

70-07-13

MORNING EKO III

July 13, 1970

Tonight I want to explain the thrd Eko. The third sutra we chant every morning is the Sandokai. Originally we chant it in the Sodo where our Patriarchs are enshrined. According to Chinese books about rules of a Zen Monastery, the Patriarchs's building or hall is on the left hand side of the Hatto. There they enshrined their Buddha. And on the other side, the right hand side of the building, Bodhidharma and Kyakujo were enshrined. And on the other side of the building they enshrined their resident priest. According to the records, that was how they enshrined the Patriarchs. But in Japan, as it is difficult to have the complete set of buildings, in most temples we have Patriarchs in the Buddha Hall. In Eihei-ji we have a special building where we enshrine the Patriarchs, Bodhidharma and Dogen Zenji, and successive Patriarchs, or masters for that temple. And we observe a very formal service like a Memorial Service or Patriarchs Service, we observe that ceremony in that building, but usually we observe all the dedications in the Hatto, the main building, the center building.

In Buddhism, especially in Zen, we have a special feeling for our Patriarchs. According to our teaching, Buddha is someone who passed away more than 2500 years ago. But Buddha's spirit will last forever, as long as we have descendants of the Buddha, disciples of the Buddha, successive Patriarchs. So the actual Buddha is your teacher. This is our belief. And you will be the Buddha too. And strictly speaking, each one of us is Buddha. Buddha's spirit is the spirit which will last forever. Why Buddha's spirit is immortal is because his spirit is supported by everyone of us and everything. And his spirit is supported by everyone of us and everything. And his spirit is supported by every being, so Buddha's spirit is always with us, and with all beings. That is how Buddha's spirit is supported. So that is what actually is meant by Absolute spirit, Absolute Buddha. Once Buddha was Gotama Buddha, but year after year, when time changes, the next Buddha will appear, and incessantly, forever, Buddha's spirit will appear. When we realize this truth completely, each one of us becomes Buddha, in its true sense. Each one of us is Buddha objectively and subjectively when we acknowledge ourselves as a son of Buddha. How you can acknowledge yourself as a son of Buddha is through your teacher. We say we transmit our teaching from warm hand to warm hand, without any cessation, without any hindrance. To be completely one with your master is how to be a Buddha.

Buddha said once, according to the *Maha Parinirvana Sutra*: "You should rely on self light (light of self) and you should rely on the light of the Dharma." So we say, "*Hotomyo jitomyo*," "Lamp of self."

"*Hotomyo*" means "lamp of Dharma." It means Dharma in its wide sense, everything, various beings; and in its narrow sense, Buddha's teaching. Buddha's teaching, as I said before, is immortal because it is the manifestation of the real truth which exists with

everything, which is supported by everything, and at the same time, which is supporting everything. So everything is supported by the Dharma, and the Dharma is supporting everything. Dharma is everything and everything is Dharma. Dharma and teaching are one. That is our conviction, our faith, and it is actually so. That is why we transmit our lamp to others. You may say, if everyone has his own lamp there will be no need to transmit a lamp to others, but even though you have it, if you don't feel you have it, it doesn't make sense. How you get the feeling of having the Dharma lamp within yourself is through your teacher. So transmission of the Dharma means to find your own lamp through your teacher. That is transmission. "*Ju*" is to "give transmission," sometimes to "receive transmission." "*Ju*" or "receive." This is a hand. To accept something is "*Ju*," and to offer something is also "*Ju*" equals "*Kaku*." "*Kaku*" means "enlightenment" or "realization." "To realize that it is so" is "*Kaku*." So how you receive transmission from your teacher is to realize your own true nature, your own lamp through your teacher. Even though you read Buddha's saying 1,000 times, Buddha has already passed away. He is not there. You may say his spirit is here, but we do not believe in some spirit like a jewel, a burning fire, or a floating desire, floating in the air. We do not believe in Buddha's soul in that way. Buddha is always with us. That we realize our true nature is to realize Buddha's Nature. So when you realize Buddha Nature, that is the true evidence of the Buddha's presence, when you realize that Buddha is here. When you don't realize Buddha Nature there is no Buddha for you. Even though he is here, if you don't realize it, it doesn't make any sense.

This evening I had a treat of Japanese noodles with our guests. A noodle is something which is supposed to be long. But my lecture is supposed to be short. If a noodle is a very good noodle it is long, and if it is not so good it is very short. So I think my lecture is not so good, so it should be short. It is not possible for a bad noodle to be long. So my lecture for tonight will be very short, especially after having a good dinner of noodles which were very long. But our transmission should be very long, a very long, long one. And our transmission is a special noodle. Dogen Zenji says, "When you realize Buddha Nature, you are the teacher." You are the teacher of your master too, and you will be even the teacher of Shakyamuni Buddha. When you attained enlightenment Shakyamuni Buddha could be your disciple. And it is very true. So our noodle has no end. Our noodle is a circle, so it is difficult to eat. If a noodle is very good, when you eat it, when you sip it (demonstrating sucking in a noodle) like this, even though the end of the noodle is in your tummy the other end should be here (on the plate)--if it is a good noodle. But Buddha's noodle has no end. So there is no way to eat it. You cannot see it, and you cannot eat it. The only way to eat that noodle is to become the noodle. That is the only way. When you become the noodle you don't know which is the end and which is the beginning. That is the Soto Zen noodle, a special noodle for us.

So here we dedicate the *Sandokai* for our teachers. And after reciting the sutra we have a kind of invocation to recite the names of the Patriarchs from Shakyamuni Buddha to us. I am supposed to be the 89th generation from Buddha, if Bodhidharma is actually the 28th Patriarch from Buddha. Historically we don't know for sure. We have no accurate record, but it is supposed to be so. And Dogen Zenji is the 51st Patriarch

from Buddha. Nyojo Zenji is the 50th. And after Dogen Zenji, in my lineage, I am 38th, if, as I said, Bodhidharma was the 28th Patriarch. But after Bodhidharma our lineage is very clear.

So the center of the third dedication is actually the most important dedication for each one of us. The first one is for Buddha. As we are one of the schools of Zen, so-called Soto Zen, and as a school of Buddhism, we have an object of worship which is Buddha; and Buddha and Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji are also honored in Japanese Soto temples. But here, as I said before, we recite the sutra first of all for Buddha, and then for Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of China, and for Dogen Zenji, the first Patriarch of China, and for Dogen Zenji, the first Patriarch of Japan. That is who we recite the first sutra for, as a most formal dedication. The next one is for the arhats and Buddha's disciples, who are the arhats in primitive Buddha's age, original Buddha's time. But the third sutra is directly related to us. Actually each one of us is having a dedication for ourselves, and the third one is, I think, the most important dedication for each one of us. What we say is quite simple. "With the merit of reciting the *Sandokai* we dedicate to our Patriarchs" and then we recite the names of the Patriarchs. That is what we do.

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Here I have some reference to this lecture. Dōgen Zenji said, in his Shōbōgenzō, fascicle of Patrarchs, "When I waited for my teacher Tendo Nyojō, old Buddha, Daishō, I could bow to those Patrarchs..." Those Patrarchs were, Dōgen says, before Buddha in India until Bodhidharma, we have 28, and in China 22, and until Tendo Nyojō, his teacher). "I waited for my teacher and I could bow to those teachers." It means that Buddha is bowing to Buddha and each Patriarch is Buddha. "YUI-BUTSU YOBUTSU". These are four characters, but if you explain it, it is very difficult to explain. "Only Buddhas and only Buddha." "YOBUTSU" means "with Buddha". Only Buddha and with Buddha. It means that you are Buddha and I am Buddha. When you are Buddha I am not Buddha. When I am Buddha you are not Buddha. So each one of us is Buddha. So you can say, "You and I are Buddha." And sometimes you can say, "I am only Buddha." So he says, "YUIBUTSU YOBUTSU". This is his technical term. "YUIBUTSU", "only Buddha", "I am only Buddha" is not perfect. Sometimes when I am Buddha you are not Buddha, but we are, the two of us, Buddha. Do you understand?

It is difficult for you to understand the idea of transmission. Why it is difficult is that when you say transmission you think as if you have something to transmit. It is some traditional way of observing things or traditional understanding of Buddhism

or something. You understand in that way. So there must be something to transmit. "But I don't want that kind of old tradition." That is what you may say. Because when we say transmission you think there is something to transmit, and your teacher is someone who transmits something to you. So if you receive transmission you should completely obey your teacher. So you should do things exactly as your teacher did. You will have that kind of idea. So that is why it is difficult to accept transmission. But between teacher and disciple, if a disciple receives transmission, he is a teacher, not me. But sometimes I may be a teacher. When a disciple bows to me I am a voluntary teacher. Even though the two of us are different people, both with different characters, with different ways, you can express Buddha's way. And when you express Buddha's way in your own way, then your way includes everything, including your teacher, and it is not possible to compare it with some other way. This is to have a vivid and refreshed way of expression of our true way. So the disciples way cannot be exactly like the teacher's way, but there must be some similarity. But even though they are similar, actually what they will do is quite different. Teacher and disciples usually speak the same language. I don't mean Japanese or English language. By language I mean... (hitting the table). This kind of language. "No!" This kind of language. We should be able to understand each other in that way. That

is "ROKU JINTSŪ", "the six supernatural powers of the ARHATS." They understand completely. They understand something which is beyond words. They understand something which is told by Japanese or English and more than that. That kind of relationship should be between teacher and disciple. Even though disciples are living apart from their teacher there must be that kind of communication, or else they are not teacher and disciple. How that is possible is because of our true practice, through our true practice, zazen practice.

Generally speaking, actually before you become your teacher's disciple you may receive his transmission, and after receiving transmission you will realize what was transmission, and who was your teacher. "Oh, he was my teacher." You will realize it when it is too late. Maybe. But you will come to that point if you continue your practice. So there's no need to worry, even if you receive transmission, or lay ordination before you know what it was, even though you are ordained before you have much understanding of the ordination ceremony, that is O.K. I think. If you feel some commitment to continue your practice that is O.K. Some day you will realize it.

From the beginning I thought Gyokujun Soon was my teacher. But, on the other hand, I found out, many years later, that I was not his disciple at that time. I thought I was. I had a strong conviction of my being the disciple of my teacher, but I found out that I was not his disciple in it's true sense.

Now I think I am his disciple, but I don't know how I will feel next year. Next year I may say, "Oh, last year I was his disciple." In this way your teacher is always with you. Sometimes he is with you, but sometimes you feel he is not your teacher, or he was not your teacher. And sometimes he will not be your teacher. But it is O.K. Anyway you will be his teacher. Day after day we have a strong conviction in our relationship, but that is not complete. Our relationship should be extended forever. So anyway, you are bound to be your master's disciple. But it does not mean you should stick to the idea of relationship between teacher and disciple. Whether you stick to it or not the relationship is there. Buddha is taking care of it whether you understand it or not. The relationship between the teacher and the disciple is so wide and so deep that our small mind cannot understand what it is. There's no other way to understand the relationship between teacher and disciple.

So the only way is, day by day, you should bow to him. That is the only way. It is day to day practice. And it is practice just for that moment. Even though you don't bow to him you are related to him anyway. So if you don't, you don't feel good. If you do, you feel good; that's all. It is not so difficult to bow to him, so it is better to bow to him even though you don't know who he is. Perhaps you may not understand what I am saying right now, but actually, if you

have someone who you can trust you will feel good, and if you have someone who entrusts your responsibility you feel good. In that way we can live forever; we will have eternal life, entrusting our responsibility, sharing our responsibility with many people. That is the relationship between the teacher and the disciple. And that is why we recite the sutra for our teacher every morning. Thank you very much.