

IX.

June 20, 1970

NOTE: This lecture covers the following lines of the SANDOKAI:
 MEICHU NI ATATTE AN ARI AN SO O MOTTE OKOTO NAKARE. ANCHU NI
 ATTATE MEI ARI, MEI SO O MOTTE MIRU KOTO NAKARE.

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Again I must talk about MEI and AN, "brightness" and "darkness". "Brightness" means relative, dualistic world of tongue and words, thinking world, or visible world in which we live. And "darkness" means Absolute World where there is no exchange value, or materialistic value, or spiritual value, even. It is the world our words do not reach, the world our thinking mind cannot reach. Beyond thinking there is a world; this is the world of Absolute, the opposite to the world or relative, dualistic world. And it is necessary for us, who live in realm of duality, to have good understanding of the Absolute, which may be the idea of diety or God, usually.

But in Buddhism we do not have any idea about diety, or about God, because the Absolute is the Absolute because it is beyond our understanding, or dualistic thinking. But we cannot deny this world of Absolute, or a kind of idea or diety. But as people may say, "Buddhism is atheism," maybe it is so, because we have no particular idea of God. We know there is, but we don't want to know what it is, because we know that the Absolute is the Absolute because our dualistic mind cannot reach it; and we know the limit of our thinking mind, or intellectuality. Buddhist understand the limits of the intellect so we do not say anything about the Absolute. That is what we mean by AN.

AN is "darkness" "Utter Darkness". MEI is "sun and moon"; the character MEI means "sun and moon". This word, a verb, ARI means "is". CHU means "within". At the same time it means "middle". ATTATE means "actually." MEICHU NI ATTATE, "actually within brightness". MEICHU NI ATTATE AN ARI, "within brightness there is darkness, Utter Darkness." The brightness means relative world. And within relative world there is Utter Darkness. This is literal translation. But it doesn't make sense.

Literal translation doesn't make sense. "Within relative world there is darkness." So we must understand the actual meaning of this character, ARI, "there is". When you say, "There is" (There is something on the table, or on the earth, or in Tassajara; there is something in Tassajara, or on something, or in something) in this case, this ARI is different character. ARI means flesh or skin, so already a part of it (not just there is something, but the way it exists) is closely related to something. So MEI and AN, "In brightness there is darkness." This is more dualistic understanding. But when we use this character, ARI, there is a closer relationship between darkness and brightness. Like I have my skin. "I have my skin," you may say. You may say, "I have my hand," but your hand is part of you. Your skin is part of you. So actually, it is not any more dualistic. Skin is you, yourself. Your hands are your hands. But you say (I don't know why) "I have two hands," but hands may feel very funny. "Oh, I am part of you, and you say you have two hands. What does it mean? Do you mean you have four hands, instead of me?" hands may say. So, if possible I think you must have another word for "have". Chinese people have two characters. When they say, "there is a stone or a book on the table," they use another character. And when we say, "We have two hands," we use this character, ARI. We say, "There is, actually, two hands." TE GA NI HUN ARIMASU. "In you there is two hands," we say. In that case the character we use is ARI.

So, it means a very close relationship between brightness and darkness. And actually, darkness itself is brightness. Dark or bright is within your mind. Because within your mind you have some standard, or degree, or measurement, how bright this room is. If it is unusually bright we say this room is bright. If it is unusually dark you say it is dark. But you can say, "This room is bright," and at the same time someone may say, "This room is very dark." Someone who came from San Francisco may say, "Oh, Tassajara is very dark." Someone, who came out of a cave may say, "This Tassajara is very bright, like a capital city. So bright or dark is within ourselves. Because we have some standard we say bright or dark, but actually

brightness is darkness and darkness is brightness. Even though we say, "Utter Darkness" it does not mean there is nothing in Utter Darkness. There are many things. But when you have bright light you will see many things, in term of Caucasian or Japanese, man and woman, stone or tree. This kind of thing exist in brightness. But when we say, "Utter Darkness," or "World of Absolute," which is beyond our thinking, you may think this is some world which is quite different from our actual human world, but this is also a mistake. If you understand Darkness in that way, that Darkness is not that which we mean by Darkness.

I think you are preparing some dishes for Ed's wedding. You may dish out various foods separately. This is dessert; this is salad, soup, in different dishes. That is brightness. But actually, when you eat, in your mouth, various food will be mixed up. There's no dessert, or no soup, or no bread. They are all mixed up in your tummy. At that time it works. When it is clearly dished out on the plate it is not yet working; it is not actually food. Food is brightness, and when it is in your tummy it is darkness. But even in darkness there is lettuce, and soup, and everything in your tummy. Same thing, but when it is changing its form it starts to work. So in Utter Darkness actually, things happen in their true sense. In brightness you feel good, and you feel as if you have big dish, but food is not serving its own purpose yet. That is brightness. So when you don't know what you are doing, actually, you are acting fully, with full mind. When you are thinking you have not yet started to work, you are not yet working on it. So actually when we start to work there is bright side and dark side. Both dark side and bright side is there. When you are actually practicing Buddhist way there is bright side and dark side. And relationship between darkness and brightness is the ARI relationship, like relationship between skin and our body. You cannot actually say, "This is skin and this is body."

AN SO O MOJTE OKOTO NAKARE. NAKARE means "not", "do not." MOJTE means "with"; AN SO "dark side" or "dark outlook." O means "to meet" or sometimes "to treat." "To meet and treat" someone like your friend. This character O "To meet," "to

encounter" means like a cloud meets a mountain. Here is mountain, Tassajara Mountain; here is a cloud. And the cloud from the ocean will meet the mountain. This kind of relationship is O. "With the understanding of darkness you should not meet with things. With the understanding of darkness you should not meet people." If you meet people with your eyes shut, ignoring all the characteristics of your friend, you should not meet your friend. It is because that is just one-sided understanding. Because in the darkness there is brightness. Even though you understand the intimate relationship between you and your friend, but friend is friend; you are you. It is maybe one, very close relationship, so maybe relationship will be one, like husband and wife. But husband is husband and wife is wife. That is real relationship. So don't meet your friend, without understanding of brightness of duality. Close relationship is dark because if your relationship is very close, one with him or her, very close, but you are you, and your friend is your friend. So you should not meet someone with the idea of darkness only. So you should not meet someone (someone is implied) with darkness. SO means "characteristic" or "outlook."

And this next sentence is: ANCHU NI ATATTE MEI ARI, MEI SO O MOTTE MIRU KOTO NAKARE. The third and fourth lines are opposite to the first and second lines. The third line repeats the same thing in a different way. "In the darkness there is brightness." Same thing. In the darkness, even when we are in intimate relationship, there is man and woman, which is brightness, duality or man and woman. So you should not see the other, see others with the eyes of brightness only. Because the other side of brightness is darkness. Darkness and brightness are two sides of one coin.

We are liable to be caught by preconceived ideas. If you experience something bad with somebody, "Oh he is a bad person. He is always mean to me." That is to say, he sees people with just brightness. "He is always mean." But it cannot be so. You should know why he is so mean to you. Because the relationship is so close, so intimate, relationship is more than relationship, of two persons. It is just one. So when he is angry, you will be angry. That's all. Because you are one. So when one is angry the other will be angry. So, when you understand in that way,

you understand the other side of the brightness which is darkness. "Oh, he is so angry with me because he is so close to me." If you understand in that way, even though you become angry you will not feel so bad. This is rather difficult. When you think, "He is bad," it is difficult for us to change the idea of, "he is bad," but it cannot be so. Sometime he was bad, but now we don't know whether he is good or bad. We should see. So we should not cling to the idea of darkness or brightness. We should not cling to the idea of equality or idea of diversity, or differentiation. But this is pretty difficult. It seems to be pretty difficult. Most people, once they have a grudge with someone, find it almost impossible to change their relationship. But if we are Buddhists, we should be able to switch our mind from bad to good, and from good to bad. If you are able to do so, bad does not mean bad; good does not mean good, anymore. But at the same time good is good, and bad is bad. Do you understand? In this way we should understand our relationship between us.

There is a poem: "The Mother of Blue Mountain and the Children of White Cloud. All day long they live together, and yet they do not know who is Mother and who are Children." The mountain is mountain and white cloud is white cloud, floating around the mountain like children. There is Blue Mountain, and there is white Cloud. There is, but they don't know, that they are white Cloud or Blue Mountain. Even though they don't know they know well, so well that they don't know.

That is the experience you will have in your zazen practice. You will hear insects and stream. Actually you hear it, but you are sitting and stream is running. You are sitting and stream is running, but actually you hear it. Even though you hear it, you have no idea of stream or no idea of zazen. You are just on the black cushion. You are just there, like a Blue Mountain, with White Cloud. This kind of relationship, is fully explained in these four lines: MEICHU NI ATTATE AN ARI, AN SO O MOTTE OKOTO NAKARE. ANCHU NI ATATTE MEI ARI, MEI SO O MOTTE MIRU KOTO NAKARE.

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