

Quiz on Fuse

Hello, I am Kaneko, your navigator.

I have been talking about fusei for the past few issues, and this time I would like to share a story that I have seen and heard.

It is a quiz-like question posed at a Buddhist lecture by Hiro Sachiya, a Buddhist researcher and evangelist. Please bear with me.

You are in a house with two brothers, and your brother got a piece of cake from a friend. What do you do at this moment? This is a question. There are three possible answers

- A. Eat half of the cake.
- B. One eats and one does not
- C. Neither eats.

If the question were posed in this way, the overwhelming majority would choose "A," which is to eat half of the cake. This seems like an obvious answer, but what about the Buddhist view?

In fact, Buddhism gives the correct answer to C, "Neither of you eats. Why?"

When the mother was giving them half a cake to eat, she asked the brothers, "Why do you think your mother told you to eat half the cake? The older brother replies, "Because I feel sorry for my little brother".

The younger brother replied, "Next time I get one, I will give half to my brother". This may seem like an ordinary question and answer, but it is profound when considered from the perspective of the Buddha.

At first glance, sharing half the cake seems to be the idea of giving, but giving because you feel sorry for your younger brother is not really giving. With that thought, you would not be able to give half to your younger brother when you are fighting with him. Also, giving with the expectation of receiving something in return, such as, "The next time my brother gives me something, I will take half of

it myself," is not true giving.

This is the idea of fusei: "I give you half because the cake tastes better when you eat half of it." The cake that is divided in half with the thought, "I will give to you, so you should be grateful to me," will not taste good. Sometimes, the recipient may say, "Then you should eat it yourself. In return, I will not give it to you even if I receive it myself".

Instead, the one who gives it to the recipient says, "It tastes better when we eat it together". When the giver says, "It will taste better if we eat it together, so please eat it with me," and then gives half and half and says, "Thank you for eating it with me," this is true giving".

In Buddhism, I said that the correct answer to C is "neither of you eat it," but it does not mean that you throw away that piece of cake.

You should take the cake you received and offer it to the Buddhist altar first. Then the cake becomes Buddha's property and the elder brother no longer has ownership of it. The brother then receives the cake from the Buddha.

Once the ownership is renounced, it is not that "the elder brother gives half to the younger brother and they both eat it together. You are receiving it from the Buddha.

If the elder brother gives to the younger brother, the younger brother has to thank the elder brother, but if he receives from the Buddha, both of them have to thank the Buddha together. This is the true offering.

In the past, we offered everything we received outside the house to the Buddhist altar. Company employees would offer their wages to the Buddhist altar, and then it would belong to the Buddha. Behind this it is the idea that everything belongs to Buddha. It is an act to let go of the mindset that it is money earned by oneself, and to recognize that all living expenses are given by the Buddha.

Giving half of one cake to another person, this is an act of altruism. It is an act for the benefit of others. At the same time, it is an act of self-interest that cultivates gratitude to the Buddha and a sense of relaxation. True offering can be said to be an act of altruism.

The Buddhist sermon series was given by Hirokazu Kaneko . Translation and voice in English by Hirokazu Kosaka.