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June 25, 1970 (6-25-70)

NOTE: This lecture covers the following lines of the SANDOKAI:
 MEI AN ONO ONG AITAI SHITE, HI SURU NI ZENGO NO AYU MI NO GOTO SHI.

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We are still talking about the reality from the light of dependency. Even though we are discussing about independency we always refer to the dependency, interdependency. So you may feel as if we are always talking about the same thing. But, actually, it is not so. We are talking about independency now, not dependency. "Dependency and independency" we say, but it is actually two sides of one coin. People say, "Japanese people are very tough." People may say this, but that is just one side of Japanese people. The other side is softness. They are very kind. Some people, who visited Japan, may say, "Japanese people are very kind." But some people may say, "Japanese people are very tough." But for a long time, because of the Buddhist training they are that way.

We have a Japanese children's song that describes a hero called Momotaro, "Peach Boy." Do you know Momotaro? There was an old couple who lived near the riverside. One day the old mother picked up a peach from the stream and came back to her home. And from the peach Momotaro came out. He was very strong but very gentle, very kind and gentle, but he was very strong. Japanese children sing a song: "Kiwa yashikute chi karamochi..." "He was very kind, but he was very strong..." That was Momotaro. Not only was he strong, but he was very kind. It is the Japanese idealistic character. What do you call it? You must have some expression for it.

STUDENT: You'd call him a man you could ride the river with.

ROSHI: (laughing) No.

STUDENT: Folk hero.

ROSHI: Folk hero. Yes. Folk hero. Without soft mind you cannot be really strong. Why he is so strong is that he has a soft mind. If he does not have the other side of the character he cannot be really strong. Because he is very sympathetic with someone, sometime (because of his sympathy to help someone) he

will be very strong. But a strong person who is strong just for himself is not so strong. A strong person who, on the other hand, is very kind will support people, and could really be a folk hero. Just to be strong is not really to be strong. When we have both soft side and strong side we can be really strong.

And it is easy to fight and win, maybe, but it is not so easy to endure when you are defeated, without crying. Let your enemy (not enemy) let your foe beat you. O.K.? That is very difficult. Unless you can endure the bitterness of the defeat you cannot be really strong. So to be strong means to be gentle, and kind and weak, maybe. If you are ready to be weak you are very strong. We say "Willow tree cannot be broken by snow." "Yanagini uki orenashi." UKI is "snow flake." ORI is "break." The weight of the snow will break, maybe, some strong tree, but even though the weight of the snow will bend, will twist the branch, (even heavy snow like we had the year before last year) cannot break the Willow branch. "Yanagini uki orenashi." Bamboo bends quite easily. It looks quite weak, but no snow can break it. This is always true.

(Reading) MEI and AN, darkness and brightness are opposite. MEI is "brightness;" AN is "darkness," "absolute" and "relative." They are a pair of opposites: MEI and AN, "brightness" and "darkness." TAI SHITE means "to face each other" or "to be a pair" or "to face with each other." AI means "with each other." AITAI means "to face with each other" or "stand with each other." AI means "each other" and TAI means "stand." ONO ONO means "each other." AI also means "each other." TAI SHITE means "to stand against." Something like that.

HI SURU NI means "like." SURU NI means "to compare metaphorically." GOTO SHI is also "like." (Reading) "This is like the foot forward and backward, forward and behind." ZEN means "forward." GO means "behind." "Foot forward and behind." This is in walking. This is a very good parable, a very good way of explaining oneness, or actual function of the two pairs of opposites. This is actually explaining our practice, how we apply the pair of opposite ideas in our everyday life. Like zazen and enlightenment, reality and ideas, good and bad, and strong and weak. When people feel they are strong they don't want to be weak. People who think they are weak never try to

be strong. That is quite usual. "I am very weak." He remains always weak, and he cannot be strong. And for the people who think they are strong, it is difficult for them to be weak. But sometimes we should be strong and sometimes we should be weak. If you remain always weak, or if you always want to be strong, then you cannot be strong in its true sense.

When you learn something you should be able to teach people. You should put in the same effort to teach something. And if you want to teach you should be humble enough to learn something. Then you can teach them. Just because you know something, if you try to teach something to others, you cannot teach anything. When you are ready to be taught by someone, if necessary, then you can teach people in its true sense. So to learn is to teach. And to teach is to learn. If you think you are always student you cannot learn anything. Why you learn is because you have to teach others after you learn something. So to observe some morality (actually there is no actual moral code or moral standard) but how you find out the actual moral code is when you think of how to teach someone. Then you will find out some moral code for yourself. So moral code is for others, and when you find out some moral code for others you will have actual moral code for yourself.

After the war Japan was defeated, completely. They absolutely surrendered. But before Japan was completely defeated they thought Japanese people had some teaching or moral code which they should observe, and they thought if they only observed that kind of moral code they would not make any mistakes. And they thought their moral code was absolutely right and straight. They thought in that way. But that moral code, unfortunately, was something which was written up, or set up in the first part of the Meiji period. So after losing the war, after they lost the confidence in their morality, they didn't know what to do or what kind of morals they should observe. They didn't know what to do. But it was not so. Actually it shouldn't be so difficult to find out the moral code. I always told the people who came to me the the problem of morality, "You have your children. If you think of your children then you will naturally know the moral code for yourself." When you think

moral code is just for yourself, that is one-sided understanding. Moral code is rather for others, to help others. And naturally the moral code you find out to help others or how to be kind to others will be also for yourself.

So we say, "To go heading to the east 100 miles is to go heading to the west 100 miles." When the moon is high the moon in the water will be low. But usually people will observe the moon above the water and they do not see the moon in the water. So when you see the moon deep into the water you should know that this moon is very high. That moon is deep means that moon is high. We should have this kind of understanding. So the moon in the water is independent, but also the moon high over the water is also independent. But the moon over the water is the moon in the water, too. We should understand in that way. So the moon in the water is independent, and the moon over the water is also independent. 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 be just kind, but it does not mean you are not strong.

So, ladies are physically weak. Because ladies are physically weak, they are strong, sometimes. They are stronger than boys. That is true. Actually we don't know who is stronger. When they are completely independent, when they have completely independent nature, which is their own, they have the same strength, equal strength with everyone, absolutely equal strength with everyone. When you are comparing which is stronger, A or B, I or he, then you don't have real strength. When you are completely independent, completely independent with your nature, then it means that you are absolute power in a relative situation. So in the relative situation, man and woman in relative nature, there is absolute power. Do you understand? When women are involved in competition with men they are not so strong. When women become completely women they have absolute power. Do you understand this point?

So brightness and darkness, although they are a pair of opposites, at the same time, they have equality. For instance, like a step forward and backward (not backwards) forward and back. This is a very good parable to explain it. Do you understand this point? Absolute and relative are like a step before

and back. Step before and back. When you walk the step forward immediately becomes the step behind. Then is this step, your right foot, the step before or the step behind? Which is it? We say "brightness and darkness" but which is brightness and which is darkness? It is difficult to tell. (Reading from Blyth's translation): "Like the foot before and the foot behind in walking." Foot before and foot behind. But when you are actually walking there's no step behind, or no foot before. If you stop walking and think...(laughing) right foot sometime may be foot before and left foot may be foot behind. And it means, at the same time, (when you are walking) that in actual practice, when you are actually practicing our way, there is no foot before and no foot behind. But if you think about it, there is foot behind and foot before.

So when you think, there is brightness and darkness. But when you actually practice our way, or when actually your foot is walking, there is no brightness or no darkness, or no foot before or no foot behind. And if I say so, you may think it is not necessary to think about zazen, and you should just sit. If you say so you are also caught by the idea that the right is foot before, and the left foot is foot behind. Then you cannot walk anymore. If you forget all about left foot or right foot you can walk. Actually when you are walking you have no idea of left foot or right foot. If you are aware of right foot and left foot you cannot walk, you cannot run.

As I said, if you chew your food there is no rice, or no pickle, or no soup, if you chew it up and if you mix it. And when you mix it in your mouth it will be digested and in your tummy. And then the food will serve its own purpose. Even so we should dish out one thing after another. And dessert should come last. There's some order. Even though there is some order you should chew it and you should mix it, or else food does not serve its own purpose. It is necessary to think about it, to make a recipe, but it is also necessary to mix everything up, and chew it up.

MEI AN CNO AITAI SHITE, HI SURU NI ZENGO NO AYU MI NO GOTO SHI. This is a very good interpretation of the reality, and a good explanation of our practice, a good suggestion of how we practice our way, and what kind of activity is going on

in our everyday life. With this line, the interpretation of reality from the light of independency is finished.

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Mel: Roshi, when you say, "independency" I'm a little confused whether you mean "independent" or "interdependency."

Roshi: Independency. Interdependency is more dependency.

Mel: Independent?

Roshi: Independent. Idea of independency and dependency.

Alan: Roshi, in English we have no word "independency." We have the word "independent" and "independence."

Roshi: Dh, indspendent! Excuse me. Independence means....

(laughing) to me it does not fit so well. "Independence may be a noun, but what I mean is a noun but maybe the same thing.

Student: We have a noun "dependency" so we can have "independency." We have the other. "Dependency" is a good English word.

Roshi: And you have no "in....."

Student: ...no "independency" (laughing)

Another Student: Now we have "independency!" (laughter)

Student: We have just one foot.

Roshi: "Independent" is so strong, so there's no need to have so delicate a word. If you are independent (striking the table with his pointer) you don't care about anything. (laughing)

Shut up! (striking the table) That is not what we mean. So when you are "independent" you are in a very vulneracle and weak situation, a dangerous situation.

Student: Isn't this idea people get of their own independence a delusion?

Roshi: Delusion, yes, actually. When you think, "I am indepencent" it is not true. You are dependent on everything.

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