

ZEN NOTES



APRIL 20, 1956 Today those two dear persons, Miura Isshu Roshi and Walter Nowick, left us at LaGuardia Airport 9:30 a.m. in what in Japanese is called a "tear-rain." To say that eyes were imitating the sky would not be true, no tears were shed, yet all faces wore a misty look not ascribable to weather conditions.

There wasn't long to wait. Weighing-in was brief. No elaborate farewells were spoken. Roshi smiled and bowed and walked away, Walter attending him. No one had anything to say. A few hands lifted to feel the drizzling rain. We watched the windows of the plane. At the one behind the door a bare-armed man's open hand was waving and waving. No American man this early in the year could have been the body of that hand. It must be Roshi's. After a few minutes Walter came to the still-open door and, pointing to where we knew Roshi was sitting, pantomimed a long face. But soon the door closed and the throbbing of the motors intensified suddenly. As the plane taxied down the field, our eyes glued to that diminishing patch of glass behind the door where the hand was still waving.

Walter and Roshi were both happy to return to the unrivaled beauties of Japan's spring, they had told us. Truly there is nothing to compare with their pleasant country existence. What indeed can we offer them here? Work, inconveniences, problems, dirty city streets, smog-bound air, a struggling group barely able to keep its head above water, so intent on its own effort it has little time to look right or left or even forward. Surely they would be foolish not to prefer that other life. The clear air of mountains, the pure food grown in one's own garden, the zendo stillness broken only by the occasional pour of rain on a thatched roof, a birdcall, the susurrations of wind through pine and bamboo. In winter the snow is very charming there, caught into patterns on the clipped bushes, zigzag trees and stone lanterns dotting graceful slopes. Now in spring there are the flowering trees and shrubs, in summer lilies, in fall the red of maples: only the alternating seasons and festivals to witness the passing of time.

At Roshi's birthday party (two days after the Buddha's) we were given a glimpse of that world where men devote not just a few hours in a busy week but their whole lives to the pursuit of divine satori. With Walter's help, in the candlelit zendo, as Roshi leaned relaxed, one elbow on the table that holds the timekeeper's bell, clappers, and incense pot, telling us stories of his sodo-life, of his teacher Nanshinken, of his childhood, it was possible for enchanted moments to feel not-strange, to sense how it would be if our language were not-two, our time not-ending.

Why our faces were sad at farewell time anyone could easily understand. We must now return to our workaday world, the struggle to survive far from resolved, our problems still confronting us, unanswered. But Roshi-san, you were on your way back to your beloved Japan, your life is simple and straight and clear. How did it come about that your face was sad too? Is it conceivable that some feeling of kinship for this oddly assorted family that looks now to you for sustenance has taken root in your heart? *Itte irasshai!*

THE DHARMAKAYA OF BUDDHA

It is understood by Buddhists that Buddha has three bodies: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya. You must not misunderstand the nature of these three bodies. There are not three persons called Buddha. In one person there are three bodies. Just as an egg has three parts: the yellow part, the white part, and the shell. Therefore there are three natures in one person. Not only Buddha but also every individual has these three bodies. When I speak about Dharmakaya, the first body, I must necessarily speak about the second and third bodies also. Using a very simple metaphor to make you understand very clearly, think there are three phases in one material existence: solid, liquid and vapor; or you can call it air, water, and earth. Then Dharmakaya corresponds to air, Sambhogakaya to water, Nirmanakaya to earth.

Buddha's Dharmakaya has no form. It is not in the ten forms enumerated in the Sutra, the so-called form of sound, form of smell, form of taste, form of touch, forms of growing, remaining, and decaying, form of man and form of woman. How then can it be a body? Buddha's Dharmakaya is in the state of Nirvana. It is not in the state of this phenomenal world. Buddha was living in this world a little while, just eighty years, and he was teaching the people for about forty-nine years. His existence was very short. After Buddha's passing into Nirvana, the Sangha of Buddha lost the main treasure of its three Treasures--Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The Buddhists had to change their theory therefore. Thus they invented the invisible and unintelligible state of Dharmakaya. It is the main state of Buddha which is existing today. We cannot see Buddha, we cannot hear from him, we cannot touch him; he is not growing, remaining or decaying; he is neither man nor woman. He is in the state of Emptiness. What is Emptiness? How can we prove the existence of Emptiness when it is not something we can see or think about? It is intangible and unintelligible. We cannot know it with our intellect. Then how can it be Buddha? This is the key; this is the keynote; this is the great question.

Of course with human knowledge we cannot think about what is unintelligible, but why do we always have to depend upon human knowledge? Why must we always think by words which we have invented? Is there any way to realize this Emptiness, this existence of Buddha, through this Emptiness? We have never seen Emptiness. We cannot think about Emptiness with thoughts. If we think about anything that can be materialized as thoughts it is not Emptiness; it is something, isn't it? So Buddha's Dharmakaya is absolutely hidden from human beings, not only from human beings, but from all sentient beings.

This Emptiness is the object of Buddhism. We have to have faith in it, even though we do not, cannot, understand it. It is very difficult to think about Emptiness. When you think about God, you can have faith in God because you believe in God's existence. But Buddha's Dharmakaya to us is non-existence. How can it be God? Buddhism is a very queer religion, therefore, when you think about it.

Buddha's Dharmakaya has no form. The form of Dharmakaya is no-form. We have faith in Buddha's Dharmakaya because it transcends man's mind. We cannot give it a name. We cannot sleep with it like a dream. We cannot talk about it because there is nothing to talk about. When we talk about Buddha's Dharmakaya we cannot open our mouths. The ancient Buddhists said it is like a deaf mute trying to talk about his dream. He dreamed something last night and this morning he wants to talk about it; but he is deaf and mute, so he cannot say anything.

No one speaks about the attributes of Dharmakaya as a Zen priest does because the priests of other sects hesitate to talk about the Dharmakaya of Buddha so freely and so plainly. But when I speak about the second body, Buddha's Sambhogakaya, you will find there is some possibility of understanding Buddha's Dharmakaya a little, some possibility of realizing it.

When you realize Buddha's second body you will attain bliss because your eyes and mind all of a sudden see Buddha's Dharmakaya, not with this eye, but with the mysterious Eye which sees the Dharmakaya. What is Buddha's second body? It is Buddha's Wisdom. Not only Buddha, but everyone has this Wisdom. Now I am here and I know that I am here. You are there

and you know that you are there. I breathe in, and I know that I am breathing in. I breathe out and I know that I am breathing out. I know my inspiration is very slow; I know my expiration is very slow. Every moment I know my own existence with my respiration, by breathing in and breathing out. This knowing is Wisdom, and we realize that we have Wisdom. Wisdom is a very primitive power. It is just "to know." Today we use the word "wisdom" in the place of intellect or intelligence, but Wisdom is neither intellect nor intelligence. Wisdom is either consciousness or knowing. Temporarily we divide this into two qualities, one side the consciousness quality, the other side intellect, but we don't need to divide it into two. Enlightened Wisdom is called Prajna.

I shall take this opportunity to explain why we practice meditation. We do not practice meditation to digest our food, or to strengthen our stomach muscles, or to find the chakras in our spine. We practice meditation to find the highest chakra, which is Wisdom. We meditate to keep our awareness. This Wisdom is called "This." It is this to me, to you, and to everyone. I do not practice meditation to prove that I have Wisdom. It is proven by itself. It is axiomatic. Everyone knows without talking about it. Fire doesn't know that it is shining, but it is shining. It does not know it is shining, but we know it is shining. This is Sambhogakaya. Buddha had it and he has it and continually he is in it.

Wisdom is not here or there; it is everywhere. The whole universe is Wisdom. The whole universe is consciousness. It is here in you, in everyone. When this Wisdom is in form, in this body, we see outer existence. When Wisdom is in no-form, it is in Dharmakaya. So when your physical body is destroyed, your Wisdom is not destroyed. Your Wisdom is there shining, but you have nothing to do about it, nothing to think about it with. You have nothing to look at, but Wisdom is there. What Wisdom is there? The Wisdom which has no physical body and which is called Dharmakaya Wisdom. When Dharmakaya Wisdom is in a physical body we call it Sambhogakaya.

Once when I was being operated upon and I was keeping myself very quiet I did not feel my body at all. I could hear the sound of the instruments and voices, the doctor was ordering the nurse; then he came and asked me my name, address, and so forth. Later I realized I did not lose my consciousness, but I lost the medium through which I realized consciousness, through which consciousness functions. The body is its medium. When this body goes away consciousness still exists. Our thoughts are also a medium, a semi-material medium. When we die this consciousness is scattered. This consciousness is not ours, not yours, not mine, not the consciousness of Mr. Smith, but of Buddha. Not Sakyamuni Buddha's or Kasyapa Buddha's consciousness, but the consciousness which is Universal Buddha. Through Sambhogakaya directly, immediately, we understand the Dharmakaya and we know that the Dharmakaya has no form. We have to practice this without thinking, without talking. We prove it without word, without thought. It is Sambhogakaya or Dharmakaya at this moment. There is no space where we can harbor a doubt.

And now I shall speak about the Buddha's Nirmanakaya. The Sambhogakaya takes a form, the form of male, the form of female. It comes into this form of eye, of ear; sometimes it is growing, sometimes staying, sometimes decaying. It can be a butcher, a university professor, a monk, a streetwalker, a soldier, anything, but all are the Buddha's Nirmanakaya.

It may seem to you that these three bodies are very strange. But think about it. It can be understood plainly. There is no hocus-pocus in it.

There was a monk called Fu Jōza who was always giving lectures on the Dharmakaya. One day he was on the high seat at the temple of Kōkō-ji, lecturing as usual about the nature of the Dharmakaya. He was saying that Dharmakaya exists beyond space, beyond time, that the size of Dharmakaya is boundless, its life limitless. It exists everywhere but it has no name. A Zen monk who was listening to this sermon from a seat way back in the audience all of a sudden laughed. What Fu Jōza had said seemed very funny to the Zen monk. Fu Jōza, hearing this laughter, stopped his sermon, descended from the high seat, came before the Zen monk and said: "I beg your pardon. Is there any error in my speech? If my understanding

where in those 5048 volumes of the scriptures, trying to find the answer to his Master's question.

At last Kan gave up. "Painted food cannot appease hunger. This is just painted food!" And he set fire to the books and burned them all. Then he ran down the mountainside, crying, for he realized he wasn't able to find any answer at all.

Crossing the Yangtze River he went northward until he came to the ruined temple of Chu Kokushi, a famous Master, one of the disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. Chikan Zenji was a contemporary of Rinzai, who died 868 A.D., so he must have lived about two generations later than Chu Kokushi.

When Chikan Zenji came to this old temple, remembering that Chu's attainment was sudden enlightenment without any teacher, he thought he would stay there, and he did stay there, without any friend, or companion, or teacher. When he was hungry, he would go to the village and beg food. He did not study, he just lived a monk's life.

And every day he was sweeping the garden. Going along the ancient path, he sought the true way of practicing Zen.

One day Chikan was mowing down the weeds around a ruined temple. When he threw away a bit of broken tile it clattered against a bamboo tree. All of a sudden he was enlightened.

"Oh, that's it!" He threw away the broom he had in his hand. He went and washed his body. He entered the temple and burned incense, bowing in the direction of his teacher Wei-shan. Gratitude filled his heart and he felt he must express this even through the distance.

"O Osho, if you had told me the answer, this would not have happened today. Your kindness to me was greater than that of mother or father."

It was then Kan made his poem.

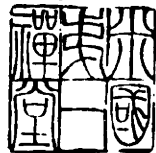
For Sokei-an's interpretation of Kan's poem and another version of this lecture, from which parts have been taken for the above reconstruction, see CAT'S YAWN, p. 52, The Clatter of a Broken Tile.

THE PERFECT MAN Somebody asked me one day: "Is there any perfect man in this world?" I was dumbfounded for a little while. I asked: "Do you think this is a perfect society?" "No." "Then how can a perfect man exist in it?" Perhaps a perfect man could exist in this imperfect society about three years.

Is the moonprint on the water a perfect circle?

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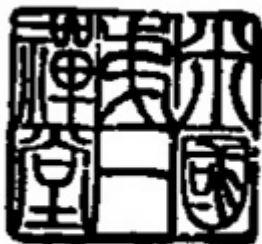


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