

Tassajara students are building a new stone wall on the path to the Zendo.



SECOND SANDOKAI LECTURE

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This lecture covers the following lines of the Sandokai: “. . . tozai mitsu ni ai-fusu. Ninkon ni ridon ari, do ni namboku no so nashi.”

I explained in the last lecture what the title, *Sandokai*, means, and about “*Chikudo daisen no shin*.” Maybe it is necessary to explain about the background of this poem, about why Sekito Kisen Daiocho wrote it. Under the Fifth Patriarch there was an outstanding teacher called Jinshu, and when the Fifth Patriarch announced that he would give transmission to someone, everyone thought that, of course, Jinshu would receive the transmission. But actually Eno, who became the Sixth Patriarch, Eno who was pounding rice in the corner of the temple, received the transmission. But Jinshu was a great scholar, and he later went to the Northern country and became a great teacher. And Jinshu’s

school was called *Hoku Zen*. And the Sixth Patriarch, who had gone to the South, spread his teaching there, and his school was called *Nan Zen*, Southern Zen.

Later, after Jinshu's death, Northern Zen became weaker and weaker. While Southern Zen became stronger and stronger. But in Sekito's time Northern Zen was still powerful. Of course the Sixth Patriarch had many, many disciples. We can count fifty, but there must have been more. One was named Katakū Jinne. He was a very alert and active person and he, as the Sixth Patriarch's disciple, denounced Jinshu's Zen pretty strongly, and we cannot exactly accept his teaching. You must have studied the Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch. In that sutra Jinshu's teaching is pretty badly denounced. It seems that way because, maybe, the sutra was compiled by someone under the influence of Katakū Jinne. Anyway, there was some conflict between Southern Zen and Jinshu's Zen, and Sekito wanted to clarify this dispute from his own viewpoint. This is why he wrote this poem.

First of all he started with Buddha's teaching, the teaching of "the Mind of the Great Sage of India." Then, "*tozai mitsu ni ai-fusu*." *To* means "West" or "India"; *zai* means "East" or "China." "The Mind of the Great Sage of India was handed down closely from West to East." It means that Sekito knows the true teaching of the Great Sage, Shakyamuni Buddha, which includes both the Southern School and the Northern School without any contradiction. Although they may not understand the teaching of the Great Sage, his teaching flowed all over. If you have the eyes to see, or the mind to understand the teaching, you will understand it; and if you understand it, it is not necessary to be involved in this kind of dispute. From Sekito's viewpoint there is no need to fight. Because they didn't understand the real teaching of Buddha they got into a dispute. That is what it means.

"*Mitsu ni ai-fusu*." *Mitsu* means "exactly, without a gap between the two." Here the main purpose of the *Sandokai* is to explain reality from both sides. *San* means "many"; *do* means "one." What is "many"? What is "one"? Many are one; one is many. If you really understand reality, even though you say "many," each one of the things is not separated from the other. They are closely related. If so, they are one. But even though it is one, it looks like many. So "many" is right and "one" is right. Even though we say "one," we cannot ignore various beings like stars and moon and animals and fish. But although there are many, they do not exist separately; they are not separated from each other; they are closely related. From this point we say they are interdependent. So when we discuss the meaning of each being, we say "many"; we have "many" things to discuss. But if we come to the conclusion, to the real understanding of reality, in fact it is just one. So all the discussion will be included in one real understanding of things. So "one" and "many" are very famous words. One and Many.

And another way to explain reality is by differentiation. Differentiation is equality. Things have equal value because they are different. If man and woman are the same, man and woman have no value. Because man and woman are different, man is valuable and woman is valuable. To be different is to have value. In this sense we all have equal, absolute value. Each thing has an absolute

value which is equal to everything else. But usually we are involved in the standards of evaluation, in exchange value, materialistic value, spiritual value or 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, so a virtuous person is not always so. If you compare him with someone who is like Buddha he is not so good. So "good" or "bad" is caused by some evaluation or standard. But because things are different, because of the difference, everything has its own value. That value is absolute value. The mountain is not valuable because it is high; the river is not less valuable because it is low. On the other hand, because the mountain is high, mountain is mountain, and it has absolute value; because water runs in the low 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; equal means absolute value.

So if we evaluate things from the absolute point of view they have equal value. Equality is differentiation according to Buddhism; differentiation is equality. In the usual sense differentiation is opposite to equality, but we understand that equality and differentiation are the same thing. And one and many are the same. If you think "one" is different from "many," your understanding is too materialistic and superficial.

The next sentence is "*Ninkon ni ridon ari*: people discriminate the dull from the keen." This means the dispute about which is better, the Northern School or the Southern School. Does it make sense? It is difficult to translate. *Ninkon* is "human being with sense organs." *Nin* means "human"; *kon* is "root" or "sense organs." *Ri* is "sharp" or "keen," someone who has an advantage in studying or accepting Buddha's teaching; *don* is "dull," someone who has a disadvantage in studying or accepting Buddha's teaching. But the clever ones do not always have an advantage; 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. You cannot compare, you cannot say which is good. Do you understand this point?

I am not so sharp so I understand pretty well. My Master always called me "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. That is, for studying Buddhism my dullness was an advantage. When I was left alone with my Master I was very sad. But when I left home I left home by my own choice. I told my parents, "I will go." And they said, "You are too young, you should stay here." But I had to go. I left my parents, so I felt I couldn't go back home. I could, 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. So a smart person doesn't always have the advantage, and a dull person is good because he is dull. We understand it in this way.

So actually there is no dull person or smart person. They are the same. Anyway it is not so easy. There is some difficulty for the smart person and for the dull person. For instance, to learn, the dull person must study hard and he must

read one book over and over again because he is not smart. But a smart person forgets quite easily. He may learn very quickly, but what he learns does 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 so soon. So smart or dull may be the same thing.

Next it says, "*do ni namboku no so nashi*: but in the true Way there is no Patriarch of South or North." That is very true. Jinshu is good and the Sixth Patriarch is good. Jinshu is good for someone who studies things literally and the Sixth Patriarch is good for a quick, sharp-minded fellow. Some teacher may explain Buddha's teaching in detail so that his student can understand, word after word. But for some other students it is necessary to point out the point without using so many words. It is up to the person. For the great teacher, if he is really a great teacher, there is no difference in true understanding, but his way of explaining the teaching will be different.

This kind of true "Mind of the Great Sage of India," this kind of understanding of reality started by Buddha, "was handed down closely from West to East." Whether you understand or not, what the Buddha said is true. People get into confusion because of the evaluation of things, "discriminating the dull from the keen"; but from the standpoint of the Patriarchs it is the same. All the Patriarchs understand this point, so "there is no Northern Patriarch or Southern Patriarch." That is Sekito's understanding.

By the way, Sekito was actually the Sixth Patriarch's disciple, but after the Sixth Patriarch passed away Sekito became the disciple of Seigen, the Seventh Patriarch. That kind of thing happens very often. I have some disciples here, but if I die those who couldn't be my disciples will be disciples of my disciples. Studying Buddhism is not like studying something else. It takes time until you accept the teaching completely. And the most important point is you yourself, rather than your teacher. You yourself study hard, and what you receive from your teacher is the spirit of study, the spirit to 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 teachers as well as masters. Some of you are my disciples. We call a master's disciple "*deshi*." Those of you who are not my disciples are called "*zuishin*." *Zuishin* is a "follower" and he may stay quite a long time under some teacher, sometimes longer than the period he stays with his master. When I was 32 my Master passed away, so after that I studied under Kishizawa-roshi, and most of the understanding I have is Kishizawa-roshi's. But my Master was Gyokujun So-on. So anyway, "The true way has no Patriarch of North or South." The true way is one.

Our practice is not to gather something in your basket, but rather to find something in your sleeve. But before you study hard you don't know what you have in your sleeve, that's all. Buddha has the same thing and I have the same thing. "Oh! It is amazing!" That is the spirit we must have. You should study hard, whatever it is, whatever is said. If you don't like what I say, you shouldn't

accept it. It is O.K. Eventually you will accept it. If you say, "No!" I will say, "Go ahead. Try hard!" I think that is the characteristic of Buddhism. Our approach is very wide, and as a Buddhist you have big freedom to study; whatever you say, it is O.K., so "there is no Patriarch of South or North." We know this.

As Sekito said, "*Ji o shu suru mo moto kore mayoi, ri ni kano mo mata satori ni arazu*: Clutching at things is delusion, and to recognize the truth is not always enlightenment either." It may be enlightenment, but it is not always so.

"Clutching at things" means to stick to things, to stick to the many things you see, understanding that each being is different, that this is something special. If you think so, you will stick to it. That is delusion. But on the other hand, even though you recognize the truth that everything is one, that is not always enlightenment. It is just understanding by your head, by your thought, by your thinking. Real enlightenment includes both: an enlightened person does not ignore things, and he does not stick to things. And he does not stick to the truth either. There is no truth which is different from each being. Being itself is the truth. You may think that truth is something which is controlling each being: "There is truth, like the truth of gravitation. The apple is each being, so behind the apple there is some truth which is working on the apple and is the theory of gravitation." To understand things in that way is not enlightenment. This is the backbone of the *Sandokai*.

