Working With The Reality Of A Table, Today (Zen)

By Kevin A. Sensenig
Draft 1.04
2020 April 17

The following, it occurs to me, might prove useful in describing a situation, individual, and dilemma or not. And specific instances of that.

Working with the reality of a table, today:

The table before me, that I am now working on, and that I imagined in my mind a bit ago, and contemplated, is 1) undefinable; 2) can be specified to build it. This is an interesting thing.[1]

When we see the table in terms of only the concrete-objectified, we simply cannot see the reality of the table, the space in the room, and the walls – it is at-once, what it is, and One.

When we see the table as the fusion of some segments of geometry and expressed mathematics (the abstract), and the material (physical, engineered, the concrete), we see the actual table manifest before us, and can work with its reality. This becomes actual function. When we see with the mind of *The Diamond Sutra* section 5, and zazen and our own realization, we see the reality of the table, the space in the room, and the walls – it is at-once, what it is, and One. This becomes just-as-and-with realization, awareness, present-mindedness, and insight. We can now work with the real world.

We know from physics that matter itself is in a constant state of flux, and that particles are always moving, fields are always interacting, and energy and potential are ever-present. And that this itself is mathematical in its ways, yet physical. It, too, is at-once, what it is, and One.

The strength of the koan is that it is specific, but does not yield to definition. So it is just like this world. We cannot penetrate it with discriminating mind, but once we do penetrate it, the whole domain lights up – and further things unfold.

We do not define the individual any more than one defines or grasps at the whole world – it is particular, at-once, just as it is, and One. Its reality must be penetrated. Then, it's 'all functions'[2].

Footnotes

1. Does the table build the table, or the factory? I was thinking of 'specified by the person and factory to build it'. But the person, the factory, and the unfolding table is also at-once, what it is, and One.
2. *Shobogenzo Zenkei* by Dogen translated by Nishijima and Cross.

Resources

The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam.
The Lankavatara Sutra translated by D. T. Suzuki.
Moon By The Window by Shodo Harada.
Shobogenzo by Dogen translated by Nishijima and Cross.