

Thirteen Rules for Disciplinants: #2

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Good evening everyone. Tonight we have the second of the Thirteen Rules for Disciplinants, or Instructors, provided to us by Koichi Tohei Sensei. Once again, someone translated this originally, which translation we are all familiar with as we look at them in the Training Manual and other places you might find them. And then Sayaka translated this directly from the Japanese, pretty much verbatim, word for word, so that always gives us a little more insight into what Tohei Sensei might have meant, because of course, when you translate something you may tend to add your own interpretation or understanding. The word usage you select is how you see what he is saying. So whoever did this original translation, as usual, it's his or her character that is in there also, not just Tohei Sensei's. But at least it is poetic, so it is nice.

I'll read the official translation:

As nature loves and protects all creation and helps all things grow and develop, so we must teach every student with sincerity and without discrimination or partiality.

OK, Sayaka, would you read it in Japanese please? (*Sayaka reads*)

I heard you say "kokoro" a couple of times. Doesn't that mean both "heart" and "mind?"

Sayaka: Yes, mind.

He says, "because nature loves and protects all creation." Let me read the full translation from Sayaka:

Have a universal mind as your own mind that loves and protects all creation and nurtures all things to grow. When you teach, you should approach all people sincerely, without favoritism or discrimination.

So, I take it that when you read the word "kokoro," and you said it twice, you are talking about ...well you say it twice, "have a universal mind as your own mind." Say that in Japanese.

Sayaka: Ten chi no kokoro mote waga kokoro toshi.

"Ten chi" "kokoro" I am asking because this person that translated it originally just said, "as nature loves and protects all creation." How does nature love and protect all creation? Do you notice that nature loves and protects all creation?

Student: No, it doesn't seem like it.

Student: He's talking about the goodness of true nature.

What, what, what? Wait, record this. "The basic goodness of true nature?"

Student: Yes, the basic goodness of true nature loves and protects all things.

Nature is good?

Student: That could be the universal mind that he is speaking of.

Surely you don't mean in the way that humans use the word "good?"

Student: No, that's not true nature. That's a distortion.

But why do we use the word "good" to refer to it then? I mean, every human who hears that thinks you mean good as opposed to bad.

Student: No, basic goodness. It's beyond good or bad.

OK. Could you explain that a little bit for me? What the heck is "basic goodness?"

Student: Universal mind. The expression of universal mind.

In other words, you are saying that the universe is basically good. That sounds pretty "Christian" to me.

Student: No, I'm not looking at it in a dualistic way.

Yes, but that's what words are, dualistic.

Student: The Tibetans also describe "rigpa" as basic goodness or universal mind.

Well, yes, so maybe I shouldn't have said "Christian." It sounds "religious" is what I meant. When we say, "as nature loves and protects all creation," from a human perspective, nature is totally indifferent, which is treating everyone with the same amount of favoritism, or lack thereof, or discrimination. That's the wonderful thing about the universe, is that it just doesn't have an agenda.

Student: Does it not want to optimize itself?

Well, I don't know. It hasn't told me that part. I just notice, when I watch, that it has no discrimination whatsoever. It has no favoritism. It doesn't prefer certain things, certain people, certain races, certain parts of itself over other parts of itself. It's just this process that's constantly going on and constantly changing.

We, on the other hand, as humans, because this universe is so vast and so inexplicable in its infinity of causation, there is no way, here at this moment, that any of us can possibly know how it came about or what's going to happen next. But we want to know. And as I see the universe, or universal mind, and as I experience that, once I am experiencing that, I am free from wanting to know. And to me, this is something to be infinitely grateful for. Of course, we say "grateful to be alive" because whenever you are alive there is still a chance that you can have this experience of non-duality, of no conflict, of no preference or no aversion. Nothing is either good or bad. It's just exactly the way it is and that's all.

We like to say things, particularly when we make a big brouhaha about it and call it a religion, you know, making a big deal out of it, but probably all we are trying to do is express this gratitude. Maybe the founder of any particular religion, whoever it was, had

this experience I am talking about and wanted to express that gratitude in some way for the people who weren't having that experience. So he said, "It's like an infinite goodness," or "it's like a fundamental goodness," because, in some sense, it feels very full and satisfying and complete with nothing missing. But it's also terrifying to the small self, to the part of us that does have preference, because when we get to know it we see that we have absolutely no choice in what happens. Our only choice is that we can pay attention to it and be awake to it, or not.

And "be awake" to what? I am always saying that you have to be noticing all the time. That's what our practice is, to be noticing. Noticing what? Noticing that everything we think, everything we do, everything we say, is either a preference, or an aversion, or some kind of indifference, and those all are part of us. We have to embrace them. They are us. There is nothing wrong with it, but they are all a built-up, conditioned phenomenon to which we have an emotional response. The stronger the emotional response is, the deeper seated the conditioning is. The more we cling to it, whether it's fear or desire, the deeper the conditioning is.

We can't make it go away, and we don't want to make it go away. It's the spice of life. It's what makes life wonderful, enjoying whatever it is you enjoy, deeply. And knowing enough to get the hell out of there and get inside when a hurricane is starting so you don't get blown away. So that's also wonderful that we have been conditioned in this way, so that we can survive and enjoy our lives.

But it is very important that we notice that it is conditioning, that we don't fool ourselves into thinking that we have somehow rationally come up with this, these choices that we make. We do, don't we? Everybody does. "Well, that's the way I see things." "That's my opinion." No, that's not your opinion. I mean, it is your opinion, but it just happens to be there because it was placed there through time after time, repetitive lessons that led you to have that response to that kind of situation.

So we are not here to accentuate one side or the other, or get rid of one side or the other, but just to observe and notice it. And that's how the universe, or as the person translated this to mean, "nature," that's how the universe loves and protects all creation without partiality, without discrimination, without favoritism, because those are only human traits. Those are only things that we do when we are reacting to our conditioning. Like some teachers like to have students that are all young and strong, and some teachers only want to have male students, and maybe some teachers only want to have female students, some teachers want to have old students, more spiritual students, or people that claim to be spiritual, whatever that means. Other people want to have only white students, while others only want to have Japanese students. So teachers can have all of these conditionings.

So if you are a teacher according to the universe, then you are free of those things. But you are not free because you think they are wrong. You are free because you are one with the universe, and that universe is completely inclusive, by definition. It includes everything. It's not that it "should" be this way. It just is. And once again, when we read this we want to be careful. These can very easily be taken as thirteen "shoulds,"

“thirteen ways that you should be.” No. This is “thirteen ways that you will be” or “are” if you are experiencing everything as the universe.

Any questions, comments, contention, conditioned responses?

Student: Sensei, there is something I wanted to add. You were saying “heart” and “mind” for “kokoro.” That’s how we, at the temple, interpret kokoro, as heart and mind. I just wanted to add that.

Oh yes. Thank you. Yes, that’s what I hear. When I ask someone to translate this for me, they always tell me it means both heart and mind, not one or the other.

Student: Shin is also mind. In Chinese “shin” is heart/mind.

Ok, so tell me, why do you say that? What does that tell us? What does that add to our discussion? What do we know from that, when we say “heart/mind?” You know, it says here at first that there is universal heart/mind or universal kokoro, and your own personal kokoro. That’s what it says here in Japanese. So when you say “heart/mind” are you talking about something that you have, privately, of your own, or are you talking about a universal heart/mind. Like, when Shinichi Sensei talks about ...when he is describing the difference between mind and Ki, he said the mind is something that you have your own preference in. It’s your own personal opinion of things. It’s your own personal thing that you use. Whereas Ki is everywhere and everybody’s. It’s not personal. And I thought that was an interesting way to think of it. I know what he means, what he is trying to say there.

So what I am asking you is, when Tohei Sensei says universal kokoro, according to her translation, he is basically saying that you should have a universal kokoro, as your own kokoro. Your own kokoro should be the universal kokoro. So when you say this, what do you mean? Personal or universal? Your own, or

Student: Well, when you say your own kokoro, that’s your own kokoro. But when you say universal kokoro you are thinking about almost like a good nature kokoro.

A good nature kokoro? There’s that word “good nature” again.

Student: I mean....

Student: Buddha nature.

Student: Yeah!

Student: So when Tohei Sensei is talking about your personal verses universal, what comes to mind for me is what you always explain to us as the difference between shoga and taiga. Is there a parallel there? Is it the same?

Sure. That’s how Tohei Sensei expressed it in his terms. The way he saw it was that there is a dual world, which he called shoga, in which there is conflict. There is right and wrong, good and bad, everyone is constantly picking a side, and so conflict is a part of the shoga world. The shoga world is also the world in which we have some small

measure of control, in terms of our own love and protection for all things, our own small, personal effort to protect the people we love and support them and help them grow and develop. Our children, our spouses, our friends, and as a teacher then you students, and as a student your teacher. But that's shoga. All form of self-development is shoga and is completely self-oriented, not universal.

But underneath and behind and including this, is a much bigger reality called universal mind or universal kokoro, or Taiga. And when we Keep One Point, we are transitioning from only seeing and experiencing the conflict-ridden shoga world, to including that which cannot be defined but gives life to this relativistic, conflict-ridden existence. And Tohei Sensei always made the point that it is very important to understand that shoga is a part of Taiga, but Taiga is not a part of shoga. You can experience shoga and keiko, self-development through out your life, and never have a clue that there is taiga, or that there is anything more than shoga. Most people live and die and have no clue that there is anything other than this relative world. That's it. We're tied to that.

But Tohei Sensei is saying, no, there is something much, much bigger. It's like the iceberg in the ocean where you see only this little tip and that looks like the whole iceberg. But that is relatively tiny compared to what is hanging under the ocean beneath. You've seen this picture so many times.

So even though shoga gets its existence from taiga, it's not necessarily self-evident. Whereas once you realize the enormity of taiga, and that shoga is just a tiny little expression of taiga sticking out of the top of the ocean, that changes everything. It changes the way you experience everything. And, in the way that I was saying earlier, it gives us a very deep sense of gratitude without having to believe in anything. There is no belief involved, none whatsoever. It's experiencing this as it is, not separate from something divine or special or good. And only when we see that, at least in my experience, only when I am seeing it that way, experiencing it that way, then I don't mind anything. Everything is fine. I don't have a preference. I don't have any demands to make on life.

Student: When I experience that inseparability I could even include Donald Trump. There was nothing that could be excluded from it.

Well you have to, don't you? You have no choice. That's like, "That's the worst thing, but still I can accept it."

Student: Because there was no position there, and he is a part of that. And my hatred is no longer there. But that surprised me, because on the personality level...

Well, it is so arrogant of us, isn't it, to have a preference of how things ought to be, when they are the way they are and we can't do anything about that.

Student: OK, so I remember this coming up in Japan at Headquarters. So when I am teaching the kids and I say, "Push out your Ki," I always have to pause and think, no, I need to start saying it a different way, because it's not "your Ki." "Push out Ki." You know, we had that talk about it's already there, and it's not "your One Point." No, it is your One Point. (laughs)

Well, yes, that's such a good question there. You didn't quite ask it as a question, but... It is your One Point. It is your access point. But it's just important to recognize that it's not exclusively available to you. So I like to say, "There's only one One Point." Nobody has any exclusionary rights to it, no matter what kind of training you've done. Because, like I said, you can't know... when you see a student walk through the door for the first time, and they have never come here before, you can't know what their experiencing, what kind of training they have done, what kind of insights they have, what they are experiencing as the universe. So you can't even treat a brand new student differently than you teach your sixth dans. Until, of course, they speak to you. Sometimes when they speak to me, and I am bringing this up because of children, then I hear them, and I realize that I need to speak to this person in this certain way in order to take into account. Like with Sayaka, I was telling her as an example, "You are Japanese, and I have to take into account your cultural background and your particular peculiarities about the way you see things, not that they are peculiar, but peculiar to us, OK? I'm sure you feel the same way about us. And because English is your second language, then when I am speaking to you I speak, similarly to when I am speaking to Shinichi Sensei, more clearly, because I want to communicate to you. And I wouldn't have to do this with Lynn, for instance, because we have the same native language. And then there are all the other things that go into that.

So I think when you are speaking to a child it's fine to say "push out your Ki." On other occasions you can help them understand what you really mean by that, but in some sense you are saying "Make an effort to pay attention here. Be present. Be in yourself completely." And I know you say it to them in all those other ways too, so they know what you mean. And then maybe, for certain ones of them, at a certain time, it might be appropriate to say, "That's not really the right way for me to say that, but I do because it's to communicate a certain movement in you.

Student: When you translated the Four Principles, rather than "Extend Ki" it was "Ki is Extending." And, you know, that's a more developed understanding.

Well, yeah, I didn't actually translate it that way. Basically, Sayaka said that "Ki o dasu" means essentially "Extend Ki."

Sayaka: Ki o dasu is extending Ki.

Yeah, so, extending Ki. When I say these things about the Four Basic Principles, it's the English, forget the Japanese, because if you talk to Shinichi Sensei about that, Ki o dasu, he would say, "Yeah, it's not so good." Like a lot of Japanese words, he says it is very difficult because people misunderstand. They think they have to do something. So, since I am a teacher, I like to say those differently, like "Ki is extending," because it's more clear in the English language. It's more accurate for us, in English. So when we are doing these translations, that's really what I am trying to get to. I am trying to find my way to... it's not just that I want to be true to the exact word translation that Koichi Tohei Sensei originally said, but what does he mean? What is he trying to get through to us? And that involves me bringing my own experience to it, not just Sayaka's help, which I appreciate. And that's really what we are doing here. And so that's why, when I present it to you, then I want to hear what you have to say about it, even if it is not a question but

just a comment, I want to hear if you are tuning in and tuning out, well, OK, but when you are tuned in, I want to hear what this does to you. You can't tell me that this doesn't do anything to you due to the way I said that. I am looking at you ladies over there.

Student: When I listen to it, basically it's just in agreement. I think, "Yes, this has been the practice as I've known it for a long, long time here." So that's my first reaction. In practice, I find over and over again, a separation, which is the same thing you say, when you include the little things in the relative world and the universe, sometimes my preference would be, to eliminate or not pay attention to some other aspects that might be occurring in my life at that time. I will not actively include it, if you know what I mean.

Yeah, I know exactly what you mean.

Student: OK, so that's personally what happens to me.

Yeah, well you are not alone.

Student: So, if anything, in class sometimes, I don't know if exactly that sort of thing comes up, but that's the one thing I notice about myself when I look at the whole picture.

Yeah, so that's what you get to work on, right? But it's very common that, when we first, and by "first" I don't mean yesterday, but when we first begin to experience the universal condition, we just want to hang out there. Exactly right. But that's not exactly it., because we have to include everything. Otherwise it's not actually universal. It's a separate sort of bliss state, which is nice, but it is going to go away in any case. It's going to go away to some degree. Like when you have a real awakening experience, it might be two or three or four days when you can't even function very well, you know. That happened to me when I was very young. And then as I got older and more experienced and it happened more and more, then somebody else doesn't even notice that that is going on.

Student: Oh but they do. Actually people, like, smile at you more. So in a funny way, they do. They don't know what they are noticing, but they do. They do notice. The world reacts more friendly to you. More open.

Yes, but they don't know that they do. Well, yeah, we love an open person. Or, as Iwao Tamura said, "Universal mind recognizes itself, always."

Student: Yeah, because it just shows. It radiates itself. Exactly.

Anyone else?

Student: Well, you said a lot tonight, so could you narrow down what you would like a response to?

What I would like a response to? Well, why don't you just pick something? What struck you?

Student: OK. Yes. What struck me. There is nothing that you said tonight that I disagree with.

Oh, no.

Student: Really, I agree that I have preferences and opinions, and I agree that those are conditioned and not universal, understanding that doesn't always mean that I am experiencing that.

Yep, right. To some degree, and for some of us, a lot of our understanding is still in the intellectual realm, still conceptual. It can be very powerful that way. Again, that's not wrong. But it's less direct. It's reflective. If we want to live our life completely, we want to be experiencing all of it, at every moment. Right now. There really aren't any other moments. Just this here. And the wonderful thing about this, at least what I've discovered, is that there is nothing that needs to be figured out. And that's really a tremendous relief for somebody like me, because I can spend a lot of time trying to figure things out. Or maybe more to the point, becoming frustrated because I can't figure something out. In the relative world, it's like my computer. I figure I should be able to figure that out, but I can't, and it's very frustrating. So I am always asking for some help there.

Anyway, for practical things we can get a helper that does understand that. But for what is happening, in a real sense, the more you recognize that you are a stranger in a strange land, the more you see that you are lost in chaos. You have no way of knowing what's coming down the pike in the next instant. You do not know what's happening, what's going to happen next. There is no way you could know, because there is an infinity of possibility at every moment.

We think, well we are here in the dojo, so we can expect it to be a certain way, and for all intents and purposes, yes you can. But, a meteor could land on the building right now. That would certainly change things radically, for all of us. So ultimately, you can't ever say, "I know what's coming next."

Student: This is just a comment. I was just watching the movie, "Bridge of Spies." You probably saw this. The spy fellow always responded when asked if he was worried, "Would it matter?" I just love that comment.

Yes, I brought that up in class several times, and I was just reading in a magazine, a famous woman that is the head of Lucas Films now, Kathleen Kennedy, she brought that up in an interview and said, "That's my mantra." "Would it matter?"

"Aren't you worried about this?" "Would it matter?" No, it wouldn't matter. And yet how much time do we waste worrying about things. So, yeah, I think he deserved the academy award just because he did such a good job just saying that one line.

Student: You said that the depth of our emotional response indicates how much we are attached.

It is commensurate with the degree of our conditioning to that particular subject, aversion, or preference.

Student: So if we don't have much of an emotional response, if we are not attached to something, isn't that kind of a lukewarm situation?

There are three conditions: Aversion, attraction, and indifference. OK? These are the three conditions to living in a human body. But nobody is saying that you can transcend being a human through indifference. You can't ignore anything. It's the opposite. It's paying deep attention to whatever is happening, so that we can see, "Oh, this is my conditioning." If you are having a big emotional response to something someone says to you, you are really stuck in that particular way. You are conditioned to have that response.

So, it's not wrong. Nobody is denying it. But it needs examining. You need to take a look at it. I don't mean to reflect on it or try to judge it. I mean just to own it, and see, "Oh, yes, if there is a big emotional response in the middle of this, it means I have a lot of purchase here." Your heart is where your attachment is, in that sense. OK? So no, we don't want to be choosing indifference over pleasure or pain. Good luck, anyway, you know.

We are very clever, as she was just talking about, in the way that we create a sense of well-being and call it a "spiritual state" through indifference and dullness. And if you have a life full of problems, then, oh man, that can feel pretty good. It's like taking a drug, to numb yourself to whatever the pain is that you are feeling. And even that is OK too, as long as you pay attention and know what it is that is going on there, because if you try to stop yourself from that habit of dullness or ignoring or pulling away from or living in a kind of cocoon where you are emotionally cut off from some of things that might be hurtful to you, then that won't work. You don't want to try to change this. You want to just notice it – the whole key to everything is noticing.

So once again, as we bring this to a close, I just want to emphasize that these are not rules of what you are supposed to do. We are not promoting what you should be like. It's just a helpful reminder that, when you are actually experiencing universal mind, it is inclusive of everything. There is no separation.

OK? Thank you very much.