

ZEN NOTES



SOKEI - AN SAYS

MAHAYANA AND HINAYANA The Japanese have invented a term, "Mahayanistic diplomacy." There is also the so-called "Mahayanistic view of business." But these queer terms have little to do with the authentic significance of "Mahayana." *Yana* means "vehicle." *Maha* means "great." So *Mahayana* means "great vehicle." *Hina*, used in contrast, is an adjective meaning "small," so *Hinayana* means "small vehicle." These two names did not exist in the beginning of Buddhism, but were invented later. Western people often think that Hinayana is the name of southern Buddhism and that Mahayana is the name of northern Buddhism. Some of them esteem southern Buddhism highly but believe northern Buddhism is not true Buddhism. This is just as if someone were to believe that a Democrat is a real American but a Republican is not.

According to our conception, Buddhism is just one thing from the time of the Buddha to today. But Buddhism can be seen as consisting of two parts. One part comprises the teaching according to which the student endeavors to practice methods for the attainment of enlightenment for himself. The other part consists of the method for promulgating the teaching and sending it forth to lay life. Regarded this way Hinayana Buddhism is for monks, and Mahayana Buddhism is for lay men and women.

Of course, some of the monks who study Buddhism in the monasteries come out at the end of their work and teach their knowledge of religion to the people. If we examine the life of such a monk, we can see it has two phases: first he comes into the monastery and stays there until he attains final awakening and is ordained as a teacher; then, he goes to a village, town, or city and promulgates the teaching. Thus, the Mahayana life of monks is different from their Hinayana life.

The Hinayana phase itself can be seen to consist of three parts. First, one must attain the transcendental world. Second, one must understand human beings. Finally, one must understand one's self.

When the transcendental world is attained, it cannot be done logically by reading what is written in books. It cannot be attained by *reading* that the transcendental world is omnipresent, om-

nipotent, and empty, swallowing these words and saying, "I have attained enough." This is not permitted in monastic training. In the monastery the monk follows the commandments for monks and strives for his attainment.

The word "enlightenment," though frequently used, gives a somewhat misleading idea of this attainment, since it suggests the Christian concept wherein God suddenly reveals the light of heaven. From a Christian point of view, perhaps "enlightenment" is a good word. Although it has a dramatic quality, the word "enlightenment" however, does not have much realistic meaning, so I prefer to use the word "awakening." But awakening to what? Awakening to the state which is not troubled by the phenomenal world, which doesn't belong to the five senses. You make direct contact with the world which has nothing to do with phenomenal existence. This is our idea of awakening. But this is not complete awakening.

You must realize the state of Reality with your living mind and emotion. You can study New York, for example, with maps and guide books, but if you don't come to New York, you don't know anything about it. Likewise to talk about the "state of Reality," or whatever you choose to call it, you must really experience it and find out whether it is exactly as written or not. Such words as omnipresent, omnipotent, and empty are very confusing, and to speak of one word, we must use two. For when a human being speaks of good, then he speaks of bad. But nothing is completely good or bad; all is relative. As in the case of salt water and sweet water: fish that live in salt water do not know sweet water because they have never experienced it. When you awake to the state of Reality you don't need to talk about the dualistic world. This world appears before you.

After you attain the world which has nothing to do with the five senses, you must wake again to *this* world. Then you must awake a third time, must really attain the true meaning of this life. At that time your study is completed and your teacher will authorize you to teach. The Hinayana part of your life is these three periods from the beginning of your study to final awakening.

The Mahayana phase begins when you come to the city and open the teaching.

There is no other way of studying Buddhism or teaching it. In America a young man spends three or four years in a theological seminary, graduates, puts his collar on backwards, and begins to teach! We come to the Ma-



hayana phase much later. We spend a long time in the Hinayana phase.

Hinayana monks almost forget human beings. Like the Trappist monks, they don't speak a word. They just stay in meditation; for five or six years they don't speak a word. We call them cave dwellers. During that time they suppress all human desire. They eat enough to support the physical body, that is all. In winter there is no charcoal to warm their hands; they live like starving animals, but they must concentrate their minds to the abstract state. For this time their freedom is absolutely sacrificed. They are like fish in the ocean; one fish goes and all the fish follow. There is no individual mind, only the group mind. They are ruled by one mind, and individuality is not permitted. In my Hinayana phase, I was that type of man.

I found a very interesting thing when I came to this country. It is this: the Catholic priest seems very Hinayanistic, but his teachings are Mahayanistic. The Protestant teacher seems very Mahayanistic, but his teachings are Hinayanistic, like those of the New England Puritans. The Catholic commandment is Hinayana, but the Catholic way is Mahayana. I find this contrast very interesting.

America is not a country where people live without self-interest. You are living for you. When I was in Ohio, it seemed to me that farmers living there had little or nothing to do with their neighbors. They met to fix prices and the like, but that was their only reason for associating with their neighbors. Americans are like kings. They do something because they like doing it. They do nothing if they don't like doing it. Although the American ideal of life is Mahayanistic, Americans live by their personal desire, isolating themselves until their hearts grow cold. That is the short-coming of individualism. You must accept the other person, and you must accept heartfulness. When you have done this, your neighbor is yourself, and your neighbor's desire is your desire. This individual you in a democratic country must have a heart as a person. When this is achieved, this country will be a truly Mahayana one.

In the monastery, when a monk understands that, his teacher will say, "Well, you seem to have come to the end. Go out and try! Perhaps people will support you and love you. If they do, perhaps you can teach something. But if they don't love you, you cannot teach anything!"

Reconstructed by William Briggs



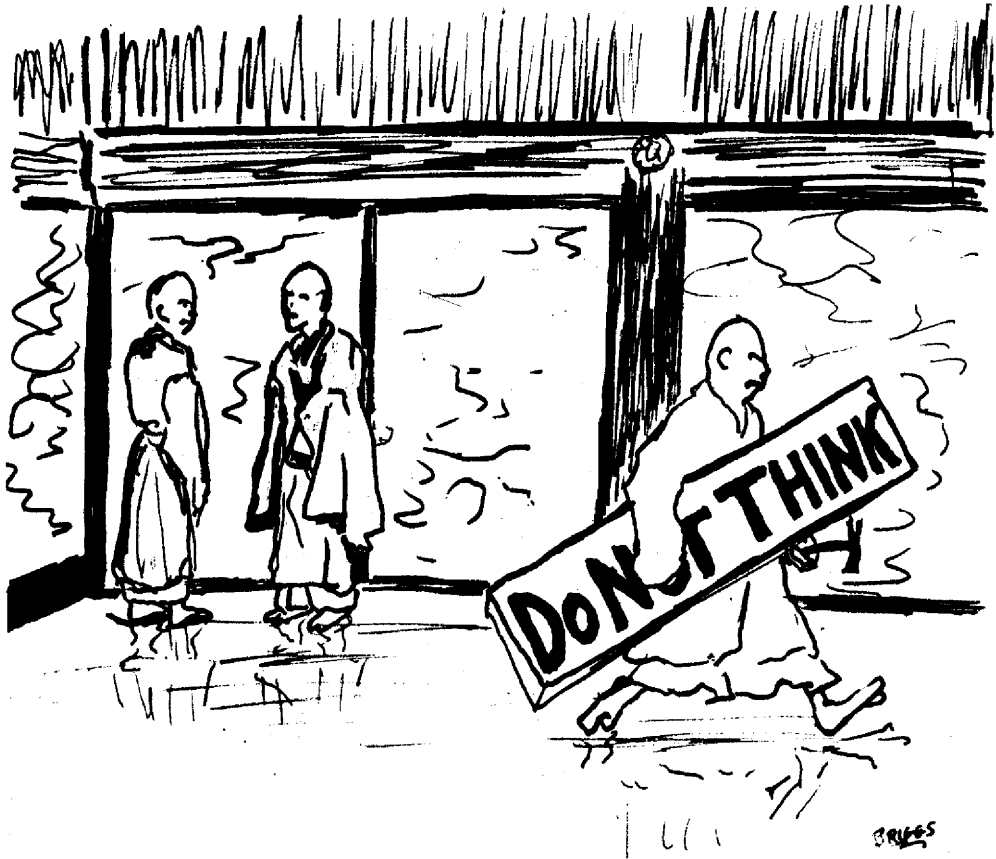
saying, "I have attained en-
ning. In the monastery the
rives for his attainment.
ntly used, gives a somewhat
uggests the Christian con-
f heaven. From a Christian
od word. Although it has a
owever, does not have much
"awakening." But awaken-
not troubled by the phenom-
enses. You make direct con-
with phenomenal existence.
ot complete awakening.
a your living mind and emo-
n maps and guide books, but
anything about it. Likewise
ver you choose to call it,
her it is exactly as writ-

hayana phase much later. W

Hinayana monks almost
they don't speak a word. The
they don't speak a word. We
suppress all human desire.
that is all. In winter they
like starving animals, but
stract state. For this time
like fish in the ocean; one
individual mind, only the g
viduality is not permitted

I found a very intere
this: the Catholic priest
Mahayanistic. The Protes
teachings are Hinayanisti
Catholic commandment is Hi
this contrast very interes

America is not a c



WHEN I WAS A CHILD I was crazy about catching shrimps and crazy about eating them too! Everyday I was down by the water catching shrimps to bring home, at all hours, for my mother to cook.

One day when nobody was home, I discovered that from observing my mother very carefully I already knew--without knowing I knew it--how to cook shrimps. So I took a pot of my mother's and boiled some water in it; and I cooked those shrimps. They were de-licious to me as I ate them!

When my mother came home-- "What!" You have cooked shrimps in my best pot! You've made it smell of shrimps. I must take that smell out! *There* is my shrimp pot! Nothing but shrimp ever cooked in it!"

I was only a child and, like any child when it does something big, enjoyed doing it again! I was only a child, like any child when he wants a cooking pot--any pot is just a pot. So several times when the kitchen was empty or nobody was home, I took any pot and cooked my shrimps.

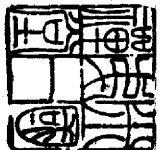
One day my mother came home with something in her hand. "Here, Yeita," she said, "is a shrimp cooking pot for you. Do not make all my cooking pots smell of shrimps any more. After you cook shrimps, wash the pot and put it away--*here*. It is yours. Nobody will touch it!"

I was very delighted with that small cooking pot that was mine. I always used it and washed it too. I think by that pot I first realized the meaning of "personal property."

ZEN HUMOR Some New York Zennists were startled by the expounding of Zen on TV by a comedian on the Dinah Shore Show and later on the Jack Paar Show. We'd like to remind them that the "Zen joke" is a "natural" in Japan.

Published monthly by
THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, INC.
156 Waverly Place, New York 14, New York

Zen Notes
Copyright 1958 by The First
Zen Institute of America, Inc.



Vol. V, No. 8, Aug. 1958
1 year \$1.00
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright of Zen Notes is the property of the First Zen Institute of America, Inc., and its content may not be copied or e-mailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download or e-mail articles for individual use.

Founded in 1930 by Sokei-an Sasaki	First Zen Institute of America 113 E30 Street New York, New York 10016 (212)-686-2520 www.firstzen.org
	
會 協 禪 一 第 國 美	