

# Case 19. Ordinary Mind Is the Way

*The Gateless Gate*, Koun Yamada

## **The Case**

Jōshū earnestly asked Nansen, “What is the Way?” Nansen answered, “The ordinary mind is the Way.” Jōshū asked, “Should I direct myself toward it or not?” Nansen said, “If you try to turn toward it, you go against it.” Jōshū asked, “if I do not try to turn toward it, how can I know that it is the Way?” Nansen answered, “The Way does not belong to knowing or not-knowing. Knowing is delusion; not-knowing is a blank consciousness. When you have really reached the true Way beyond all doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as the great empty firmament. how can it be talked about on a level of right and wrong?” At these words, Jōshū was suddenly enlightened.

## **Mumon’s Commentary**

Nansen was asked a question by Jōshū, and Nansen’s base was shattered and melted away. He could not justify himself. Even though Jōshū has come to realization, he will have to delve into it for another thirty years before he can realize it fully.

## **The Verse**

*The spring flowers, the moon in autumn,  
The cool breezes of summer, the winter’s snow;  
If idle concerns do not cloud the mind,  
This is man’s happiest season.*