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6-6-70

The purpose of the study of Buddhism is to have perfect understanding of things, and subjectively to understand ourselves, and especially what we are doing in our everyday life (in what kind of activity we are involved in) and why we suffer, why we have such a conflict in our society, or in our family or within ourselves. In other words it is to understand, with good understanding of subjective world and objective world, and what is going on in objective world and within ourselves. If we see things as it is and if we are aware of what we are doing, actually, with good understanding of those things, we will know what we should do. And this is intellectual study of Buddhism.

And this intellectual study include dualistic study and non-dualistic study. They are two ways of study. And then what you should do is to have real experience of Buddhist way. So study and practice is different. Even though you have good understanding, if you do not follow the understanding, it will not help you.

We are now studying a kind of scripture which was written by great Chinese Zen Master, entitled SANDOKAI. And last night I explained what we mean by Darkness, and what we mean by Brightness. Darkness means something which we cannot see or think about. It is something which is beyond our intellectual understanding. Darkness does not mean some dark place which you do not know. Of course we do not know what is going on in utter darkness, but you will be afraid of it; you have a kind of fear if you are in a dark place. But what we mean by Utter Darkness is something which is beyond our understanding. This room is pretty dark right now, but still you can see things in this room. If there is no light, in Utter Darkness, you cannot see anything. But it does not mean there's nothing. There's many things, but you cannot see. That's all. So Utter Darkness means something which is beyond our understanding. And Brightness means something you can understand in term of good or bad, or square or round, or red or white. So Brightness means various things, and Darkness means one whole Being in which many things

exist, something which include everything. Even though there are many things, the things which include everything (moon and stars and everything) is so big and we are just a tiny speck of big Being. So when we think we say that is Darkness, Darkness means something which include everything. You cannot get out of it. If there is some place where you can go, that place is included in Darkness. That kind of big, big Being is Utter Darkness, where anything can be acknowledged because everything is so small. But it does not mean that there is nothing. Various things exist in one whole big, big, great Being. So whatever the study may be it is always going on in the realm of Brightness. So we discriminate between things, "This is good, this is bad; this is agreeable or disagreeable; right or wrong, big or small, round or square." In this way we study things and we live in this world, saying this is good or this is bad. Whatever you deal with are the things which are in Brightness, things which are in duality (dualistic). But it is necessary for us to know Utter Darkness of the Being where there's nothing to see, or nothing to think about. This kind of experience will be experienced only in zazen practice. But in your thinking or listening to lecture, or talking about teaching, we cannot study what is actually Darkness. I cannot talk about Darkness, but I can talk about something we can understand, and by which you will be encouraged to practice zazen and which will lead you to the experience of Darkness.

Darkness sometimes is called Nothingness or Emptiness in comparison to Somethingness. Sometimes we say No Mind. No Mind means Utter Darkness. No Mind. You don't think there.

I feel I went too far. Here, I went too far, so I have to go back to something, some bright room. It is too dark to see your face, one by one...too dark. But I will try to see your face, and what kind of problem you have. I think I must go back to everyday problems. I was talking with some student about my relationship to my wife (laughing). I have many complaints (laughing) but I don't think I can live without her. (laughing) That is, to tell the truth, what I really feel. (laughing) Since I came to Tassajara I learned a kind of proverb ...hen-pecked. It is a very interesting word...hen-pecked husband.

(Covering his head with his hands and imitating a man who is pecked by a hen). There is no time to raise his head. Always pecked by hen. Still he needs hen. He feel as if it is impossible to live with her; maybe better to get divorced from her. He may think in that way. But sometime he may think, "Oh, but I cannot live without her; so I cannot live with her nor can I live without her. With her, no; without her, no. What should we do? That is the actual problem we have in the relative world of Brightness. When lamp is bright I can see myself and wife. When there is no lamp there is no problem. But we don't think about Utter Darkness of the room. We always suffer from the life which we can see by our eyes, or which we can hear with our ears. That is what we are doing. So in this world of brightness it is difficult to live without things. Of course difficult. Impossible. With things it is also difficult. That is the problem we have. What shall we do? With things it is too much. Without things we have no purpose of living in this world. In this way we have many problems. But if you have even the slightest idea of Utter Darkness, which is the other side of Brightness, then you will find out the way how to live in the Brightness of the world. In Brightness of the world you will see something good and something bad, and man and woman, or something right and something wrong. In this world of differentiation things exist in different form and color. At the same time, in this world of various forms and colors we can find equality on everything.

Only chance for us to be equal is to be aware of, or to realize our own form and color, and to respect our own form and color. Only when you respect yourself as a man, or as a woman, as a learned person or as an ignorant person, then each one of us has equal value. This is the only way to be equal. Equality looks like it means to share something equally with everyone. But we don't think that is possible. Actually that is a kind of dream. You cannot share things equally. Even though we share things equally (for instance if we share our food equally) someone may like it and someone may not like it. It is impossible to share things equally. And to have the same right or responsibility or duty, or commitment is not possible.

But only when we realize our own capacity, our own physical strength, or nature of man and woman, and respect our nature or characteristic, then each one of us will 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. But if water want to be a cup that is not possible, and it is true with cup. Cup cannot be water. Cup should be a cup and water should be water. So when water is in cup, water serve its own purpose and cup will serve its own purpose. Then cup-without water means nothing. Water without cup means nothing to us. When water is water and cup is cup, and cup and water take some activity or relationship with each other, or interdependency, (become interdependent) then water will have its own value and cup will have its own value. In this case we say cup and water is equal.

Freedom: If you think freedom is just to ignore rules and to act as you want, without thinking anything, that is maybe freedom, you may say. But that kind of freedom does not actually exist. That is a kind of dream. We say that kind of dream is delusion. Something which does not actually exist. Sometimes we care for it, but actually it doesn't exist. So we shouldn't be involved in vain effort to try to catch cloud. You cannot catch a cloud. So how to get out of the difficulty is to have good understanding of ourselves, and to know what we are doing, and to know what is possible, and what is not possible. And we should be very realistic or else whatever you do will not work. If you enjoy your daydreams that is another matter. Some times it is good to think something which is impossible, dreaming about something which is wonderful. That is good, because purpose of daydream is just to enjoy it like a movie. And you feel as if you became a movie star. That is good, but that cannot be our final goal of life. So we should know what is delusion and what is reality, and when we are sincerely involved in good practice we should not dream of something which is impossible. We should work on something which is something possible to realize. So another side of differentiation is

equality. Because things are different there is equality, things are equal. When you understand equality of man and woman in its true sense, you have no more problem. "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 feel that she is important because she is in that way, because she is taking care of you (sometime it may be too much, but that is her nature). And nature of man is something different from that. He is usually more idealistic and thinking about something which looks like it is almost impossible (not so realistic). And he is trying to go on and on without thinking about what will happen to him if he does it. So wife may say, "Oh, don't do that. It is too soon. Wait. Wait." If she say so you think, "Oh, I must do it right away." You will feel in that way. So you will say, "I cannot live with her." (laughing) That is her nature. So careless, hasty man want careful, more conservative woman. So sometimes she may be very angry with her husband. But that is also her nature. Because of her nature it is important. So you may say, "I cannot live without her." But when you say, "I cannot live with her" something is missing in your understanding. "I cannot live without her" is right.

The other day I said the Chinese character of man is like this: (demonstrating with his fingers in the air). Two lines supporting each other. Man and woman may be one. Teacher and disciple may be another. If there is no teacher there is no disciple (demonstrating how one finger falls down when the supporting finger is removed). If there is no disciple there is no teacher. So when teacher and disciple exist like this: (supporting each other) then there is monastery. Everything exist in that way. That is our understanding. So that we cannot exist without her or without it, is right. And many difficulties will be created when you lack this kind of true understanding of the meaning of the other side of each event or fact or thing. Another side of good will be bad. The other side of bad will be good. That is reality. So the other side of the Darkness is Brightness. You may say this room is dark but it is brighter than basement where there is no light. And even basement is brighter than the hall of a morgue.

So you cannot say bright or dark, actually. Bright or dark is only in your mind. There is no bright or no dark in reality. But sometimes we have to have some standard, or some rules, or some means of communication, so we say good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable, but those are just words. We should not be caught by words. We shouldn't stick to words. But usually we stick to words. When your girl friend says, "I don't like you!" you may take her words literally. But she didn't mean so. Maybe opposite. Because she likes you so much sometimes she feels "I hate you." But it is not actually so. So if you stick to words without observing things from both sides you will not know what to do about things.

Excuse me but our eyes unfortunately open towards outside. So we cannot see inside of ourselves. It means that we are liable to be concerned about some others practice or some others life and you will be very critical with others. And even though you start to think about what kind of practice you should have (which way you should take) but still, in that way you cannot find out your own way, because still your eyes and your thinking is directed toward outside. When you say, "Which way should I take?" the way is there and I am here, and I is not realized. You don't know what is I, and what you think about, the way you should go (this way or that way) and you are completely ignorant about yourself. So you criticize yourself as you criticize others. That's terrible. So you cannot exist in this world because of your sharp criticism. It is easy to criticize others and also to criticize yourself, too. It is quite easy. But it may be a little bit difficult because you don't feel so good, but you will criticize yourself anyway and you suffer. That is what we are doing every day. Why you suffer is because something is missing in your understanding of what you are doing. ...

So Buddhists understand things which look like they exist outside yourself as actually existing inside of yourself. It is picture of yourself. "He is not good". When you say so you are criticizing someone within yourself. Nothing exists outside of yourself. This understanding is understanding of Big Mind which include everything. So things happen only within yourself.

It is activity of your life within yourself like your stomach digesting things. But by thinking mind you think, "Here is heart and here is tummy." (pointing) You understand in that way. And there is not much relationship (according to your understanding) between your tummy and your heart. So you think by big surgery or by operation you can cut off your tummy. You understand our physical activity in that way. But it is not actually so. It is closely related with each other. So if you make your tummy strong the heart will be also stronger. So it is not always necessary to have big operation on your heart. When we understand ourselves in that way things are closely related as our tummy and heart are closely related. So there is no need to say tummy or heart any more. So when you don't know what is going on in your physical body you are in complete health. And when you don't talk about he, or she, or me, then your life is pretty sound and good. How you obtain this kind of complete harmonious life within yourself is by practice. To talk about things is to arrange your food on your dish. Every morning my students arrange food beautifully on each dish. But fortunately, or unfortunately, if I eat or chew it, it is all mixed up in my mouth and I have just taste of food, no color, no beauty, or no sesame seed, or no brown rice in my mouth. So even more so when it reach to my tummy. I don't even know what it is when it is in my tummy. When things are in full activity there's no idea of good or bad, this or that. But it is good to see things in different dishes and in different way and in different color. It is good. So it is good to think about food, your life, or nature of man or woman. But even though you think about it it doesn't mean much unless you really have a taste of it (a taste of our life.) Unless you chew it up and mix it together and swallow it, it doesn't make much sense. So why we study this kind of thing (SANDOKAI) study Buddhist study like this, is just to arrange our food in different dishes and appreciate the color and form of it. But eventually we must eat it. If you eat it there is no such teaching whatsoever. No teacher or no disciple. No Buddha or no Christ, when we eat it, actually eat it. How to eat it is practice. Actual practice is how to eat things, or how to chew it up, or how to mix things together. And we are fortunate, even though we mix up together, we know how to analyze things in

various ways, to know what we have been doing. This is important, but this is actually shadow of your practice, not actual practice. So our practice will go on and on in this way arranging carefully and mixing together, and chewing it up, and analyzing our practice again to see what is going on (what am I doing?) In this way our practice goes on and on. Tomorrow we will arrange things and mix it, and chew it, and digest it, and again and again our practice will go on and on. So, at the end of SANDOKAI Sekito says, "If you go step by step there is not matter of 1000 mile stream of 1 mile stream. When you start to go on and on in this way, arranging things, mixing things and analyzing things (analyzing in bright light, mixing in dark room) our practice goes on and on endlessly. Then there is no Enlightenment or 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 of big river or high mountain. Because you create river for yourself, and you create mountain for yourself. But it doesn't exist. When you analyze, when you criticize yourself you think you are like that; you have some special concept, understanding of yourself in term of good or bad. But it is not actually so. But you create some difficulty for yourself. That is what we are doing.

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Question by David: Roshi, you said that zazen was darkness and lecture was bright and things are bright, and also you talked about RI being this and JI being that, but what I wanted to know was can you really separate them?

Roshi: No, it is not possible to separate them. That is good point. We are separating, tentatively, that which is not possible to separate. So it is like two side of a coin. This side is Brightness and the other side is Darkness. So I'm talking about this side (holding up book) (bright side) and by your practice you will see the other side (dark side). And you will see the whole picture of this book. So if you think, by your practice you will understand something which is completely different

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Missing

for now



from this side (bright side) that is big mistake.

David: Roshi, I wondered why you talked about one side and not the other. Is it impossible to speak about both sides together?

Roshi: Both sides together is not possible. Because if you talk about it, it is bright side. This side (dark side) is not possible to talk about. But I can talk about this side (bright side) because I have some experience or understanding of the other side (dark side). If I have no idea of this side (dark side) what I am talking about means nothing. It will be poison for you maybe. How beautiful I may describe it, ( ? side) it is poison actually. It is something which is quite different from other side. And which is not possible to mix, to put together. So something poisonous is something which does not agree with the other side. Poisonous teaching. Something poisonous looks very beautiful. But if the other side is ignored that teaching is opium or drug. It doesn't accord with the other side of life.

David: What is Teisho?

Roshi: Teisho is to give encouragement. A little bit different from lecture. Teisho is to give encouragement. Not just to talk about it but to give some suggestion. And to help people to have good understanding of our practice. It should not be dead words. The words must come from actual experience (Oh, I don't want to say actual experience of Enlightenment. This is a big word) actual experience of reality is Teisho. It should not be dead words. It should not be some words which we read in some book. That is the difference between Teisho and lecture. Strictly speaking, lecture is to give some knowledge. Most part of Teisho is to help people's actual practice and Enlightenment. So there is some difference between them. So actually we are pushing people towards real practice. That is Teisho. TE means to (offer?) (holding up book) "Here is something you must have as a Buddhist. Look!" is Teisho. So, without something real we cannot talk about it. If you read this book after memorizing it that is not Teisho. So, Teisho is something which comes out from inside, from bottom of heart. That is Teisho. So actually, because I must use words so I must follow logic and philosophical special technical term, but sometimes, ignoring those special terms we can directly speak about it. That is Teisho. Sometimes

it may not be word. (Hitting table with his staff) This is Teisho. Something to talk about which is not possible to talk about is Teisho.

Roovane: Your lecture on SANDOKAI is supposed to give us understanding, you say. (Roshi: Yes) Then you say you can't understand the bright side unless we understand the dark side, unless we have good zazen. (Roshi: Yes) Is lecture just skillful means?

Roshi: Why I say so is because you will stick to my words. So after giving you some lecture I take it from you. That is just intellectual thing. So you should forget what I said, but you should sense what is the real meaning of my words. Buddhists know that if we stick to words we will be enslaved by words, and we will know just a little part of it. So it is better, after suggesting something, it is better to cut off my finger. After pointing at something, if you are interested in something, it may be better to cut off my finger so that you will not be attached to this finger anymore. And then you will be interested in something which I pointed out. That is words. You explain how to cook something by book, but actually what you do is to cut vegetables and put salt in it and boil it. This is actually what you do. When you forget all about cook book you can be a good cook. As long as you are watching cook book, if you try to understand what is written it may take time. It is better to study by seeing someone who is actually doing it. That is best way. Teisho is something to give something directly. But usually your attitude of listening to it is to think about it, and whether it is good or bad, and wondering what he is speaking about, or wondering if it is acceptable to you or not. "And if it is good I will accept it, and if it is not good I will not accept it." That is extra. You don't need to be so careful. Just to listen to it is enough. You don't need to try to understand it either. If you don't understand it it is O.K. If you understand it it is better. That's all. So there should be no special intention of listening to it. Just to listen to it. That is how you listen to Teisho. It is different from studying something. But as you are very logical, your mind works very logically I have to follow some logic, that's all. Because you are logical I have to be logical. That's all. If you are not

logical I can say whatever I like. I can sing a song even.  
(laughter)

Roovans: Would you try that some time? Not singing a song, but being a little bit not logical?

Roshi: Yes, Do you think I am too logical?

Craig: I'd like to hear you sing a song.

Roshi: O.K. I wish I could do it.

David: Roshi, I've got a nice song. It goes "Nega wa ku wa...  
(David was the Kokyo and Roshi had run 20 minutes over his lecture time. Everyone joined Roshi in chanting).