

CASE FOR DHARMA EXCHANGE

Shoyoroku Case 53: Obaku's Dregs

Preface to the Assembly

Having opportunity and not seeing a Buddha: Great enlightenment has no teacher. Human emotions are eliminated by the sword that regulates heaven and earth. Holy understanding is forgotten in the activity that catches tigers and buffaloes. Tell me: Whose stratagem is this?

Main Case

Attention! Obaku addressed the assembly, saying, "All of you without exception are eaters of wine-dregs. Going on pilgrimage here and there, when will there ever be a day for you? Don't you know there are no Zen teachers in all of Tang China?" At that time a monk who was there stepped forward and said, "What about those everywhere who have disciples and lead assemblies?" And Obaku remarked, "I don't say there's no Zen, just that there are no teachers."

Appreciatory Verse

Roads being split, threads being dyed—how bothersome!
Catching at leaves and lining up flowers ruins the Ancestors.
Subtly grasping the handle that educates Southerners,
the cloud-and-water inscribing tool is on the potter's wheel.
Tangles and shards removed and crushed, downy hairs razored off.
Balance scale, bright mirror, jeweled ruler, golden sword:
Old Obaku even divines autumn fur,
cutting off the spring breeze, not allowing arrogance.