere, and yet things stay in their own places. That is the main point of the *Sandokai*.

DISCUSSION

Student: Does interdependence mean the bird is the whole world, and independence mean the bird is just a bird?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. In the *Heart Sutra* we say form is emptiness, emptiness is form. "Form is emptiness"—*ego*. And

* Founded in the thirteenth century by Eihei Dogen, Eiheiji is one of the two head temples of the Soto school of Zen.

"emptiness is form"—*fuego.* [Knocks on the table.] This is *fuego.* You cannot say anything, you know. It is difficult to say what it is. [Knocks on the table again.]

Student: Is there any particular reason why we strike the bell as we chant the first syllable of *Mommon issai no kyo?*

Suzuki Roshi: To hit the bell means to produce an independent buddha, one buddha after another. *Gong*. Buddha. One independent buddha appears. *Gong*. Another independent buddha appears. When the next buddha appears, the previous buddha disappears. So one by one, striking one after another, you produce a buddha, one after another. That is our practice.

Student: Roshi, today someone said, "No students, no teacher; no teacher, no students." Someone else asked, "Well, what makes the roshi the roshi?" And someone said, "Because he has students." You can't be the roshi without students. Students can't be students without the roshi. They are both independent because they are together.

Suzuki Roshi: Yes, together. Without students, no teacher. And the students encourage the teacher. It is very much so. If I have no students I may goof off every day. Because I have so many students watching me, I must do something; I must study so that I can give a lecture. If there is no lecture, I will not study.

But at the same time I shall be very much ashamed of myself if I study just to give the lecture. So usually, when I study for a lecture I go off in another direction, following something interesting, and most of the time I don't study for the lecture. But still, if I don't study I don't feel so good. Because I feel it is necessary to prepare for the lecture, I start to study. But as soon as I start, I go off on my own and study for the sake of studying, not just for giving the lecture. Things are going on in this way endlessly. And it is good, you know.

Someday, what I study will help students. I don't know when. Just to feel good we study, and just to feel better we practice zazen. No one knows what will happen to us after sitting one, two, or ten years. No one knows, and it is right that no one knows. Just to feel good we sit zazen, actually. Eventually that kind of purposeless practice will help you.

FIFTH TALK

Today We May Be Very Happy, and the Next Day We Don't Know What Will Happen to Us

Sights vary in quality and form,
sounds differ as pleasing or harsh.
Refined and common speech come together in the dark,
clear and murky phrases are distinguished in the light.

Everything has its own nature and form, and when you hear a voice it is either agreeable or disagreeable. Here the *Sandokai* is talking about sights and sounds, but the same is true for of all the senses, as well as the mind. There are good and bad tastes, good and bad feelings, agreeable and disagreeable ideas. It is our attachment to them that creates suffering. When you hear something good you will enjoy it. When you hear something bad you will be annoyed or disturbed. But if you understand reality completely you will not be bothered by things. The next phrase gives the reason: "Refined and common speech come together in the dark"—*An wa jochu no koto ni kanai*.

We understand things in two ways: in darkness (*an*) and in the light of form (*shiki*), where we see things as good and bad. We know that there is no good or bad in things themselves. It is we who differentiate things as good or bad and thus create good or bad. If we know this we will not suffer so much. "Oh, that is what I am doing!"

Things in themselves have no good or bad nature. To understand this is to understand things in utter darkness. Then you are not involved in a dualistic understanding of things as good or bad. Sekito says, "Refined and common speech come together in the dark." Darkness includes good and bad. In utter darkness, good words and bad words will not disturb you.

"Clear and murky phrases are distinguished in the light." There are pure words and muddy words. In brightness we have dualistic words, the duality of pure and impure.

Even though we are angry at someone, we can still acknowledge that person. Because a teacher knows a student very well, sometimes the teacher will be angry with him. The teacher knows that the student is very good, but sometimes the student will be lazy. Then the teacher will hit him. Sometimes the teacher will praise or encourage him. But it does not mean we are using different methods or attitudes. The understanding is the same, but the expression is different. Students who are pessimistic, who see things very negatively, should be encouraged. But if they are too good or too bright, then the teacher will scold them. That is our way.

We say the "positive way" and the "negative way." The positive way is to acknowledge things in terms of good or bad, beautiful or ugly. If you make a good effort you will be a good student. To acknowledge a student's effort is the positive way. The negative way is not to accept anything. Whatever you say, you will get thirty blows. Positive and negative—sometimes one and sometimes the other. Usually we are very

much attached to either the bright side or the dark side of things.

Do you know this famous koan? A monk asked a master, "It is so hot. How is it possible to escape from the heat?" And the master said, "Why don't you go to a place where it is neither cold nor hot?" The disciple said, "Is there a place where it is neither cold nor hot?" The master said, "When it is cold you should be cold buddha. When it is hot you should be hot buddha." You may think that if you practice zazen you will attain a stage where it is neither cold nor hot, where there is no pleasure or suffering. You may ask, "If we practice zazen is it possible to have that kind of attainment?" The true teacher will say, "When you suffer you should suffer. When you feel good you should feel good." Sometimes you should be a suffering buddha. Sometimes you should be a crying buddha. And sometimes you should be a very happy buddha.

This happiness is not exactly the same as the happiness that people usually have. There is a little difference, and that little difference is significant. Because buddhas know both sides of reality, they have this kind of composure. They are not disturbed by something bad, or ecstatic about something good. They have a true joy that will always be with them. The basic tone of life remains the same, and in it there are some happy melodies and some sad melodies. That is the feeling an enlightened person may have. It means that when it is hot, or when you are sad, you should be completely involved in being hot or being sad, without caring for happiness. When you are happy you should just enjoy the happiness. We can do this

because we are ready for anything. Even though circumstances change suddenly, we don't mind. Today we may be very happy, and the next day we don't know what will happen to us. When we are ready for what will happen tomorrow, then we can enjoy today completely. You do this not by studying a lecture but through your practice.

These are Sekito's words. Later, in Tozan's time (three generations after Sekito) people got stuck in word games about brightness and darkness. They liked talking about the bright side, the dark side, and the middle way, but they lost the point of how to obtain real freedom.

Dogen Zenji, who lived still later, did not get caught up in these word games so much. Rather he emphasized how to get out of word games by fully appreciating things moment after moment. He was more interested in a koan like, "When it is cold you should be a cold buddha; when it is hot you should be a hot buddha." That's all. To be completely involved in what you are doing without thinking about various things is Dogen's way. This kind of attainment is reached through actual practice, not through words.

Words can help your understanding of things. When you are very dualistic, when you are getting confused, they can help you. But if you are too interested in talking about these things, you will lose your way. We should be interested in actual zazen, not in these words, and we should practice actual zazen.

Dogen Zenji's way is to find the meaning in each being—like a grain of rice or a cup of water. You may say a cup of

water or a grain of rice is something that you see in brightness. But when you pay full respect to the grain of rice, I mean when you actually respect it as you respect Buddha himself, then you will understand that a grain of rice is absolute. When you live completely involved in the dualistic world, you have the absolute world in its true sense. When you practice zazen without seeking for enlightenment or seeking for anything, then there is true enlightenment.

DISCUSSION

Student: When something happens and I suffer because of it, part of me feels the pain and part of me is trying to understand the pain at the same time. I don't know whether I try to understand because I'm afraid of letting go and just feeling the pain, or whether that's wise understanding.

Suzuki Roshi: You have this difficulty because you are involved in a problem for yourself. As long as you are involved in personal problems, whatever understanding you may have is only on the bright side. You have no chance to realize the other side—darkness, the absolute. I am talking now as if I am an enlightened person, and you are listening to this as if you are an enlightened person. In other words, all of us are bodhisattvas, and as bodhisattvas we are discussing this kind of problem. But when you apply this kind of talk just to gain an intellectual understanding of your problem, you have no chance to understand the other side of it. That is why you have this problem. If you are really practicing the bodhisattva way,

whatever side it may be is okay. When you criticize yourself, it is okay; when you do what you want to do, that is also okay. You are not doing two different things. Whatever you do is always good according to the situation, but you don't have confidence in your actions or in your life because you are involved in selfish or personal practice.

Student: When I am fully awake I have, maybe, a little control over my desires, but in the *morning*—

Suzuki Roshi: In the morning you have trouble. I know that. So that is why I say, "Get up!" [Knocks on the table.]

Student: How do you do that?

Suzuki Roshi: Just do it. Or else someone will come and hit you! [Makes a sort of humorous growl.]

Student: I did just get up a couple of times—I jumped out of bed. But it was such a big thing!

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. A big thing. So if you can get up pretty well, I think your practice is almost okay. That is a very good chance to practice our way. Just get up. Okay? That is the most important thing.

Student: Roshi, what does studying a book give you?

Suzuki Roshi: For you it may not be so important. But for me,

I must have some clear picture of what I'm talking about, or else I cannot say anything. That is why I study before I lecture. My teacher always told me, "Even though it doesn't help, before you lecture you should study." [Laughter.]

SIXTH TALK

The Boat Is Always Moving

The four elements return to their natures
just as a child turns to its mother.
Fire heats, wind moves,
water wets, earth is solid.

According to Buddhist thought, the four elements are fire, wind, water, and earth. Though not a perfect description, we say that these four elements each have their own nature. The nature of fire is to purify. Wind brings things to maturity. I don't know why, but wind-nature encourages things to be more mature. Wind has a more organic activity, while the activity of fire is more chemical. The nature of water is to contain things. Wherever you go there is water; water contains everything. This is opposite to the usual way of thinking about water. Instead of saying there is water in the trunk of the tree, we say that water contains the trunk of the tree as well as the leaves and branches. So water is something vast in which everything, including ourselves, exists. Solidness is the nature of earth. "Earth" here does not mean land, but rather the solid nature of matter.

According to Buddhism, if you analyze a thing into the smallest unit imaginable, that smallest final unit is called *gokumi*. Although sometimes defined as "atom," it is not really the atom because the atom is not the final unit. I do not

know the proper terms, but according to my understanding of modern physics the smallest, final unit of being has no weight or size. It is just electrical energy.

Strangely enough, Buddhism has a similar idea. Although *gokumi* has the four elements—fire, wind, water, and earth—it is not something solid. When we reach this point, we see that its nature is just emptiness. The four elements are not just material. They are energy or potential or readiness. This is *gokumi*. To these four elements we add the quality of emptiness. So fire, wind, water, and earth are all empty. Even though they are empty, from this emptiness these four elements come into being. And as soon as these four come into being, right there is the final unit, *gokumi*. That is a Buddhist understanding of being. It looks as if we are talking about matter, but these elements are not just matter. They are both spirit and matter. Thinking mind is included. Accordingly, emptiness includes both matter and spirit, both mind and object, both the subjective world and the objective world. Emptiness is the final being, which our thinking mind cannot reach.

Each of the four elements, then, resumes its own nature, that is, comes to emptiness. "Just as a child turns to its mother." Without the mother there is no child. That the child is here means the mother is here. That emptiness is here means that the four elements are here. And even though the four elements are here, they are nothing but a momentary formation of the final emptiness.

In these four lines, and in the six lines that follow, Sekito is explaining reality in two ways: one is independence and the

other is dependence. He talks first about the truth of independence. Although there are four elements, these elements naturally resume their original natures. Although there are many things, each one of them is independent. A child, even though it has a mother, is independent. Fire is independent in its nature of heat, wind is independent in its nature of movement, water is independent in its nature of moisture, and earth is independent in its nature of solidity. Each thing is independent.

I want to read the lines for the next talk so that you can understand the lines for this talk better.

Eye and sight, ear and sound,
  nose and smell, tongue and taste.
Thus for each and every thing,
  depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth.
Trunk and branches share the essence;
  revered and common, each has its speech.

These lines express the understanding of what I call "independency." Each one of you is independent, but you are related to each other. Even though you are related to each other, you are independent. You can say it both ways. Do you understand? Usually when we say "independent," we have no idea of "dependent." But that is not a Buddhist understanding of reality. We always try to understand things completely so we will not be mixed up. We should not be confused by "dependence" or "independence." If someone says, "Everything is independent," we say, "Okay, that is so." And if someone

else says, "Things are interrelated," that is also true. We understand both sides. So whichever you say, that is okay. But if someone sticks to the idea of independence only, we will say to him, "No, you are wrong." There are many koans like this. For example: "If the final karmic fire burns everything up, at that time will the buddha nature exist?" Sometimes the teacher will answer, "Yes, it will exist." But at another time he will answer, "No, it will not exist." Both are true. Someone may ask him, "Then why did you say it will exist?" That person will get a big slap. "What are you thinking about? Don't you understand what I mean? That buddha nature will not exist is right, and that it will exist is also right."

From the viewpoint of independency, everything exists with buddha nature no matter what happens to this world. But even so, nothing exists when seen from the viewpoint of utter darkness or the absolute. That which exists is nothingness, or darkness, in which the many things exist as one. Many things exist, but there is nothing you can see or say about that. There is no way to understand things by explaining them individually. This is just an intellectual description. We must have an actual feeling of it as well.

If you can just appreciate each thing, one by one, then you will have pure gratitude. Even though you observe just one flower, that one flower includes everything. It is not just a flower. It is the absolute, it is Buddha himself. We see it in that way. But at the same time, that which exists is just a flower, and there is no one to see it and nothing to be seen. That is the feeling we should have in our practice and in our every-

day activity. Then, whatever work you do, you will have a continuous feeling of pure gratitude.

When we think about something in terms of duality, we observe and understand it intellectually. Even so, it is important that we do not stick to our ideas. That understanding should be improved day by day by our pure non-dual thinking. We say, "You cannot catch a fish in the same place twice." Today, you were fortunate to catch a big fish at a certain place, but tomorrow you should fish in some other place. We also have the saying "Notch the rail of the boat in order to mark our location." The boat is moving, but you mark the rail to remember the place: "Oh, there was something beautiful, and we should remember it." Marking it doesn't help, because the boat is always moving. But we do it just the same.

This is a good example of the thinking mind. It shows our foolishness and suggests to us what Buddhist life is. Do you know the old Chinese story of the hunter who sees a rabbit run into a tree stump? He comes back the next day and waits for another rabbit to run into the stump. This is very foolish. If a rabbit comes, we are lucky. If he doesn't, we shouldn't complain. We should appreciate what we see here, right now. "Oh, a beautiful flower!" We should fully appreciate it. But we should not mark it on the rail of the boat.

DISCUSSION

Student: In a previous talk, you said that if we understand our closeness, our dependence on other things, then we are inde-

pendent. Are we independent even if we don't understand this?

Suzuki Roshi: Actually, it is so, but the point is that you don't feel that way, so you don't understand it in that way. Yet even though you don't have a really close feeling toward others, if you know this fact even intellectually, you will not make too big a mistake. Or at least you will not stick to one side only, or you will not be so arrogant.

There is something very important here. When I talk this way, I am talking about things as if I am a completely enlightened person. For an enlightened person this is very true, but for people who are not enlightened it is just talk. When our practice follows this understanding, that is true Buddhism. Our practice should not be just intellectual. Even if you practice hard, without this kind of understanding your practice doesn't make much sense. It is still involved in the idea of somethingness.

Student: You said that for an enlightened person it's very true, and for a non-enlightened person it's just talk.

Suzuki Roshi: What's missing? Practice is missing. Only when you practice zazen hard is it true. At the same time, even though you practice hard, your practice will not always be complete. There may be a big gap between the truth and your understanding or actual experience. Your intellectual understanding may be high, but your practice may be low. To have

an intellectual understanding is easy, but practicing with emotions is difficult because we easily stick to something emotionally. So we say, "It is easy to understand nothingness," and "It is easy to destroy an intellectual understanding." But to deal with emotional difficulty is as hard as splitting a lotus in two. Long strings will follow and you cannot get rid of them. The strings remain. With intellectual difficulty, it is as easy as breaking a stone in two. Nothing is left.

Student: When I see a situation in which one person seems to be hurting another, I become emotionally upset. Am I becoming upset because I'm not seeing the situation as it actually is? If I were seeing it as it actually is, would I not be upset?

Suzuki Roshi: That is a very difficult question to answer. It is difficult to know whether one person is helping another in an appropriate way or not. If it is not appropriate, you will be upset. At least you will worry. But even when someone is helping another properly you may be upset. That happens, you know. If someone is helping your girlfriend or boyfriend in an appropriate way, you may get upset anyway. That kind of thing happens pretty often.

Student: Roshi, my question is more like this: If a person really sees things clearly, is there then no situation that would upset him emotionally?

Suzuki Roshi: Upset emotionally? I don't think so. But affected, yes. There is a big difference between these two. A buddha

may be upset quite easily, in the sense of being deeply affected. But when he is upset, it is not because of his attachments. Sometimes he will be very angry. Anger is allowed when it is buddha's anger. But that anger is not the same as the anger we usually have. If a buddha is not upset when he should be upset, that is also a violation of the precepts. When he needs to be angry, he must be angry. That is a characteristic of the Mahayana way of observing precepts. We say, "Sometimes anger is like a sunset." Even though it looks like anger, actually it is a beautiful red sunset. If anger comes from pure mind, from purity like a lotus, it is good.

Student: Roshi, I've observed that our emotions seem to be independent of our intellectual understanding and have a life of their own that has nothing to do with what we know or understand. What is the source of emotion in our body or mind? Where does it come from?

Suzuki Roshi: It mostly comes from a physical source. Maybe it is a physiological thing. The thinking mind is like a river. When we think, we think in a universal, river way, ignoring physical and physiological conditions.

If we focused on the various possible conditions—five, ten, twenty, one hundred, or more—it would not be possible to think. A characteristic of the thinking mind is to ignore all the conditions and follow its own track, so a person tends to just think and go on. Whatever happens, it doesn't matter. "What are you talking about? We should do this!" This may be more

of a man's way. A woman's way may be to attend to the various conditions, carefully observing them and figuring out what to do bit by bit.

There is a similarity between the thinking mind and emotional practice. A practitioner doesn't become so involved with things either emotionally or intellectually, so it is easier to see things for what they are.

Student: I have some difficulty listening to these talks. When I used to chant the *Sandokai* knowing nothing about what it meant, I was able to concentrate on nothing but my breathing and my voice coming from my *hara*.* But now I start thinking about what the *Sandokai* means and I lose touch with what I am doing. I get attached to the words and to the idea that there is the dark side, the *ri*, becoming the *ji* side. Now when I chant the *Sandokai*, the intellectual side, the bright side, is strong and I don't enjoy chanting it. Maybe you can give me some advice on how to avoid this kind of difficulty.

Suzuki Roshi: You cannot avoid it. That is why I am talking to you. You have to polish your understanding.

Student: You said the other day that in the morning we should just get up. Usually I just get up, but this morning when I woke up, I didn't get right up. I waited until the wake-up bell came back again, and then I started to think about what you said in the talks.

* The vital center of the body, just below the navel.

Suzuki Roshi: That was not just because of the talks. That was not my fault! [Laughing.]

Student: My question is: can we have subjective understanding of our practice without having some kind of objective or right understanding, or do we have to have both of them and balance them? Can we practice Buddha's way without knowing Buddha's way intellectually?

Suzuki Roshi: If you can, you are very lucky. But, unfortunately, we cannot practice without intellectual understanding.

Student: When we sit zazen and have correct posture and follow our breathing, do we need these concepts about Buddhism or about the four elements?

Suzuki Roshi: No, at that time we should forget them.

Student: I mean, do we have to understand the idea of Buddhism to practice?

Suzuki Roshi: We have to because we tend to look at things in that way. Back and forth—study and practice. We have to polish our understanding so that we will not be intellectually mixed up. That is important.

SEVENTH TALK

Without Any Idea of Attainment, Just to Sit Is Our Way

Eye and sight, ear and sound,
nose and smell, tongue and taste.
Thus for each and every thing,
depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth.
Trunk and branches share the essence;
revered and common, each has its speech.

In my last lecture I explained the meaning of the independency of everything. Although things are interdependent with respect to each other, at the same time, each being is independent. When each being includes the whole world, then each being is actually independent.

Sekito was talking about the nature of reality at a time when most people, forgetting all about this point, were judging which school of Zen was right or wrong. That is why Sekito Zenji wrote this poem. Here he is talking about reality from the viewpoint of independency. The Southern school is independent and the Northern school is independent, and there is no reason why we should compare them in order to decide which is correct. Both schools are expressing the whole of Buddhism in their own way—just as the Rinzai school has its own approach to reality, and the Soto school has its own approach. Sekito Zenji is pointing this out. Although he refers to the dispute between the Northern and Southern schools, at the same time he is talking about the nature of reality and what Buddha's teaching is in its true sense.

Now I want to explain these lines, which describe reality from the viewpoint of independency. "Eye and sight, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste." It looks as if Sekito is talking dualistically about the dependency of eyes on their objects. But when you see something, if you see it in its true sense there is nothing to be seen and no one to see it. Only when you analyze it is there someone seeing something and something that is seen. It is one activity that can be understood in two ways. I see something, but really there is no one seeing it and nothing to be seen. Both of these are true. Here Sekito is talking about this oneness of eye and form. That is how Buddhists observe things. We understand things in a dualistic way, but we don't forget that our understanding is dualistic. I see. Or someone or something is seen by someone. These are interpretations of subject and object that our thinking mind produces. Subject and object are one, but they are also two.

Sekito is saying that for eyes, there is form. But at the same time there are no eyes and no form. When you say "eyes," eyes include the form. When you say "form," form includes the eyes. If there is no form and nothing to see, eyes are not eyes anymore. Because there is something to see, eyes become eyes. The same is true of ears, nose, and tongue.

Dogen Zenji says, "If there is no river, there is no boat." Even though there is a boat, it will not be a boat. Because there is a river, a boat can become a boat. Usually the reason that people become attached to the objective world, or to something they see, is because they understand things in only one way. Their understanding is that something exists indepen-

dent of them. That is the normal way of understanding. "Here is something very sweet to eat." But cake becomes cake because we want to eat it. So we make a cake. There is no cake without us. When we understand things in this way, we are seeing cake, but we are not seeing cake. This is in keeping with the precepts.

Maybe you will kill some animal or insect. But when you think, "There are many earwigs here and they are harmful insects, so I have to kill this one," you understand things only in a dualistic way. Actually, earwigs and human beings are one. They are not different. It is impossible to kill an earwig. Even though we think we have killed it, we have not. Even though you squash the earwig, it is still alive. That momentary form may vanish, but as long as the whole world, including us, exists, we cannot kill an earwig. When we come to this understanding, we can keep our precepts completely.

But even so, we should not kill anything without a reason, or we should not kill by making up some convenient reason. "Because earwigs eat vegetables I must kill them." "There is nothing wrong with killing animals, so I am killing earwigs." To kill an animal, excusing your action through some reasoning, is not our way. Actually, when you kill an animal, you don't feel so good. That is also included in our understanding: "Even though I don't feel so good about it, I have to kill. Even though it is not possible, still I may kill an animal." In this way, things go on in the big world.

Sticking to some idea of killing or not killing, or to some reason why we kill or don't kill, is not the way of observing

precepts. The way to observe precepts is to have a complete understanding of reality. That is how you don't kill. Do you understand? How you understand my lecture, how you practice zazen, is how you don't kill. In other words, you should not live in the world of duality only. You can observe our world from the dualistic viewpoint and from the viewpoint of the absolute. "It is not good to kill" is the dualistic viewpoint. "Even though you think you killed, you did not kill" is the absolute viewpoint. Even though you violate your precepts, if after doing it you feel very sorry, if you say "I am sorry" to the earwig, it is Buddha's way. In this way our practice will go on and on. You may think that if there are precepts you should observe them literally or else you cannot be Buddhists. But if you feel good just because you observe some precept, that is not the way either. To feel sorry when we kill an animal is included in our precepts. Everyone is involved in this kind of activity. But the way we do it and the feeling we have may not be the same for everyone. One person has no idea of precepts or attainment. Another is trying to make himself feel good through religious activity or by observing precepts. That is not the Buddhist way.

The Buddhist way is, in one word, *jihi*, compassion. *Jihi* means to encourage people when they are feeling positive and also to help them get rid of their suffering. That is true love. It is not just to give something or to receive something or to observe precepts that we practice our way. We practice our way with things as they naturally occur, going with people, suffering with them, helping to relieve their suffering, and en-

couraging them to go on and on. This is how we observe the precepts. We see something but we do not see something. We always feel the oneness of the subjective and objective worlds, the oneness of eye and form, the oneness of tongue and taste. So we don't have to attach to something in a special way, and we don't have to feel especially good because of our Buddhist practice. When we practice in this way, we are independent. That is what Sekito is talking about.

"Thus for each and every thing, depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth." Eyes, nose, tongue, ears, sight, smell, taste, and hearing: all these are dharmas, and each dharma is rooted in the absolute, which is buddha nature. When observing many things, we should look beyond their appearance and know how each thing exists. Because of the root we exist; because of the absolute buddha nature we exist. Understanding things in this way, we have oneness.

"Trunk and branches share the essence; revered and common, each has its speech." The words we use are different—good words and bad words, respectful words and mean words—but through these words we should understand the absolute being or source of the teaching. That is what Sekito is talking about here.

In the *Bonmo-kyo,* an important scripture on the precepts, it says, "To see is not to see, and not to see is to see." To eat meat is not to eat meat; not to eat meat is to eat meat. You understand the precepts in only one way. You observe the precepts by not eating meat. But not to eat meat is to eat meat. Actually, you are eating meat. Do you understand? That is

how we observe the precepts. "Don't commit unchaste acts." To see a woman is not to see a woman. Not to see a woman is to see a woman.

There were two monks traveling together, and they came to a big river where there was no bridge to cross. While they were standing on the bank a beautiful woman came along. One of them carried her on his back across the river. Later, the other monk became furious. "You are a monk! You violated the precept not to touch a woman. Why did you do that?" The monk who had helped the woman replied, "You are still carrying the woman. I already forgot about her. You are the one who is violating the precepts." Maybe as a monk it was not completely right for him to carry the woman. Even so, as all human beings are friends, we should help them even if it means violating a Buddhist precept. If you think about the precepts only in a limited or literal way, that is actually violating the precepts. So to see the woman was not to see the woman. When the monk crossed the river with her on his back, actually he was not helping her. Do you understand? So not to help her was to help her in the true sense.

When you are involved in the dualistic sense of precepts—man and woman, monk and layman—that is violating the precepts and is a poor understanding of Buddha's teaching. Without any idea of attainment, without any idea of doing anything, without any idea of meaningful practice, just to sit is our way. To be completely involved in sitting meditation is our zazen. And this is how we observe our precepts. Sometimes we will be angry, and sometimes we will smile. Some-

times we will be mad at our friends, and sometimes we will give them a kind word. But actually what we are doing is just observing our way. I cannot explain it so well, but I think you must understand what I mean.

DISCUSSION

Student: I don't feel that talking about Buddhism or the *Sandokai* is the same as my life or my practice. I feel some separation. Talking about it seems like something else. It's way out there.

Suzuki Roshi: I felt that way myself for a pretty long time. It is rather difficult to communicate some feeling through my talk. That is why the old masters twisted their students' noses or hit them. "Right here! What are you thinking about?" In short, that is the point. I am going around and around the point, so I am using words. We speak of scratching an itchy foot with our shoe on. It doesn't help so much, but even so I have to talk.

Student: You said that when we kill an earwig or any insect, we can't kill it as long as everything is here. Do you mean that each thing will always be each thing, this lecture will always be this lecture?

Suzuki Roshi: When you see things-as-it-is, it is so.

Student: If the body of the earwig dies, what happens to the earwig's karma? Where does the earwig go?

Suzuki Roshi: Earwigs go to the source of reality. They know where to go. When we speak in this way you will feel that it is just talk. But when you suffer a lot it will be a great relief to know that.

Student: Roshi, what is the difference between you and me?

Suzuki Roshi: There is difference and no difference—that is why we practice together. Because there is some difference we practice together, and because we are not different we practice together. If you are completely different from me, there is no reason why you should practice with me; and if we are completely the same, there is no reason why we should practice together. Because we are different, we practice our way, and because we are originally the same, we practice our way. Not different and different. This kind of thing is not easy to know. Traditional practice starts from the source of the teaching, which is nothingness, which is absolute, which is non-duality. Usually you are attracted to something through your eyes or nose, through sight or smell or some form, but not through this original source of the teaching. The original source is not something that can be described, so we say "tongueless speech." We are talking about something that is impossible to talk about. That is called *teisho,* not "lecture." We can explain this with words, but we are explaining what is empty, so we call these words "the finger pointing at the moon." If you understand what the moon is, the finger is not necessary anymore. What you should understand is not my

words. You should realize by your true experience what I mean. You are blind to this point, so you feel I am talking about something in a sophisticated way that looks like the so-called Buddhist way. The Buddhist way is not these words but the meaning behind the words.

Student: In killing the earwig there are no words or memories or anything. There is just the experience of killing the earwig. Is that the teacher that leads you to the source? Is the experience of killing the earwig, not the talk about it, the teacher?

Suzuki Roshi: At that time you needn't feel like a good Buddhist or a sinful monk or think about violating your precepts. When you are working in the garden for some purpose you should be involved in that activity completely. Sometimes you may be mad at the earwigs, but no one can criticize you. If you are expelled from Tassajara because you killed a lot of earwigs, you should go. "Okay, I will go." You should have that much confidence—not confidence, it is more than confidence. You shouldn't have to fight with anyone. If you have that much understanding of what you are doing, that is good—the way is there.

Student: When we say we shouldn't harm sentient beings, earwigs or anything else, do we say that because it is impossible to harm them, or because it is wrong to harm them, or both?

Suzuki Roshi: Both. And we should know that it is not possible. Why it is not possible is because these are just words. Words cannot reach that place. Only when you get caught by words do you say "possible" or "impossible." Killing something, sacrificing something—that is how you actually live every day. Applying Buddha's teaching just to give yourself some excuse, even if it does make you feel better, is a very superficial understanding of Buddhism. You cannot help feeling bad when you kill something. This is also a superficial understanding. But that does not mean that you are doing something wrong, because you are not actually killing. Both are true. But if you say, "Because I am not killing anything it is okay to kill," that is wrong, because you are sticking to an idea or a precept that itself is just words. It is not the true heart, the true feeling of Buddha.

Student: Roshi, every animal has a way of living, of eating, of raising its young, of relating to its world that is in keeping with the particular dharma or *dao* of its being. Doesn't mankind also have a particular way of living and eating and raising our young that is in keeping with our dharma or *dao?*

Suzuki Roshi: Not absolutely. Rather, we have to make our best effort to keep the dharma—that's what these words are about. Words are necessary, but even though they are necessary, you shouldn't think they are complete. We should make constant effort to produce new dharma, new precepts. We say,

"This is human life." But this human life is for today, not tomorrow. Tomorrow we must have better ways to live. This kind of effort should be continued. When we feel bad it means we should improve our way. But you should not expect a perfect dharma that says clearly "you should" or "you shouldn't." No one can insist on their own way, but we should appreciate their effort to improve the dharma. Does this make sense?

Student: You say that we must always, every day, improve our way, make our best effort. I have also heard you say, "For the true teaching to be passed on, the disciple must surpass the teacher." Can we carry on the dharma even if we don't surpass the teacher?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. "Surpass" is also a dualistic word, so we should not stick to it. There is no reason why I should feel good or bad if you surpass me. To talk about which is better is just words. Even to create one page of new dharma is very difficult. Even though you feel that you have invented something new, the Buddha is always waiting there for you. Buddha will say, "Oh, come here. Good for you! Come nearer to me. I have some more things for you." It is very hard to surpass his teaching.

EIGHTH TALK

Within Light There Is Utter Darkness

In the light there is darkness,
but don't take it as darkness.
In the dark there is light,
but don't see it as light.

First I will talk about the two terms *mei* and *an,* "light" and "darkness." Light means the relative, dualistic world of words, the thinking world, the visible world in which we live. Darkness refers to the absolute, where there is no exchange value or materialistic value or even spiritual value—the world that our words and thinking mind cannot reach. Living in the realm of duality, we must have a good understanding of the absolute, which we may think of as a deity. But in Buddhism we do not have any particular idea about a deity. The absolute is the absolute because it is beyond our intellectual or dualistic thinking. We cannot deny this world of the absolute. Many people say that Buddhism is atheism because we have no particular idea of God. We know there is the absolute, but we know it is beyond the limit of our thinking mind, so we don't say so much about it. That is what we mean by *an,* "darkness."

Meichu ni atatte an ari—"In the light there is darkness." This is a literal translation. But the literal translation doesn't

make much sense. So we must understand the actual meaning of *ari,* "there is." There are two characters for "there is" in Japanese: *ari* and *ʔai*. When we say that there is something on the table, or on the earth, or in Tassajara—something on or in something—we use *ʔai,* and when we say, "I have two hands," we use *ari*. Actually, we say, "There are two hands," or "In you there are two hands." Part of the character for *ari* means "flesh" or "skin." This shows a very close relationship between light and darkness, like the relationship between my skin and myself. The English sentence "In the light there is darkness" sounds more dualistic. "I have my skin," you may say, or "I have my hand." But your hand or your skin is a part of you, so actually it is not dualistic. Skin is you yourself. Your hands are your hands. In English you say, "I have two hands." But your hands may feel funny when you say this. "Oh! We are a part of you, yet you say you have two hands. What do you mean? Do you mean you have two more hands besides us?" If possible, I think there should be another way of expressing this in English.

In these lines *ari* means there is a very close relationship between light and darkness. And actually darkness itself is light. Darkness or brightness is within your mind. In your mind you have some standard or measurement of how bright or dark this room is. If it is unusually bright, you may say the room is bright; if it is unusually dark, you may say it is dark. But you can say, "This room is bright," and at the same time, someone else may say, "This room is very dark." Someone who comes from San Francisco at night may say, "Oh, Tas-

sajara is very dark." But someone who comes here from a cave may say, "Tassajara is very bright, like a capital city." The idea of light or dark is within ourselves. Because we have some standard we say light or dark, but actually light is darkness and darkness is light.

Even though we say "darkness," it does not mean that nothing is there. When you have light you can see many things, such as Caucasians and Japanese, men and women, stones and trees. These things appear in the light. When we say "darkness" or "world of the absolute," which is beyond our thinking, you may think this is a world quite different from our human world, but this is also a mistake. If you understand darkness in that way, it is not the darkness meant here.

Some of you are preparing food for Ed and Meg's wedding. You may dish out various foods separately, putting them on different plates. This is soup, this is salad, this is dessert. That is the light. But when you eat, various foods will be mixed up in your tummy. Then there is no soup, no bread, no dessert. At that time they all work together. When the various items are on the plate, they are not yet working, so it is not yet actually food; it is light. When it is in your tummy, it is darkness; but even in darkness there is still lettuce and soup and everything. The food is the same; only as it changes its form does it start to work. In utter darkness things happen that way. In light you feel good; you feel as if you have a special dish in front of you, but the food is not serving its purpose yet.

When you don't know what you are doing, actually you are acting fully, with a full mind. When you are thinking, you are

not yet working. When you start to work, both the dark side and the light side are there. When you are actually practicing the Buddhist way, there is a light side and a dark side, and the relationship between light and darkness is this *ari* relationship, like the relationship between skin and body. You cannot actually say which is skin and which is body.

Anso wo motte o koto nakare—"but don't take it as darkness." *Nakare* means "do not." *Motte* means "with." *Anso* means "dark side" or "dark outlook." The character *o* means "to meet," implying that you treat the person you meet as a friend. You meet or encounter the way clouds meet a mountain. Here is a Tassajara mountain, there are clouds, and the clouds from the ocean will meet the mountain. This kind of relationship is *o*. You should not meet people just with the understanding of darkness. If you meet your friend with your eyes shut, ignoring how old he is or how handsome he is, ignoring all his characteristics, you will not meet your friend. That is just a one-sided understanding, because in the darkness there is light. Even though the relationship between you and your friend is very intimate, still your friend is who he is and you are you. Maybe the relationship is like husband and wife. Husband is husband and wife is wife; that is a real relationship. Don't meet your friend without the understanding of light or duality. A close relationship is dark because, if your relationship is very close, you are one with the other person. But still you are you and your friend is who he is.

The third and fourth lines here are parallel to the first and second. They say the same thing as the first and second, but

in a different way. "In the dark there is light, but don't see it as light." In darkness, even when we are in an intimate relationship, there is the duality of man and woman. This duality is the light. But you should not see others with the eyes of light only, because the other side of light is darkness. Darkness and light are two sides of one coin.

We are liable to be caught by preconceived ideas. If you have a bad experience with somebody you may think, "Oh, he is a bad person, he is always mean to me." But this may not be so. You are seeing him with the eyes of light only. You should know why he is mean to you. Because the relationship is so close, so intimate, it is more than a relationship between two persons. It is just one. So when he is angry, you will be angry. When one is angry, the other will be angry. You need to understand the other side of light, which is darkness. Then, even though you become angry, you will not feel so bad. "Oh, he is so angry with me because he is so close to me." When you think he is bad it is difficult for you to change your idea of him. It may be true that sometimes he is bad, but right now you don't know whether he is good or bad. You have to see.

We should not cling to the idea of darkness or light; we should not cling to the idea of equality or differentiation. Most people, once they have a grudge against someone, find it almost impossible to change their feeling. But if we are Buddhists we should be able to shift our minds from bad to good and from good to bad. If you are able to do so, "bad" does not mean bad, and "good" does not mean good anymore. But at the same time, good is good and bad is bad. Do you under-

stand? In this way we should understand the relationship between us. There is a poem:

> The mother is the blue mountain
> and the children are white clouds.
> All day long they are together,
> yet they do not know
> who is the mother and who are the children.

The mountain is the mountain and the white clouds are white clouds floating around the mountain like children. There is the blue mountain and there are the white clouds, but they don't know that there are white clouds or blue mountains. Even though they don't know, they know very well—so well that they don't know.

That is the experience you will have in your zazen practice. You will hear insects and the stream. You are sitting and the stream is running, and you hear it. Even though you hear it, you have no idea of stream and no idea of zazen. You are just on the black cushion. You are just there like a blue mountain with white clouds. This kind of relationship is fully explained in these four lines of the *Sandokai*.

DISCUSSION

Student: Roshi, which translation are you using?

Suzuki Roshi: We are using several. A translation cannot be perfect. It is difficult, almost impossible, to translate because there are no exact equivalents. *Ari* here can mean "nothing"—"there is" means "there is not." "Light" means "dark." But

"light" doesn't mean anything if it also means "dark." That is why I said "double-edged" earlier. Light? Dark? Which is it? What is it? But still there is both light and dark.

There should not be any questions on this point, but if you have a question please ask me—if you want to get hit! [Laughing.]

Student: Roshi, what about focus? You said that the clouds don't know they're the children of the mountain and vice versa, but when we humans open and arrange our eating bowls, we focus on that without listening to the stream. It is a different activity.

Suzuki Roshi: It is the same activity.

Student: For me it is different.

Suzuki Roshi: That is why you get the stick. [Laughing.] When you really focus there is light and darkness together, but when you are thinking about it there are two sides. Now you are asking a question. When you are asking a question you are thinking, so it is hard for me to answer your question. I may have to be very angry with you. That is the only way. If you get hit you will probably stop thinking about it.

Student: Roshi, why do we shave our heads?

Suzuki Roshi: So that your thinking mind can go as smoothly

as this [rubbing his shaved head with his hand]. Bright—dark—very smoothly. And to get rid of ornaments. We should not have anything that is not necessary.

Student: The *Diamond Sutra* says that we suffer misfortune in this life because of sins or mistakes committed in past lives and that by suffering these misfortunes now, we will work out these mistakes or get retribution for them, atone for them, and open the way for enlightenment. It seems like a very heavy load. I don't understand it. It adds a new dimension to my problem.

Suzuki Roshi: It will help. Because you suffer now does not mean that someone makes you suffer but that your suffering is caused by you yourself. If your understanding is like this you will have no complaints. But at the same time, if you understand your life just from the viewpoint of karma, the dualistic explanation of why we suffer, you are already caught by the idea of karma. We should be free from that one-sided view. Even though we say "karma," karma doesn't exist. But if karma doesn't exist, then you may say, "Whatever I do, it's all right." That means that you are caught by the idea of darkness. The other day we discussed why we kill earwigs. We have to kill them, but that doesn't mean that it is all right to kill them. It is not all right. We should understand our activity from both sides. If you don't feel so good about it, you should make more effort; you should find out how to protect the vegetables without disturbing the earwigs. But you should

not waste too much time or your practice will suffer. Anyway, you have to continue to find some good ideas one after another.

Student: Roshi, what is the difference between understanding things or activities from both sides and not understanding them at all?

Suzuki Roshi: Oh—there's no need to talk about not understanding at all [laughs]. If you have a chance to listen to a lecture or read a book, you will understand something.

Truth is truth. There are not two truths, only one. When you understand truth only with your mind, you may feel that is the truth. But compared to your actual activity or feeling or life, the truth that you understand with your mind is not the actual truth. Because our actual life is not as easy as our thinking, it is easy to be convinced that some idea we have is the perfect truth. Yet for us it is not true because that kind of thinking does not accord with our actual life.

So there are two ways of understanding the truth. One way is intellectual truth. "We understand," we say, but that understanding is just an intellectual understanding. Whether we understand it or not, truth is truth—whether Buddha appeared in this world or not, truth is truth. In the second way, something may be true for a buddha or an enlightened person, but for us it is not true. We cannot accept the fundamental truth as it is, so for us it does not seem true. That is the truth we work with in our practice. From the viewpoint of our practice, truth is not always true.

Student: Although many practitioners in Buddha's time had attained *samadhi*,* Buddha did not accept this *samadhi* until it was set round with equanimity. Is that what you just said?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. To stress some conception is not our way. We put more emphasis on our actual life. That is why we must practice. That all of us have buddha nature is true whether Buddha said it or not. But unfortunately most of us do not realize we have buddha nature. I don't know why.

Student: When one comes to see the darkness in the light and the light in the darkness, do they finally become the same thing or do they always remain separately darkness and light?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes, they are the same thing, but our lazy mind separates darkness from light. To plunge into the light, to find darkness in light, to find Buddha nature in perfect zazen is our way. Whether you are sleepy or not, good students or bad students, you should sit. That is the only way to have darkness in your bright dualistic practice.

* *Samadhi* (Sanskrit or Pali), as commonly used by Buddhists, means profound meditation, a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which subject and object are one, or the one-pointedness of mind.

NINTH TALK

The Willow Tree Cannot Be Broken by the Snow

Light and dark oppose one another
like front and back foot in walking.

We are still talking about reality from the viewpoint of independency. Dependency and independency are actually two sides of one coin.

People may say that the Japanese are very tough. But that is just one side of the Japanese personality. The other side is softness. Because of their Buddhist background, they have been trained that way for a long time. The Japanese people are very kind.

We have a children's song that describes a hero called Momotaro, the Peach Boy. There was an old couple who lived near the riverside. One day the old woman picked up a peach from the stream and came back to her home. And from the peach, out came Momotaro. The Japanese children sing a song about him: "He was very strong but very kind and gentle." He is the ideal Japanese character. What do you call it? You must have some expression for it.

Student: Folk hero?

Yes, folk hero. Without a soft mind you cannot be really strong. If Momotaro did not have this side of his character,

if he was not very sympathetic, he could not be really strong. A person who is strong just for himself is not so strong, but a strong person who is very kind will support people and can really be a folk hero. When we have both a soft side and a strong side, we can be strong in a real way.

It may be easier to fight and win than to endure without crying when you are defeated. You should be able to allow your foe to beat you, okay? This is very difficult. But unless you can endure the bitterness of defeat, you cannot be really strong. Readiness to be weak can be a sign of strength. We say, "The willow tree cannot be broken by the snow." The weight of the snow may break a strong tree's branches. But with a willow, though the snow may bend or twist the branches, even a heavy snow like the one we had last year cannot break them. Bamboo also bends easily. It looks quite weak, but no snow can break it.

"Like front and back foot in walking." Darkness and brightness—absolute and relative—are a pair of opposites, like front and back feet when we walk. This is a very good way of explaining oneness, or the actual function of a pair of opposites. It expresses how we apply pairs of opposites, like delusion and enlightenment, reality and idea, good and bad, weak and strong, in our everyday practice. People who feel they are strong may find it difficult to be weak. People who feel they are weak may never try to be strong. That is quite usual. But sometimes we should be strong and sometimes we should be weak. If you remain weak always or if you always want to be strong, then you cannot be strong in the true sense.

When you learn something, you should be able to teach it to people. You should put the same effort into teaching as into learning. And if you want to teach, you should be humble enough to learn something. Then you can teach. If you try to teach just because you know something, you cannot teach anything. When you are ready to be taught by someone, then, if necessary, you can teach people in the true sense of the word. So, to learn is to teach and to teach is to learn. If you think you are always a student, you cannot learn anything. The reason you learn something is in order to teach others after you have learned it.

There is no fixed moral standard; rather, you find your moral code when you try to teach others. Before Japan was defeated in the war and surrendered unconditionally, the Japanese people thought they had a moral teaching that was absolutely right. If they only observed that code, they believed, they would not make any mistakes. But that moral code, unfortunately, was set up at the beginning of the Meiji period (1868–1912). After losing the war, they lost confidence in their morality and didn't know what kind of morals they should observe. They didn't know what to do. But actually it shouldn't be so difficult to find one's moral code. I said to people at that time, "You have children. When you raise them, you will naturally know the moral code for yourself." When you think the moral code is just for yourself, that is a one-sided understanding. A moral code is, rather, to help others. The moral code you find when you want to help and be kind to others will naturally be good for you as well.

It is said, "To go east one hundred miles is to go west one hundred miles." When the moon is high in the sky, the moon in the water will be deep. But usually people will observe the moon above the water and not see the moon in the water. That the moon is deep means that the moon is high. The moon in the water is independent and the moon over the water is independent; but the moon over the water is also the moon in the water. We should understand this. When you are strong, you should be strong. You should be very tough. But that toughness comes from your gentle kindness. When you are kind, you should just be kind. But that does not mean you are not strong.

Women may not be physically as strong as men. Because of that they are often stronger than men. Actually, we don't know who is stronger. When we have our own completely independent nature, our strength is absolutely equal with everyone else's. If you are involved in comparing who is stronger, you or I, then you don't have real strength. When you are completely independent, one with your own nature, you are an absolute power in a relative situation. When different kinds of people are competing with each other, they are not so strong. When each becomes completely himself or herself, they have absolute power. Do you understand this point?

So light and darkness, although they are a pair of opposites, are equal, as when one footstep is ahead and the other is behind. When you walk, the step ahead immediately becomes the step behind. Is a step with your right foot the step ahead or the step behind? Which is it? Which is brightness and which is darkness? It is difficult to tell.

When you are walking, there is no foot ahead or behind. If you stop walking and think about it, sometimes the right foot may be ahead and the left foot may be behind. But when your feet are actually walking, when you are actually practicing the way, there is no light or darkness, no foot ahead or foot behind. If I say that you should just sit zazen without thinking, you may feel that you should not have any thoughts. You will be caught by the idea that the right foot is ahead and the left foot is behind. Then you cannot walk anymore. When you are actually walking, you have no idea of left foot or right foot. But if you are self-consciously aware of right foot or left foot, you cannot walk or run.

As I have said, before you chew your food there is rice, pickle, and soup. When you have chewed your food there is no rice, no pickle, no soup. After you mix the food in your mouth, it will be digested in your tummy, and it will serve its purpose. Even so, we should serve one thing after another, and dessert should come last. There is an order. But even though there is an order, you should chew your food and mix it, or else the food will not serve its purpose. It is necessary to think about it, to have a recipe, but it is also necessary to chew and mix everything up.

This is a very good interpretation of reality and a good illustration of how we practice our way and of the kind of activity that is going on in our everyday lives. With these lines, Sekito's interpretation of reality in the light of independency is completed.

DISCUSSION

First Student: Roshi, when you say "independency," I'm confused as to whether you mean "independence" or "interdependency."

Suzuki Roshi: "Independency." Excuse me. "Interdependency" is more like "dependency."

Another Student: We have the noun "dependency," so we can have "independency."

Suzuki Roshi: But do you have "independency"?

First Student: Now we have "independency"!

Suzuki Roshi: "Independent" is too strong. If you are independent—[striking the table with his stick]—that's all! You don't care about anything. That is not what we mean. When you are independent, you are in a very vulnerable or dangerous situation.

Student: People think they are independent. Isn't this a delusion?

Suzuki Roshi: Yes. When they think, "I am independent," it is not true. You are dependent on everything.

Student: I can't figure out how you can tell the difference between what a woman is supposed to be and what a man is supposed to be. If a woman competes with a man someone may

say she's weak, but how do you know what a woman or a man is supposed to be like in the first place?

Suzuki Roshi: I don't mean weak. If men and women compete and are compared with each other by setting up some standards or categories, sometimes the man will be stronger and sometimes the woman will be stronger. Anyway, you cannot always be strong. But when you become yourself, a woman or a man absolutely, you have absolute value always and no one can replace you.

Student: I have some trouble with the relevancy of this lecture. I'd like you to say one more thing about it, but I don't know what. I can't quite see what it's all about. I do understand what it's about when you are talking about opposites and things like that.

Suzuki Roshi: The purpose of what I am saying is to open a different approach to your understanding of reality. You are observing things from just one side or the other, and you stick to some one-sided understanding. That is why I am talking in this way. It is necessary.

Strictly speaking, Buddhists have no teaching. We have no God or deities. We don't have anything. What we have is nothingness, that's all. So how is it possible for Buddhists to be religious? What kind of composure do we have? That will be the question. The answer is not some special idea of God or a deity, but rather, the understanding of the reality we

are always facing. Where are we? What are we doing? Who is he? Who is she? When we observe things in this way, we don't need a special teaching about God because everything is God for us. Moment after moment we are facing God. And each one of us is also God or Buddha. So we don't need any special idea of God. That may be the point.

Student: Roshi, that sounds very good to me, but then why do we take vows? For instance, when Ed and Meg got married, you said they should take refuge in the Triple Treasure (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) and observe the ten cardinal precepts.

Suzuki Roshi: We take vows and observe precepts, and we read sutras. But even though you read scriptures and observe precepts, without right understanding they will be precepts of either light or darkness, and when you are caught in this way or rely too much on precepts or scriptures, they will *not* be Buddhist precepts or scriptures any more.

Student: Suppose I take a precept that says not to speak ill of others. If I don't follow the precept, it seems like there is no reason for it at all, and if I do follow it, it seems like I'm being caught by it. I just don't understand. If precepts are not rigid, they don't seem to be of any use at all, and if they are rigid, they don't seem to be consistent with the *Sandokai*.

I have always wondered about that part in the meal chant where we say, "to avoid all evil and practice good." I asked you about it, and you said that we should just pay attention to

what we are doing. If that is so, why don't we just say that? Why don't we say, "I vow to practice zazen in my everyday life and not be caught by rules?" Why go through this "good and evil" thing? It's kind of phony.

Suzuki Roshi: No-o-o. You are just trying to argue with me, that's all. [Laughing.] You need precepts, but actually it isn't possible to violate precepts. You cannot. But you feel as if you are. If you feel that way, you should accept your feelings, and if you accept your feelings then you have to say, "excuse me," or "I'm sorry," or something. That is also quite natural. "Don't kill" is a dead precept. "Excuse me" is an actual working precept, which is not one foot behind or one foot forward. Do you understand? If you read the precepts and say, "Okay, I will do it," that is precepts. And when you have violated a precept, you may say, "Oh, excuse me." That is quite natural.

Student: Some of the precepts do feel natural—for instance, that I shouldn't say nasty things about people. But the precept about taking harmful drugs or intoxicants seems unnatural. If all the precepts were natural and I just wanted to do things naturally, then that would make more sense to me.

Suzuki Roshi: If you feel like that, you might also say, "It is quite natural for me to be born and live in this world." But is it natural? You have already assumed something that you shouldn't assume. Why did you come here? That may already be a big mistake. [Laughing.]

Student: When I came here they didn't ask me about precepts. They just wanted to know if I had $2.50 a day.

Suzuki Roshi: Good bargain. But it cannot be so simple. Any-

way, you should say, "Oh, I'm sorry." When you are born you cannot say so. Now you can. So you should say, "I am sorry to be your daughter or your son. Excuse me. I have caused you a lot of trouble." That is actually following the precepts.

Student: Roshi, sometimes I feel this way about listening to lectures: Once I was just walking along and someone came and said, "Did you realize that when you are walking, one foot is ahead and the other is behind?" No! For a long time that amazed me. I wondered why he ever asked me a question like that, and I thought about it a lot. It was a very strange thing, and it occupied my attention. After a long time, I found that I was just walking again and didn't think so much about it. But one day as I was walking, another man came up and said, "Did you realize that when you are walking, one foot is ahead and the other is behind?" And I feel at that point now. I still don't understand it at all, but I have to deal with it somehow. Half of me says, "What's the relevance of it?" because it doesn't bother me anymore, and the other half says, "Yes, but it's still happening like that every time I take a step."

Suzuki Roshi: If you think of your life only as a personal practice, it doesn't make much sense. But if you are aware of what we human beings are doing, you will see that this is exactly how we cause trouble for ourselves. Right foot or left foot, Rinzai or Soto, America or the Soviet Union, peace or war—if your understanding is like this, it is a big problem. The way to solve it is to walk on and on and on.

Student: Do I understand you to say that the problem is how to be aware of all these polarities and precepts without being conscious of being aware? Self-consciousness sort of fixes things, and that is not real either. It fixes the chain.

Suzuki Roshi: Yes, when the chain is fixed, it cannot move. But still you should move. Time does not wait for you, so you should go on and on following reality. If you think about this point, you will already have started to walk. But if you just remain thinking about it, it doesn't work and you are not walking forward. If you think, "The world is going on and on, we are becoming older and older, today will not come again, and tomorrow I have to go somewhere," you have already started to walk. You cannot think the same thing always; you cannot always stop and think. You should just go on and on, making your best effort. And when you make your best effort, you are actually walking. Sometimes one foot may be behind and sometimes it may be ahead. Sometimes you feel as if you are doing something good and sometimes you feel as if you are doing something bad. But you have to accept that you are going on and on and on that way. Since you have to accept it, and since you have to live in each moment, then you are actually living in each moment. Then you should do something, say something. "*Say* something!" the Rinzai master shouts. "*Say something now!*" [Strikes the table with his stick.] What do you say? That is the point.

TENTH TALK

Suffering Is a Valuable Thing

Each of the myriad things has its merit,
expressed according to function and place.
Phenomena exist, like box and lid joining;
principle accords, like arrow points meeting.

Now I would like to talk about how we observe things, how we should treat things, and how we understand the value of things. "Each of the myriad things has its merit, expressed according to function and place"—*Bammotsu onozukara ko ari, masani yo to sho to wo iu beshi*. The myriad things (*bammotsu*) include human beings, mountains and rivers, stars and planets. Everything has its own function, virtue, or value. When we say "value," usually we mean exchange value. But here value has a wider meaning, for which we use the word *ko*. *Ko* does not mean "function" or "utility" in the usual sense, but instead it applies more to virtue or merit: someone living a meritorious life or doing something for society or the community. That function will have virtue for us. But when we say "function," you may still wonder, "Function of what?"

Here I will have to use some technical terms. For instance, if you see something—[The sound system suddenly is turned up and Roshi hears his own voice coming back from the loudspeakers.] Oh! [Laughter.] You hear my voice. You think you

are listening to me. What you are listening to may be my voice, but actually you are listening to the function of some universal entity called electricity that covers the whole world—the whole universe. This is one understanding. Another would be that you are listening to my nature as well as the nature of electricity. So when you see or listen to something, the whole universe is included. When we understand things in this way, we call it the understanding of *tai*.

Tai means "body." But it is a big, ontological body that includes everything. And we call the nature of that body *shō*—not the *sho* in these lines of text here, but the *shō* that means "the basic nature of everything." When we grasp that which is beyond words, we call that understanding *ri*, or truth. *Ri* is something beyond our idea of good and bad, long and short, right and wrong.

In the next line we have *yo*, which means "utility" or "usage." *Ko* and *yo* may seem the same, but here—when used as Buddhist technical terms—*ko* refers to the function of things, or *ji*, while *yo* refers to the function of absolute truth, or *ri*. In these two lines, Sekito is talking about the oneness of *ko* and *yo*. *Ko* and *yo* apply to each occasion and to every thing. So when you encounter things, you should know that right there the true teaching reveals itself. You should know that place.

Sometimes we use *ko* and *yo* together. When we say *koyo*, we understand not only each thing just as we see it, but also the background of each thing, which is *ri*. We should know how to use things. To know how to use things is to know the teaching, or the way things are functioning. To understand

things means to understand the background; and to understand the value of things is to understand how to use them in the right way according to the place and the nature of each thing. This is to see things-as-it-is. Usually, even though you say, "I see things-as-it-is," you don't. You see one side of reality and not the other. You don't see the background, which is *ri;* you only see things in terms of *ji,* the phenomenal side of each event, and you think each thing exists only in that way, but it is not so. All things are changing and are related, one to another, and each thing has its background. There is a reason why all things are here. To see things-as-it-is means to understand that *ji* and *ri* are one, that distinction and equality are one, and that the application of the truth and the value of things are one.

For instance, we think the universe is only for human beings. Nowadays our ideas have become wider, and our way of understanding things has become freer, but even so, our understanding is mostly human-centered, so we don't see or appreciate the true value of things. You have many questions to ask me, but if you understand this point clearly, there is not much to ask. Most questions and problems are created by human-centered, selfish ideas. "What is birth and death?" That is already a very self-centered idea. Of course, birth and death are our virtue or merit. To die is our virtue; to come into this world is also our virtue. We see how things are going, how everything is appearing and disappearing, becoming older and older, or growing bigger and bigger. Everything exists in this way. So why should we treat ourselves in a special way?

When we say "birth and death," we mostly mean the birth and death of human beings. When you understand birth and death as the birth and death of everything—plants, animals, and trees—it is not a problem anymore. If it is a problem, it is a problem for everything, including us. A problem for everything is not a problem anymore. Almost all of these questions come from a narrow understanding of things. A wider, clearer understanding is necessary. You may think that talking about this kind of thing will not help you at all. For a selfish human being, it may be hard to be helped.

Buddhism does not treat human beings as a special category. It is deluded and egotistical to put human beings into a special category. Yet it is normal for humans to think that way, not reflecting within but seeking some truth outside themselves. When you look for the truth outside, it means the background is not big enough. You need to find some confidence within yourself.

The *Sandokai* says here that all beings have their own virtue or merit. As human beings, we have our own nature. Only when we live like human beings, who have a selfish human nature, are we following the truth in its greater sense, because then we are taking our nature into account. So we should live like human beings in this world. We should not try to live like cats and dogs, who have more freedom and are less selfish. Human beings should be put into a cage, a big invisible cage like religion or morality. Dogs and cats have no such special cage. They don't need any teaching or religion. But we human beings need religion. We human beings should say "ex-

cuse me," but dogs and cats don't need to. So we human beings should follow our way, and dogs and cats should follow their way. This is how the truth applies to everything.

If we observe our human way, and dogs and cats observe their animal ways, it looks as if humans and animals have different natures. But although our natures are different, the background is the same. Because where we live and the way we live is different, the application of the truth should be different. It is like the way we use electricity. Sometimes we use it as a light and sometimes as a loudspeaker. Human beings have their nature and animals have their nature. But even though our ways of expressing our natures are different, our natures have the same basis. That is the application of the truth. This is actually what Sekito is talking about. We should not be attached to the difference in usage, because we are using the same true nature, or buddha nature. But according to the situation, we will use buddha nature in different ways. That is how to find the true nature within ourselves in everyday life.

The next two lines are: "Phenomena exist, like box and lid joining; principle accords, like arrow points meeting." The relative (*ji*) fits the absolute (*ri*)—like a box and its lid. The absolute and relative accord like two arrow points meeting. As I said before, *ji* means various things and events, including things you have in your mind, the things you think about. *Ri* is something beyond thinking, beyond our understanding or perception. Again, relative and absolute are the same thing, but we must understand them in two ways.

Where there is *ji,* there is *ri*. Like a box and its lid, they fit

together. That I am here means that the true buddha nature is here. At the moment, I am an expression of buddha nature. I am not just I. It is more than I, but I am expressing true nature in my own way. That I am here means that the whole universe is here, just as where there is a kerosene lamp there is oil.

The way *ri* accords with *ji* is like two arrows meeting in midair. There is an old story about this. In China, in the Warring States Period (430–221 B.C.E.), there was a famous archery master named Hiei (Ch. Feiwei). Kisho (Ch. Jichang), another very good archer, became ambitious and wanted to compete with Hiei. So he waited with his bow and arrow for Hiei to come. Seeing Kisho arrive, Hiei raised his bow and arrow. He tried to hit Kisho first, but both of them were so good and quick that the arrows met in the air. *S-s-s-t!* Afterward they became like father and son.

There is some reason, for instance, that I am old. Without a reason, I would not have become old. And without a reason, I wouldn't have been a youth. For some reason, I became old, so I cannot complain. The background of my being old is the background of my being raised as a beautiful boy. [Laughing.] I am supported by the same background, and I shall also be supported by it even when I die. That is our understanding.

To accept things-as-it-is looks very difficult, but it is very easy. If you don't find it easy, you should think about why it is difficult. "Maybe," you may say, "it is because of the shallow, selfish understanding I have of myself." And then you may ask, "Why do I have a selfish understanding of things?"

But a selfish understanding of things is also necessary. Because we are selfish, we work hard. Without a selfish understanding, we cannot work. We always need some candy, and a selfish understanding is a kind of candy. It is not something to be rejected, but something that helps you. You should be grateful for your selfish understanding, which creates many questions. They are just questions and they don't mean so much. You can enjoy your questions and answers; you can play games with them; you needn't be so serious about it. That is the understanding of the Middle Way.

We can understand the Middle Way as *ri,* emptiness, and *ji,* somethingness. Both are necessary. Because we are human beings and our destiny is to live for possibly eighty or ninety years, we must have a selfish way of life. Because we have a selfish way of life, we will have difficulties that we should accept. When we accept difficulties, that itself is the Middle Way. Without rejecting your selfish way of life, you must accept it—but don't stick to it! Just enjoy your human life as long as you live. That is the Middle Way, the understanding of *ri* and *ji*. When there is *ri,* there is *ji;* when there is *ji,* there is *ri*. To understand difficulty in this way is to enjoy your life without rejecting problems or suffering.

I noticed something very important that I have not emphasized so much before: suffering is a valuable thing. I understood this today when I was discussing it with someone. Our practice could be the practice of suffering. How we suffer will be our practice. It helps a lot. I think most of you know suffering, as you have pain in your legs when you sit. And in every-

day life you have suffering. Bishop Yamada* led some *sesshins* at Zen Center. He emphasized *unshu*, which Hakuin Zenji had practiced for a long time.** Hakuin had suffered from consumption when he was young, and he conquered his illness by the practice of *unshu*, which means putting emphasis on the out-breath—"*m-m-m-mmm*." How do you say it?

Student: Groan?

Groan? When you suffer, you say "*m-m-m-mmm*."

Student: Sigh?

No, not sigh.

Student: Moan?

Moan—no. More strength—like a tiger in pain.

Student: Growl?

Growl? [Laughing.] He said your breathing should be like the breathing you have when you suffer. You should put more strength in your lower abdomen and take a long time exhaling. You should practice "*m-m-m-mmm*" silently; otherwise, it is not *unshu*. When you repeat this *unshu* as if you are suffering from something physically or mentally, and you direct your

* Reirin Yamada was Soto Zen bishop of North America from 1960 to 1965.

** Hakuin Zenji (1689–1769) was an important Japanese Zen master who revitalized and systematized the Rinzai school. His breathing practices are described in the autobiographical essay "Yasenkanna," reprinted in Trevor Leggett's *The Tiger's Cave* (London: Rider and Company, 1964, pp. 142–156).

practice just to the suffering you have, then that can be a good practice. It does not differ from *shikantaza*.*

But when your suffering is centered in your chest and your breathing is shallow, this is agony. When you suffer completely, you should suffer from your lower abdomen. "*M-m-m-mmm*." You feel good when you do that. It is much better than saying nothing or just lying down.

Bishop Yamada had difficulty until quite recently. Now he is, maybe, "over the cloud."** But when he was in Los Angeles, he suffered a lot. At that time, I hadn't had much experience of illness and couldn't understand. I couldn't accept his practice of *unshu* like a sick person might. "*M-m-m-mmm*." "What is that practice?" I thought. But I found out why he did it, and I found out that it helps a lot. Of course, he understood what suffering is. No one enjoys suffering, but our human destiny is to have suffering. How we suffer is the point. We should know how to accept our human suffering, but we should not be completely caught by it. Maybe that was Bishop Yamada's practice.

To find the oneness of *ri* and *ji*, the oneness of joy and suffering, the oneness of the joy of enlightenment within difficulty, is our practice. This is called the Middle Way. Do you understand? Where there is suffering, there is the joy of suffering, or nirvana. Even in nirvana, you cannot get out of suffering. We say nirvana is the complete extinction of desires, but what

* *Shikantaza* means "just sitting."

** That is, over his suffering.

that means is to have this complete understanding and to live according to it. That is zazen. You are sitting upright. You are not leaning over to the side of nirvana or leaning over to the side of suffering. You are right here. Everyone can sit up and practice zazen.

I am following Sekito's poem line by line, but actually it is necessary to read it straight through from beginning to end. If you talk about it piece by piece, it doesn't make much sense. Sekito is very strict in the conclusion, very strict. You cannot escape from him. You cannot say anything or else you will feel his big stick. In his time, the Zen world was too noisy, so he became very angry. "Shut up!" is what he said, actually. So I shouldn't talk so long. Maybe it's already been too long. Excuse me.

A SHORT TALK DURING ZAZEN

Presented during zazen on the morning of June 28, 1970, between the tenth and eleventh Sandokai *talks.*

You should sit with your whole body: your spine, mouth, toes, *mudra*.* Check on your posture during zazen. Each part of your body should practice zazen independently or separately: your toes should practice zazen independently, and your *mudra* should practice zazen independently, and your spine and your mouth should practice zazen independently. You should feel each part of your body doing zazen independently. Each part of your body should participate completely in zazen. Check to see that each part of your body is doing zazen independently—this is also known as *shikantaza*. To think "I am doing zazen" or "my body is doing zazen" is wrong understanding. It is a self-centered idea.

The *mudra* is especially important. You should not feel as if you are resting your *mudra* on the heel of your foot for your own convenience. Your *mudra* should be placed in its own position.

* In zazen, *mudra* refers to the position of the hands, which form a circle called "the cosmic *mudra*."

Don't move your legs for your own convenience. Your legs are practicing their own zazen independently and are completely involved in their own pain. They are doing zazen through pain. You should allow them to practice their own zazen. If you think you are practicing zazen, you are involved in a selfish, egotistical idea.

If you think that you have a difficulty in some part of your body, then the rest of the body should help the part that is in difficulty. You are not having difficulty with some part of *your* body, but the part of the body is having difficulty: for example, your *mudra* is having difficulty. Your whole body should help your *mudra* do zazen.

The entire universe is doing zazen in the same way that your body is doing zazen. When all parts of your body are practicing zazen, then that is how the whole universe practices zazen. Each mountain is standing and each river is flowing independently. All parts of the universe are participating in their practice. The mountain practices independently. The river practices independently. Thus the whole universe practices independently.

When you see something, you may think that you are watching something outside yourself. But, actually, you are watching your *mudra*, or your toe. That is why zazen represents the whole universe. We should do zazen with this feeling in our practice. You should not say, "I practice zazen with my body." It is not so.

Dogen Zenji says, "Water does not flow, but the bridge flows." You may say that your mind is practicing zazen and

ignore the practice of your body. Sometimes when you think that you are doing zazen with an imperturbable mind, you ignore the body, but it is also necessary to have the opposite understanding at the same time. Your body is practicing zazen in imperturbability while your mind is moving. Your legs are practicing zazen with pain. Water is practicing zazen with movement, yet the water is still while flowing because flowing is its stillness, or its nature. The bridge is doing zazen without moving.

Let the water flow, as this is the water's practice. Let the bridge stay and sit there, because that is the actual practice of the bridge. The bridge is practicing zazen; painful legs are practicing zazen; imperturbable zazen is practicing zazen. This is our practice.

ELEVENTH TALK

We Should Not Stick to Words or Rules Too Much

Hearing the words, understand the meaning;
don't set up standards of your own.
If you don't understand the way right before you,
how will you know the path as you walk?

"Hearing the words, understand the meaning"—*Koto wo uke te wa subekaraku shu wo esu beshi*. *Koto* means "words." *Koto* also includes everything: words, things, and ideas that we see or hear. *Uke te* means "to receive" or "to listen to." *Shu* is "the source of teaching," which is beyond words. When you listen to the words, you should understand the source of the teaching. Usually we stick to words, so it is difficult to see the true meaning of the teaching. We say that the words or the teaching is the finger pointing at the moon. Words just suggest the real meaning of the truth. If you stick to the finger pointing at the moon, you cannot see the moon. We should not stick to words, but should know the actual meaning of the words.

In Sekito's time each master had his own way of introducing the real teaching to his disciples. As students stuck to their teachers' words or particular ways, Zen became divided into many schools, and it was hard for the students to know which was the true way. Actually, to wonder which was the true way

was already wrong. Each teacher was suggesting the true teaching, in his own way, from the same source that was transmitted from Buddha. To stick to words without knowing the source of the teaching is wrong, and that is what many teachers and students of Sekito's time were doing. So Sekito is saying here: If you receive words, you should understand the source of the teaching that is transmitted from Buddha and is beyond each teacher's own way of expressing or suggesting the truth.

The next sentence is, "Don't set up standards of your own." You should not establish rules for yourself; you should not stick to rules or be bound by them. Most people are doing that. When you say "This is right!" or "This is wrong!" you establish some rules for yourself. And because you say so, naturally you will stick to them and be bound by them. That is why Zen was divided into many ways or schools—Soto, Rinzai, Obaku, Ummon, Hogen, and Igyo. Originally there was one teaching, but each teacher or his disciples established a school, and they stuck to their "family" way and were bound by it. They understood Buddha's teaching in their own way, and then stuck to their understanding and thought that it was Buddha's teaching. In other words, they stuck to the finger pointing at the moon. If three teachers are pointing at the moon, each has his own finger, and so there are already three schools. But the moon is one. So Sekito says don't establish your own rules for yourself.

This is very important for our practice. We are liable to establish our own rules. "This is the rule of Tassajara," you may

say. But rules are the finger that points to how we have good practice at Tassajara according to the situation. Rules are important, but you shouldn't think: "This is the only way," "Our rules are true permanent teaching," or "Their rules are wrong." You shouldn't stick to your own understanding of things. Something that is good for one person is not always good for another. So you should not make rules for everyone. Rules are important, but don't stick to rules and force them on others.

When you enter a monastery you shouldn't say, "I have my own way." If you come to Tassajara you should obey Tassajara's rules. You should not establish your own rules. To see the actual moon through Tassajara rules is the way to practice at Tassajara. Rules are not the point. The teaching that the rules will catch is the point. By observing rules you will naturally understand the real teaching.

From the beginning this point may be missed by all of us. Most people start to study Zen in order to know what Zen is. This is already wrong. They are always trying to provide some understanding or rules for themselves.

The way to study Zen should be like the way a fish picks up its food. It does not try to catch anything. It just swims around. And if something good comes—*snap!* Even though it is very hot, you are observing Tassajara rules, eating in the hot zendo like a fish swimming around, and if something good comes—*snap!* As you are doing so, you will get something. I don't know whether you realize it or not, but as long as you are following the rules, you will have something. Even though

you don't have anything or study anything, you are actually studying, like a fish who doesn't seem to know what he is eating. That's all. We should study Zen in that way. To understand does not mean to understand something through your head.

If you ask the question "What is good?" of a Zen student, his answer may be "Something you should do is good, and something you shouldn't do is bad." That's all. We don't think so much about good or bad.

Dogen Zenji says, "The power of 'should not' is good." This is something intuitive, the very inmost function of ourselves, our innate nature. Our innate nature has its own function before you say "good" or "bad." It appears to be sometimes good and sometimes bad. This is our understanding. But our innate nature is beyond the idea of good or bad. Wondering why we practice zazen in such hot weather leads to confusion. We should be like a fish, always swimming around in the river. That is a Zen student. Dogen Zenji said, "The bird does not need to know the limit of the sky or what the sky is before flying in it." Birds just fly in the big sky. That is how we practice zazen.

So you should not try to make rules for yourself. These are very strict words. They may not seem to mean much, but actually when Sekito Zenji says this, he is waiting with a big stick. If you say something, he answers, "Don't make rules for yourself! Don't try to understand through your head!" He is waiting like this! [Suzuki Roshi holds up a stick as if ready to strike.] So we cannot say anything. *Hai!* [Yes!]—that's all.

You needn't even say *hai!* You should do things like a mule or an ass.

You may think this is absolute surrender, but it is not. It is the way to understand the source of the teaching. We are likely to wonder what the source is. It is not something you can understand through words, but something you have when you do things quite naturally and intuitively without saying "good" or "bad." Time is going on and on, and we do not have time to say "good" or "bad." Moment after moment we should follow the flow of time. You should go with time. When you become tired of doing something, you may talk about this way or that way, just to kill time. But when you see that the vegetables in the garden have almost dried up in the hot weather, you do not have much time to discuss what is the appropriate thing to do today. While discussing it, you are becoming more and more hungry. So the kitchen people should go to the kitchen and prepare food for the next meal. That is the most important thing.

This does not mean that it is a waste of time to think about things. It is good to think about things, but we should not stick to words or rules too much. This is a very delicate point. Without ignoring rules, and without sticking to rules, we should continue our Tassajara practice. This is what Sekito is suggesting.

And then he says, "If you don't understand the way right before you, how will you know the path as you walk?" The only way is to use your five sense organs wherever you go and simultaneously to understand the source of the teaching. If

you don't do this, even though you move your feet or practice you cannot know the true way.

So the most important thing is not rules but finding the true source of the teaching with your eyes and ears wherever you are. This is a direct way to know the source of the teaching, without trying to establish some particular way for yourself. If you stick to words, if you do not see the true way through your own eyes, ears, nose, and tongue, if you stick to rules and ignore the direct experience of everyday life, then even though you practice zazen, it doesn't work. To have some direct experience of everyday life without thinking "Rinzai" or "Soto," "this way" or "that way," is the most important thing. That is how we understand the true source of the teaching transmitted from Buddha.

The true way could be a stick. The original way of Buddha could be a stone. As Master Ummon said, it may be toilet paper. What is the true way? What is Buddha? Buddha is something beyond our understanding. Buddha could be anything. Instead of the word "Buddha" we could just say "toilet paper," or "three pounds of hemp," as Tozan did. So if someone asks you, "Who is Buddha?" the answer may be "You are Buddha too." If someone asks, "What is the mountain?" you may reply, "The mountain is also Buddha." In Japanese we say *mo mata*—"also." You shouldn't say simply, "This is Buddha." That statement will lead to some misunderstanding. But if you say, "This is also Buddha," it is okay. If someone asks, "Where is Buddha?" you may say, "Here is Buddha too." "Too" is not so definite. Buddha may be somewhere else too.

The secret of the perfect Zen statement is "It is not always so." As long as you are at Tassajara, this is our rule, but it is not always so. You shouldn't forget this point. This is also Buddha's rule. If you know this, there is no danger and you will not invite any misunderstanding. This is how you become free of selfish practice. Even though you think you are practicing Buddha's way, you are liable to be involved in selfish practice when you say, "The way should be like this." You should definitely say, "This is our Tassajara way." But you should be ready to accept some other way too.

This is rather difficult—to have a very strict, strong confidence in your own practice and to be flexible enough to accept another's way too. You may feel that to be ready to accept another's teaching is not a strict way. But unless you are ready to accept another's practice, you cannot be so strict with your own. Strictness may become just stubbornness. Only when you are ready to accept someone's opinion can you say, "You should do so!" When other people come, we can observe their way. Otherwise, you cannot be so strict with yourself.

Usually strictness means to be rigid, to be caught by your own understanding and not to provide room for the understanding of others. If someone asked my master's opinion about some matter, he always said, "If you ask me, my opinion is this!" [Suzuki Roshi hits the table with his stick.] When he said so, he was very strong. He could be so strong because he said, "If you ask me." That is our way. To be just yourself is to be ready to accept someone else's opinion too. Each moment you should intuitively know what to do. But this does not mean you should reject the opinions of others.

In everyday life there is *dao,* the way, and if you do not practice in the midst of everyday activity, there is no approach to the true way. That is what Sekito means. Don't stick to words. Don't make your own rules and force rules on others. It is not possible to force rules on others anyway, because each person has his own way and should have his own way.

TWELFTH TALK

Do Not Pass Your Days and Nights in Vain

Practice is not a matter of far or near,
but if you are confused, mountains and rivers block your way.
I respectfully urge you who study the mystery,
don't pass your days and nights in vain.

"Practice is not a matter of far or near." This is very important. When you are involved in selfish practice you have some idea of attainment. When you strive to reach a goal or attain enlightenment, you naturally have the idea "I am far from the goal," or "I am almost there." But if you really practice our way, enlightenment is right where you are. This may be rather difficult to accept. When you practice zazen without any idea of attainment, there is actually enlightenment.

Dogen Zenji explained that in self-centered practice, there is enlightenment and there is practice: practice and enlightenment are events that we will encounter in our life. But when we realize practice and enlightenment as events that appear in the realm of the great dharma world, then enlightenment is an event that expresses the dharma world, and practice is also an event that expresses the dharma world. If both express or suggest the big dharma world, then actually there is no need to be discouraged if we do not attain enlightenment. Nor should we be extremely happy if we do attain it, because there is no difference. Practice and enlightenment have equal value.

If enlightenment is important, practice is also important. When we understand this point within each step, we have enlightenment. But there will be no need to be excited about it. Step by step we will continue endless practice, appreciating the bliss of the dharma world. That is practice based on enlightenment, practice beyond our experience of good or bad, beyond self-centered practice.

In the last lecture I discussed Sekito's statement, "If you don't understand the way right before you, how will you know the path as you walk?" Whatever you see, that is the *dao.* Even though you practice, if you do not understand this, your practice will not work. Now he says that if you practice our way in its true sense, there is no problem about being far away from the goal or almost there. A beginner's practice and a great Zen master's practice are not different. But if you are involved only in self-centered practice, that is delusion.

In the next line he says that if you practice our way with a dualistic sense of practice and enlightenment, then you will be separated from the *dao* by difficulties as great as those of crossing mountains and rivers.

Then he says, "I respectfully urge you who study the mystery, do not pass your days and nights in vain"—*Koin munashiku wataru koto nakare*. *Ko* here means "sunbeam" and *in* means "shadow," so *koin* means "day and night" or "time." *Wataru* means "to spend" or "to pass." *Nakare* means "not," and *munashiku* is "in vain." "Do not pass your days and nights in vain" means "Don't goof off."

Even though you work very hard sometimes, you may be

spending your valuable time without actually doing anything. If you don't know what you are doing, we may say, "Oh, you are passing your time in vain." You may say, "No, I'm striving very hard to put ten thousand dollars into my savings account," but to us that may not make much sense. Even though you work very hard at Tassajara during the work period, it does not always mean that you are doing the right thing. If you goof off you are wasting your time, and even if you work very hard, maybe you are also wasting your time. This is a kind of koan for you.

"Every day is a good day." This famous koan doesn't mean that you shouldn't complain if you have some difficulty. What it means is "Don't spend your time in vain." I think most people are spending their time in vain. "No, I'm always busy," they may say. But if they say so, it is a sure sign that they are spending their time in vain. Most people do things with some feeling of purpose, as if they know what they are doing. But even so, I don't think they have a proper understanding of their activity.

When you do something with a purpose based on some evaluation of what is useful or useless, good or bad, more or less valuable, your understanding is not perfect. If you do things that need to be done regardless of whether the results are good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, that is real practice. If you do things not because of Buddha, or truth, or yourself, or others, but for the things themselves, that is the true way.

I cannot explain this so well. Maybe I shouldn't explain so

much. You shouldn't do things just because you feel good, or stop doing things just because you feel bad. Whether you feel good or bad, there is something you should do. If you don't have this kind of feeling when doing something, you have not yet started on our way in the true sense.

I don't know why I am at Tassajara: it is not for you or for myself or even for Buddha or Buddhism. I am just here. But when I think I have to leave Tassajara in two or three weeks, I don't feel so good. I don't know why. I don't think it is just because you are my students. I don't have any particular person whom I love so much. I don't know why I have to be here. It is not because I am attached to Tassajara. I'm not expecting anything in the future in terms of a big monastery or Buddhism. But I don't want to live up in the air. I want to be right here. I want to stand on my feet.

The only way to stand on my feet when I am at Tassajara is to sit. That is the reason I am here. To stand on my feet and to sit on my black cushion are the most important things for me. I don't trust anything but my feet and my black cushion. They are my friends, always. My feet are always my friends. When I am in bed, my bed is my friend; there's no Buddha, no Buddhism, no zazen. If you ask me "What is zazen?" my answer will be "to sit on my black cushion," or "to walk with my feet." To stay at this moment in this place is my zazen. There is no other zazen. When I am really standing on my feet I am not lost. For me that is nirvana. There is no need to travel, to cross mountains or rivers. I am right here in the dharma world, so I have no difficulty crossing mountains and

rivers. That is how we don't waste time. Moment after moment we should live right here, without sacrificing this moment for the future.

In China in Sekito's time, Zen Buddhism was very polemical. In the background of the teaching there was always some controversy. There were many schools of Zen, and they were often lost in dispute. And because they were involved in ideas of right and wrong teaching, or traditional and heretical teaching, they lost the main point of their practice. So Sekito said, "Don't spend your time in vain." Don't sacrifice actual practice for idealistic practice, trying to attain some kind of perfection, or trying to find the traditional understanding as taught by the Sixth Ancestor.

The disciples of the Sixth Ancestor compiled the *Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor* in different versions, and each said, "This is the Sixth Ancestor's way. Those who do not have this book are not the descendants of the Sixth Ancestor." This kind of understanding of Zen prevailed at that time. So Sekito said, "I respectfully urge you who study the mystery, don't pass your days and nights in vain." Not to be caught by some idea, some selfish understanding of practice or teaching, is to follow our practice in the right way.

This is sometimes called "tile-polishing practice." Usually, people will polish a mirror. If someone starts to polish a tile you may laugh at him. But polishing a tile makes it shine. Someone may say, "Oh, this is just a tile. It cannot be a mirror." That is the practice of those who give up easily, thinking, "I cannot be a good Zen student, so I have to give up sit-

ting zazen." They do not realize that a tile is valuable, sometimes more valuable than a mirror. No one can afford to make a roof with mirrors. Tiles are very good for making roofs, just as a mirror is important for looking at yourself. That is tile-polishing practice.

As you know, there is a famous story about Nangaku, a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor, and Baso, his student. Baso was practicing zazen when Nangaku passed by and asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm practicing zazen."

"Why are you doing that?"

"In order to become a buddha."

"Ah, it's very nice of you to try to become a buddha," said Nangaku, and he picked up a tile and started to polish it.

So Baso asked, with some curiosity, "What are you doing?"

"I want to make this tile into a mirror."

His disciple asked whether it was possible to make a tile into a mirror. Nangaku answered, "You said you are practicing zazen to be a buddha, but a buddha is not always someone who attains enlightenment. Everyone is a buddha whether they have attained enlightenment or not."

Baso said, "I want to become a buddha through sitting practice."

Nangaku said, "You speak of practice in the sitting position. But to sit is not always Zen. Whatever you do, that will be zazen."

Baso was lost. "Then what would be the appropriate practice?"

Nangaku replied, "If a cart does not go, what would be the appropriate means to make it go—to hit the cart or to hit the horse?" Baso couldn't answer because he was still involved in practicing to attain something.

So Nangaku continued his explanation. I cannot tell you all the details, but in short, what he said was, "Trying to figure out which is right—to whip the horse or to whip the cart—is wrong, because the cart and horse are not separate, they are one."

Practice and enlightenment are one, like cart and horse. So if you do actual physical practice, that is also enlightenment. We call practice based on enlightenment "real practice that has no end," and we call enlightenment that starts with practice and is one with practice "beginningless enlightenment." If someone starts to practice, there is enlightenment, and where there is enlightenment, there is also practice. There is no enlightenment without practice. If you don't stay on this spot realizing your position, then you are not practicing our way. So you are wasting your time if you are sacrificing your present practice for some future attainment. That is not real practice.

Sekito was also a direct disciple of the Sixth Ancestor, and he knew the Sixth Ancestor's practice very well. So when Kataku Jinne and his disciples started to denounce the Northern school of Jinshu, Sekito felt bad about their being attached to some idea without realizing what practice is. His understanding was carried on by Dogen Zenji in Japan five centuries later. Dogen extended this understanding, not just logically

but more widely and with more feeling and in a more poetic way, through his tenacious thinking mind.

Some people say the *Sandokai* is not such a good poem because it is so philosophical. It may be so if you don't understand the background of Sekito's teaching, and if your mind does not penetrate through his words. We say "to read the back of the paper"—not just the printed characters, but the other side of the page. It is important for us to understand Sekito's *Sandokai* in this way.

DISCUSSION

Student: In light of what you said earlier, I don't understand the vows. If there are no sentient beings why do we vow to save them? It sounds like a big joke.

Suzuki Roshi: That is because your practice is always confined within the realm of "Why do we practice zazen? What does it mean?" Actually, your practice is very good. Why is your practice so good? I don't understand. [Laughs.]

Student: It doesn't feel so good to me.

Suzuki Roshi: Anyway, you are doing well. My lecture may be some enticement. [Laughs.] It may be better for you not to listen to my talks. Just practice zazen.

Student: I don't mind zazen so much, but I don't like to make promises I don't understand.

Suzuki Roshi: If sentient beings are numberless, or desires are inexhaustible, you cannot say, "I vow to save them." Our

promise is very silly. It doesn't make any sense. I agree with you. But still we do it. Why? Because we don't feel so good if we don't work for others. We take the four vows, but what we mean is more than that. For the sake of convenience, we say just the four. But I really, truly feel lucky that we have inexhaustible desires and numberless sentient beings to save, and also that it is almost impossible to save each of them in terms of "I save you." You cannot save in that way. Whether it is possible or not, whether it is the Buddhist or bodhisattva or Hinayana or Mahayana way, is not the question. Anyhow, do it! That is our vow.

Student: When I promise to do something, it has to have some meaning. If it doesn't have some meaning, I can't say it.

Suzuki Roshi: That is your arrogance.

Student: I don't know, maybe, but—

Suzuki Roshi: You are crying. Even though you are crying, that crying doesn't make any sense. Your effort is still based on some selfish practice. You don't give yourself up. You have to suffer and fight more with yourself. There is no one to fight with, and nothing to fight with. Fight with your selfish practice until you give up. That is the most important point for real students. They shouldn't fool themselves. They don't want to be fooled by our teaching, or by Zen, or by anything. That is right. They shouldn't be fooled by anything.

Student: Well, what will I do at the end of talks, when we chant the four vows? Everyone will chant the four vows, and I won't believe them.

Suzuki Roshi: You don't have to believe in them literally. Because various teachers and numerous people recite them, you should do it. If they are cheating themselves, you, too, should be cheated; you should be fooled along with all sentient beings. That you cannot do it means that you want to be a special person. That is good. That much spirit we should have; but that is not our way. My answer is very cold. I cannot be sympathetic with your practice. Maybe some great teacher will give you some candy. Go and get it.

Student: It's not like that, Roshi. Maybe part of it is, but I still don't understand. I don't feel right. Even if the whole world is fooled, if there is something I don't believe in, or I don't understand—

Suzuki Roshi: You don't understand. You see various colors, but how many colors do you see with your eyes? How much sound can you hear? How much can you understand with your small mind? You should know the limit of your thinking mind. Your thinking mind only works dualistically. You have no words to explain this kind of reality. It is almost impossible to understand our teaching through words. But because you stick to my words, or to scriptures, you think the scriptures should be perfect, should be more convincing. You think in that way, but I must confess that what I say is not always right, not always true. I am suggesting something more than that. Not only Buddha, but Confucius also said, "If someone wants to fool you, you should be fooled by them." That is very important.

Student: Even though practice is greater than words, still, in the small world of words I don't feel strong enough yet to be inconsistent. If I say to you, "I don't see that lamp, Roshi," then something funny happens inside of me, and sometimes that same funny feeling happens inside of me when I say the vows. I think, "Okay, I vow to save all sentient beings," but then something is going on inside that doesn't—

Suzuki Roshi: Yes, I understand that. You know, we priests always put our palms together and bow when we meet. How many times have you put your hands together at Tassajara? When I was young I didn't like it at all. I felt as if I was fooling myself, and I didn't feel so good. But as I had to do it, I did it, that's all. But now I understand, because I understand how foolish I am. I don't have as much spirit as I had before. Truth is truth, and I can't agree with you now. Maybe if I were your age I could agree with you quite easily and we would be great friends, but now I am not your friend.

Student: Roshi, do you think that we have any choice? For instance, am I here at Tassajara by my choice, or am I simply here at Tassajara?

Suzuki Roshi: Your buddha nature brought you here to Tassajara. I don't think it was your choice completely. Maybe twenty or thirty percent is your choice. But most of the rea-

son for your being here is beyond that. That we hear Buddha's teaching is because of our previous study. Wisdom seeks wisdom, and we are listening to the teaching that we have listened to under many teachers in past lives. Dogen says this. Even though you feel as if your whole body is saying, "I am feeling this way one hundred percent," that voice that now seems to cover all of your being actually is only a little, tiny part of you. Maybe I shouldn't explain so much in the traditional way.

Student: Well, then, if I were to become a buddha, would I have anything to do with it?

Suzuki Roshi: First of all, try to forget yourself and rely on your true voice, your voiceless voice, your nonverbal voice. "Listen to the tongueless teaching," we say, don't listen to my words. Think about this.

Student: Whose voice is it that we listen to?

Suzuki Roshi: Your voice and Buddha's voice. That is what the *Sandokai* is talking about. You sometimes think it is your voice, but it is Buddha's voice. Your thinking comes from a one-sided feeling. You think you are here. You think you are Joe or Mary, but actually it is not so, not at all. I think I am Suzuki, but if someone calls me Suzuki, I feel very funny. "Oh, is this Suzuki?" The first reaction is "No, I am not Suzuki."

Student: Roshi, I may put my palms together in *gassho* and someone may look at me and say, "Oh, that is a good *gassho*," but there may be a cold heart behind it.

Suzuki Roshi: Cold heart or warm heart is not the question.

Student: Is it still a good *gassho?*

Suzuki Roshi: Perfect!

TALK GIVEN TO A VISITING CLASS

We Are Just a Tiny Speck of Big Being

An additional talk on the general spirit of the Sandokai, *given to Tassajara students and a group of visiting philosophy students.*

The purpose of the study of Buddhism is to have a perfect understanding of things, to understand ourselves and what we are doing in our everyday life. It is also necessary to understand why we suffer and why we have so much conflict in our society, in our families, and within ourselves—in other words, to understand what is going on in the objective and subjective realms. If we see things-as-it-is, and if we are aware of what we are doing and have a good understanding, we will know what we should do. This is the intellectual study of Buddhism, which includes both dualistic and non-dualistic study. It is also necessary to have some real experience of the Buddhist way. Study and practice are different from each other; even though you have a good understanding, if you do not follow that understanding, it will not help you.

We are now studying the *Sandokai*, a poem—a kind of scripture—written by a great Chinese Zen master. In one of my lectures, I explained what we mean by darkness and light. Darkness means something we cannot see or think about,

something beyond our intellectual understanding. We do not know what is going on in utter darkness. If you are in a dark place, you may be afraid. This room is pretty dark right now, but still you can see things. If there were no light, you could not see anything. But it would not mean there is nothing here. There are many things, but you would not be able to see them, that's all. So "darkness" means something that is beyond our understanding. And "brightness" means something you can understand in terms of good or bad, square or round, red or white. So "brightness" means the various things, and "darkness" means one whole being in which the many things exist. Even though there are many things, including the moon and stars, everything is so vast that we are just a tiny speck of big being.

"Darkness" means something that includes everything. You cannot get out of it. Wherever you may go, that place is included in darkness. Utter darkness is a big, big being where everything can be acknowledged because by comparison everything is so small. That does not mean that there is nothing; various things exist in one great whole being. However, whatever study we may be doing, it is always going on in the realm of brightness. We discriminate between things, saying, "This is good, this is bad; this is agreeable or disagreeable, right or wrong, big or small, round or square." Whatever you deal with appears in brightness in the dualistic world. But it is necessary for us to know the darkness, where there is nothing to see, nothing to think about. This will be experienced only in zazen practice. While thinking or listening to lectures or talking about the teaching, we cannot study what darkness

actually is. I cannot talk about darkness, but I can talk about something that we can understand, that will encourage you to practice zazen, and that will lead you to the experience of darkness.

Darkness sometimes is called "nothingness" or "emptiness," in contrast with "somethingness." Sometimes we say "no mind." You don't think when you are in utter darkness.

But I feel I have gone too far [laughs], so I have to come back to something, to some bright room. It is too dark to see your faces one by one, and what kind of problems you have. I think I must come back to our everyday problems.

I was talking to a student about my relationship with my wife. I often complain, but I don't think I can live without her. That is, to tell the truth, what I really feel. Here at Tassajara I learned a very interesting expression: "hen-pecked husband." There is no chance for this husband to raise his head; he is always pecked by the hen. Still, he needs the hen. He feels as if it is impossible to live with her; maybe it would be better to get divorced. Then sometimes he thinks, "Oh, but I cannot live without her. So I cannot live with her, and I cannot live without her. What should I do?"

This is a problem we have in the world of brightness. When the lamp is bright I can see myself and my wife; when there is no lamp there is no problem. But we don't think about the darkness. We always suffer from the life that we can see with our eyes and hear with our ears. That is what we are doing. In the world of brightness it is difficult to live without others. To live with them is also difficult. That is the problem we have. What shall we do? But if you have even the slightest

understanding of darkness, which is the other side of brightness, then you will find out how to live in the brightness of the world.

In brightness you will see something good and something bad, or something right and something wrong. In this world of differentiation, things exist in various forms and colors, and at the same time we can find the equality of everything. The only chance for us to be equal is to be aware of and respect the world of form and color. Only when you respect yourself as a learned person or as an ignorant person will you find true equality.

We think equality means to share something equally with everyone. But that is not possible. That is a kind of dream. For instance, if we share our food equally with others, some may like it and some may not; it is impossible to share things equally. For everyone to have the same responsibility, or duty, or commitment is not possible. Only when we realize and respect our own capacity, our own physical strength, our own nature as man or woman, and our own character or nature, will each one of us be equal.

This equality is a little bit different from the usual understanding of equality. Here is a cup in which I have some water. Water and cup are not equal; water is water, and cup is cup. If the water wants to be a cup, that is not possible, and this is true also for the cup. The cup should be a cup, and water should be water. When water is in the cup, water serves its purpose and the cup serves its purpose. A cup without water and water without a cup mean nothing to us. When water is

water, and cup is cup, and cup and water have some relationship with each other, they become interdependent; so water will have its own value, and the cup will have its own value. In this sense we say that the cup and water are equal.

If you think freedom is just to ignore rules and act as you want, that is a kind of dream, a delusion. Actually freedom does not exist in that way, and we shouldn't be involved in a vain effort to try to catch a cloud. The way to get out of the difficulty is to have a good understanding of ourselves. We need to know what we are doing, to know what is possible and what is not. And we should be very realistic, or whatever we do will not work. If you enjoy your daydreams that is another matter. Sometimes it is good to think about something impossible, to dream about something wonderful. The point then is just to enjoy it like a movie. You feel like a movie star. That is good, but it cannot be our final goal in life. We should know what is delusion and what is reality. When we are sincerely involved in good practice, we should not dream of something impossible. We should work for something that is possible to realize.

So the other side of differentiation is equality. Because things are different there is equality. When you understand the equality of man and woman in its true sense, you have no more problems. "I cannot live without her," you may say. When you feel that way you don't know who she is and who you are. When you realize that she is important because she is who she is, then you understand her nature. If a husband is more idealistic than realistic, thinking about doing something that

seems almost impossible and ignoring what may happen to him, his wife may say, "Oh, don't do that; it is too soon. Wait. Wait." [Laughs.] If she says that, he may think, "Oh, I must do it right away." And he will complain, "I cannot live with her." [Laughs.] But that is her nature. A hasty, careless man can benefit from a careful, more conservative woman. Sometimes she may be very angry with her husband, but that is also her nature. So when he says, "I cannot live with her," something is missing in his understanding.

The other day I said the Chinese character for "human" is two lines supporting each other (人). Man and woman may be like this, or teacher and disciple. If there is no teacher there is no disciple; if there is no disciple there is no teacher. So when teacher and disciple exist like the two lines in this character, supporting each other, there is a monastery. Everything exists in that way. "I cannot exist without her, or without him" is right. Many difficulties are created when you lack this understanding of the other side of each event or thing. The other side of good will be bad; the other side of bad will be good; that is reality.

So the other side of darkness is brightness. You may say this room is dark, but it is brighter than the basement where there is no light. And even the basement is brighter than the hole of a mole. So you cannot say bright or dark, actually. Bright or dark is only in your mind; there is no bright or dark in reality. Yet sometimes we need some standards or rules or means of communication, so we say something is good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable. These are just words. We shouldn't

be caught by words. When your girlfriend says, "I don't like you!" you may take her words literally. Maybe she means the opposite. Because she likes you so much, sometimes she feels "I hate you," but it is not actually so. If you stick to words without observing things from both sides, you will not know what to do.

Our eyes open only toward the outside, and we cannot see inside ourselves. Because of this we tend to be concerned about another's practice or life and to be very critical. Even though we may think about what kind of practice we should have, we cannot find our own way because our eyes are directed toward the outside. When you say, "Which way should I take?" the "I" is here, the "way" is over there, and the nature of "I" is not realized. If you don't know this "I," you are completely ignorant about yourself. So you criticize yourself as you criticize others. That is terrible! You cannot exist in this world because of your sharp criticism. It is very easy to criticize others. It may be a little bit more difficult to criticize yourself because you may not feel so good, but you do it anyway, and you suffer. That is what we do every day. You suffer because something is missing in your understanding of what you are doing.

According to Buddhist understanding, things that look like they exist outside are actually existing inside ourselves. When you think, "He is not good," you are actually criticizing someone within yourself. It is a picture of yourself. This is the understanding of the big mind that includes everything. Things happen only within yourself; they are activities of your life

within yourself, like your stomach digesting things. In your mind you may think, "Here is my heart, and here is my tummy," and you may not be aware of the relationship between them. You may think that by surgery you can cut out your tummy without affecting your heart. But it is not actually so. Your heart and your tummy are closely related to each other, and if you make your tummy strong, your heart may be improved. So it is not always necessary to have a big operation on your heart. When you understand that things are closely related, there is no need to say "tummy" or "heart" anymore. When you are in good health, you don't necessarily know what is going on in your physical body; when your life is sound and good, you don't talk about him or her or yourself.

The way to obtain this kind of harmonious life within yourself is by practice. Talking about things is like arranging food on your plate. Every morning our students arrange food beautifully on each dish. But fortunately or unfortunately, when I chew it, it is all mixed up in my mouth and I just have the taste of food—no color, no beauty, no sesame salt or brown rice. It is even more mixed up when it reaches my tummy. I don't even know what it is. When things are in full activity, there is no idea of good or bad, this or that. It is good to see food arranged in different dishes. It is good to think about food, your life, or the nature of man and woman. But even though you think about these things, it doesn't mean much unless you really have a taste of them in your life. Unless you chew it up, mix it all together, and swallow it, your life doesn't make much sense.

We study Buddhism like this, just as we arrange our food in different dishes and appreciate its color and form. But eventually we must eat it, and then there is no teaching whatsoever. When you actually eat it, there is no teacher or disciple; there is no Buddha or Christ.

How to eat is our practice. We are fortunate that even though we chew things up and mix them together, we also know how to analyze them in various ways, and we know what we have been doing. To analyze your psychology or your practice is important, but that is the shadow of your practice, not the practice itself.

So we will practice on and on in this way, arranging carefully and mixing together and chewing and analyzing to see what is going on. "What am I doing?" In this way, analyzing in a bright light and mixing in a dark room, over and over, our practice goes on and on endlessly. At the end of the *Sandokai* Sekito says that if you go on in this way, step by step, it is not a matter of a thousand-mile trip or a one-mile trip. There is no enlightenment and no ignorance, because we are going on and on and on, and we are always on the path of the Buddha. But if you stop working and stick to the idea of good or bad, then you will have difficulty, like crossing a big river or a high mountain. You create the river and the mountain for yourself. They don't exist. When you analyze, when you criticize yourself, you have some special concept of yourself in terms of good or bad and you think that is you. It is not actually so, but that's how you create difficulty for yourself. That is what we are always doing.

DISCUSSION

Student: You said that zazen is within darkness, and listening to the lecture is within brightness. If someone listens to the lecture with a good understanding, then that's zazen, isn't it?

Suzuki Roshi: The *Sandokai* says that even though you recognize the truth, that is not enlightenment. But the lectures will encourage you, and you will know why you practice zazen. You are arranging things according to my Buddhist recipe, and you are cooking something here at Tassajara. The dishes are before you, so you should eat what you cooked. How to eat it is to practice zazen. This food is prepared for people who practice zazen, so to eat it will help your practice.

Student: You said zazen is darkness and the lecture is brightness, and you have also talked about *ri* being dark and *ji* being bright, but what I want to know is whether you can really separate them.

Suzuki Roshi: That is a good point. We are purposely separating something that cannot be separated. It is like two sides of a coin: this side is brightness and the other side is darkness. I am talking about this bright side, and by your practice you will see the other side. Then you will see the whole picture of the *Sandokai;* that is reality. Thinking that by your practice you will understand something completely different from this bright side is a big mistake.

Student: I was wondering why you spoke about one side or the other. Is it impossible to speak about both sides together?

Suzuki Roshi: Both sides together is not possible, because whatever you talk about is the bright side. It is not possible to talk about the other side. But because I have some experience or understanding of the other side, I can talk about this bright side. If I had no experience of the other side, what I am talking about wouldn't mean anything. No matter how beautifully I may describe it, this bright side would be poison for you then. This bright side is something quite different from the other side, and it is not possible to mix them or put them together. Again, something that does not agree with the other side is poisonous. A teaching may look very beautiful, but if it isn't in accord with the other side, if the other side is ignored, that teaching is like opium.

Student: Before lectures, we chant, "An unsurpassed, penetrating, and perfect dharma," and I am just wondering how the lecture enters into darkness. How does a lecture teach us? How is it something besides brightness? How is the lecture zazen, or what is *teisho?*

Suzuki Roshi: Teisho is to give encouragement. It is not just to talk about something, but to give some suggestions and to help people have a good understanding of our practice. The words must come from the actual experience of—I hesitate to say—the actual experience of enlightenment. These are big words. The actual experience of reality is *teisho.* The words should not be dead; they should not be something that we study or read in a book. That is the difference between *teisho* and lecture. Strictly speaking, lectures give some knowledge of some-

thing; *teisho* helps people's actual practice and enlightenment. So pushing people toward real practice is *teisho.* "Here is something you must have as a Buddhist. Look!" That is *teisho.* We must have something real to talk about. If you read this book [holding up a book], even memorize it, that is not *teisho. Teisho* is something that comes from inside, from the bottom of the heart. Because I must use words, I must follow logic and use special, technical philosophical terms. But sometimes, ignoring those terms, we can speak directly about reality. Sometimes it may not be with words. [Knocks on the table.] This is *teisho.* To talk about something that is not possible to talk about is *teisho.* Excuse me. I cannot explain it so well.

Student: You say that your talk on the *Sandokai* is supposed to give us understanding. But you also say that we can't understand the bright side unless we understand the dark side—unless we have good zazen. Is your talk just skillful means?

Suzuki Roshi: You will stick to my words. So after giving a talk, I take it from you. It is just something intellectual. You should forget what I said, but you should sense the real meaning of my words.

Student: Is talking to students Buddha's skillful means?

Suzuki Roshi: It should be that way whether we are Buddhists or not. But Buddhists know that if we stick to words we will be enslaved by words, and we will understand just a little part of what is said. When you are interested in something that I

have pointed out with this finger, it may be better for me to cut off this finger so you will not be attached to it anymore. We explain how to cook something in a book, but actually what we do is cut vegetables, put salt on them, and boil them. As long as you depend on what is written in the cookbook, it may take time before you can cook! When you can forget all about your cookbook you will be a good cook. It is better to study by seeing someone who is actually doing it. That is the best way.

To give something directly is *teisho.* Usually your attitude in listening to *teisho* is to think about whether it is good or bad. You wonder, "What is he speaking about? If it is good, I will accept it. If it is not good, I will not accept it." That is extra; you don't need to be so careful. If you just listen, you don't even need to try to understand it. If you don't understand, it is okay; if you do understand, it is better, that's all. There should be no special intention in listening. Just to listen is how you should receive *teisho.* It is different from studying something.

As your mind works logically, I have to be logical. If you are not logical, I can say whatever I like. I can even sing a song.

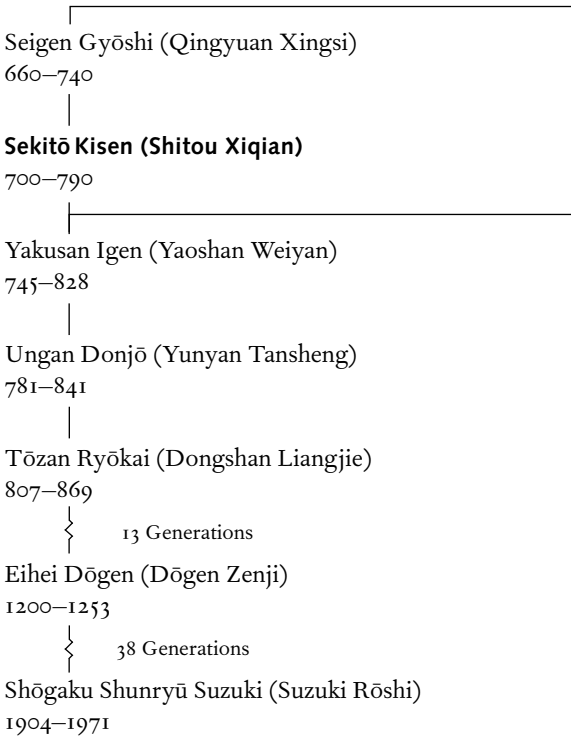
Oneness of One and Many

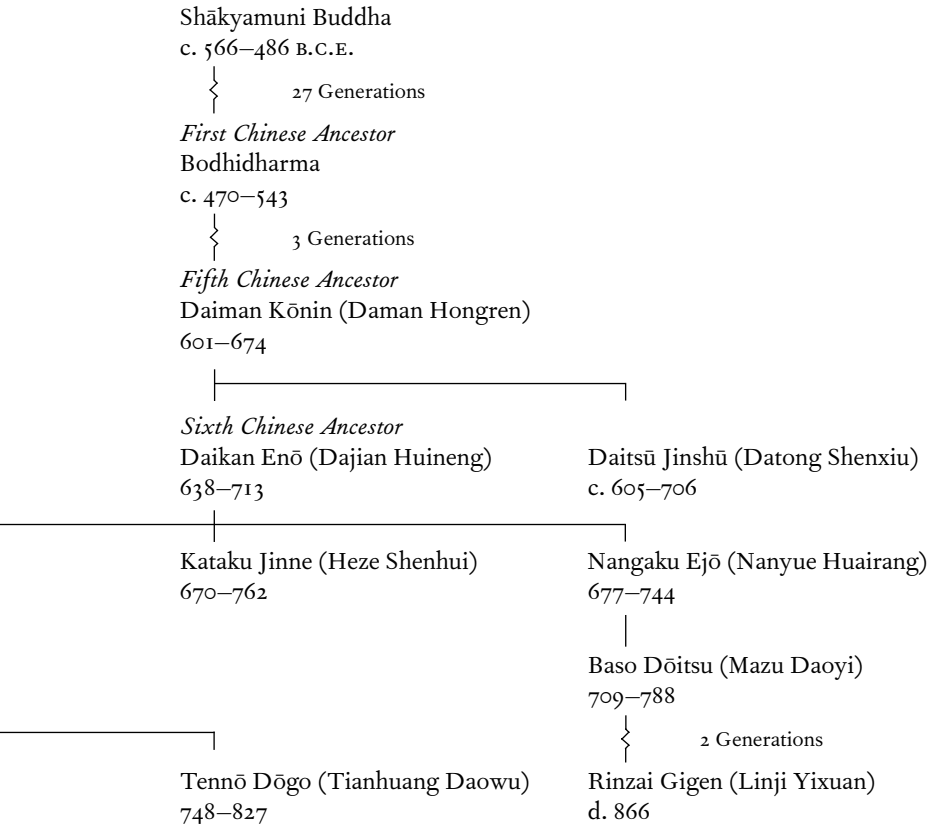
The mind of the great sage of India
was handed down closely from west to east.
People may discriminate the dull from the keen,
but in the true way there is no Ancestor of North or South.
The true source is pure and stainless.
The branch streams flow in the dark.
Clutching at things is delusion.
To recognize the truth is not always enlightenment either.
The five sense gates and the five sense objects
are interdependent and absolutely independent;
interrelated endlessly,
yet each stays in its own position.
Things have various natures, various forms.
There is good and bad taste, sound, and feeling.
In darkness, superior and inferior cannot be distinguished;
in brightness, the duality of pure and impure is apparent.
The four elements resume their nature
as a child has its mother.
Fire is hot, wind blows,
water wets, and earth is solid.
For eyes there is color and form, for ears there is sound,
for the nose there is smell, and for the tongue there is taste;
Each being comes out from the root
as branches and leaves come out from the trunk.
But both root and end should return to their original nature.

The words we use are different—good and bad, respectful and mean—but through these words we should understand the absolute being or source of the teaching.
Within brightness actually there is utter darkness;
but you should not meet someone just with darkness.
Within darkness there is brightness
but you should not see others only with the eyes of brightness.
Darkness and brightness stand with each other
like one foot forward and the other behind in walking.
Everything—all beings—have their own virtue.
You should know how to apply this truth.
Things and emptiness are like a container and its cover fitting together,
like two arrows meeting head-on.
When you listen to the words, you should understand the source of the teaching.
Don't establish your own rules.
If you don't practice in your everyday life as you walk,
how can you know the way?
The goal is neither far nor near.
If you stick to the idea of good or bad, you will be separated from the way by high mountains or big rivers.
Seekers of the truth,
don't spend your time in vain.

Compilation from these talks and from private discussions with Suzuki Roshi

LINEAGE CHART OF TEACHERS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT




Shākyamuni Buddha
c. 566–486 B.C.E.
27 Generations
First Chinese Ancestor
Bodhidharma
c. 470–543
3 Generations
Fifth Chinese Ancestor
Daiman Kōnin (Daman Hongren)
601–674
Sixth Chinese Ancestor
Daikan Enō (Dajian Huineng)
638–713
Daitsū Jinshū (Datong Shenxiu)
c. 605–706
Kataku Jinne (Heze Shenhui)
670–762
Nangaku Ejō (Nanyue Huairang)
677–744
Baso Dōitsu (Mazu Daoyi)
709–788
2 Generations
Tennō Dōgo (Tianhuang Daowu)
748–827
Rinzai Gigen (Linji Yixuan)
d. 866

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