

# ZEN NOTES



## SOKEI-AN SAYS

THE BLINDNESS OF ANURUDDHA      In the Buddha's Sangha there were many of his cousins, nephews, nieces and other relatives. Even his divorced wife, aunt, younger brother, and son were among his followers. One of the monks was Anuruddha, the Buddha's cousin.

Anuruddha was tall and handsome. It is described in a sutra, that he was once put up for the night in a house by the roadside during his travels. The mistress of this house was a widow who became infatuated by his beautiful figure and suddenly embraced him. He disappeared right in her arms.

The story I am going to discuss is related in three different sutras that have been translated into Chinese.

According to this story Anuruddha slept while the Buddha was preaching a sermon. This is common and happens all the time. It happens to me when I am speaking. I hear another voice accompanying mine; I hear the voice of snoring! And all of a sudden such a person awakes and is terribly embarrassed. In this way Anuruddha slept while the Buddha spoke.

The Buddha scolded him and Anuruddha made a vow never to close his eyes again. He never went to bed and soon became blind. Once when every one was sewing the monks' robes, Anuruddha was unable to thread the string through the eye of the needle. Of course, no one could help him. The Buddha came up to him, took an end of the string, and went himself through the eye of the needle. A queer story!

While Anuruddha was sleeping the Buddha expressed his thoughts in a poem:

He sleeps while the Buddha is preaching;  
His mind is not disturbed.  
Every one enjoys the teachings of a sage;  
It is deep as a bottomless river, pure and transparent.  
He who listens to it will purify his mind;  
His mind will be quiet as a stone mountain.  
Even the storm cannot shake it,  
And he will never care for either praise or blame.

It is nice to sleep while someone is preaching. If he were a nice preacher it would be pleasant to sleep listening to his sermon. While the Buddha was preaching in his beautiful voice, Anuruddha slept undisturbed. This story is very clear. Later Anuruddha will become blind, unable to see anything. The story is better understood once we remind ourselves that when the Buddha was dying Anuruddha was there; and he is described as not being blind at all! Throughout all the Buddhist scriptures, nothing is written about Anuruddha's blindness. We cannot take Anuruddha's blindness literally. It is a metaphorical way of illustrating his unenlightened mind.

In this story after Anuruddha has been discovered asleep, the Buddha asked him, "Are you afraid of the king's law?" The Buddha was referring to the law made by politicians; kings make laws that often are convenient for themselves but not so easy on others.

When Anuruddha replied that he was not afraid of the king's law, the Buddha asked, "Are you afraid of thieves?" The Buddha did not mean bandits or robbers but the military classes which in India were called thieves. When they invaded a town, nothing was left. The king would order a bunch of thieves to annihilate a town, and they would go there and destroy it.

Anuruddha also replied to this, "No, my Lord."

The Buddha asked, "Then what is the reason for your becoming a monk?"

Anuruddha said, "I cherish afflictions, anxieties, and I always fear sickness and death. I became a monk in order to be able to abandon these fears and anxieties."

"Every monk and every one of my relatives listens attentively to me when I preach. Why, Anuruddha," asked the Buddha, "do you sleep?" The Buddha was very hard on him.

Anuruddha threw himself on the ground and vowed, "Though my body decomposes, hereafter I will not close my eyes before the Buddha." And he did not sleep. So his eyes were corrupted and he could not see anything anymore.

He could not see anything anymore! Meditating intensely after being scolded by the Buddha and listening attentively, he finally reached the stage where he could not see any phenomenal appearance. This means that he attained something which is in back of the phenomenal world. The objects of our senses are appearances. The sun is shining, the sky is blue, and the earth is rich brown; but the reality of these appearances is behind the visible world. Anuruddha saw it! When he saw it, the visible world disappeared. In the sutras his state of mind is described metaphorically as blindness! He could not see anything any more.

It is written that the Buddha sent for a physician who was famous and had been his father's doctor. The Buddha sent for him in order to have him cure Anuruddha's blind eyes. The doctor said to the Buddha, "I cannot open his blind eyes. But you, Buddha, have the power to open them."

The point here is that no one has the power to save Anuruddha's mind which has fallen into the emptiness at the back of the world and made him blind to the phenomenal world of appearance. It happens many times when one sees the back of this ma-

terial existence that he becomes totally blind to this world. Such a one always meditates with his eyes closed tight and refrains from associating with other fellow beings.

However, in meditation everything should become clear and bright. The Buddha went to Anuruddha and explained this to him. He told Anuruddha that meditation is food for the mind. If you use your eyes from morning to night, they will become very tired. You must sleep to nourish your eyes. If you meditate from morning to night, your mind will become very tired, and, in two or three years, you will become insane. Meditation is for nourishing your mind.

The first thing that I noticed when I came to America was the restlessness of your minds. Your clothes are beautiful; your food is delicious; your houses, strong and warm; but your minds are like feathers. Your beefsteak is thick but your minds are feeble, shaking, trembling. The mind must be strengthened. There is no other way to strengthen the mind than by meditation. Even without a penny in your pocket, your mind must be composed.

This quiet mind was described in the poem above:

His mind will be quiet as a stone mountain.

Even the storm cannot shake it...

Your mind must have some dynamic force in it, must be quiet, not stupid! We say, "The mind must be quiet as the forest and also as swift as the wind."

Anuruddha asked the Buddha, "How can I attain quiet mind?"

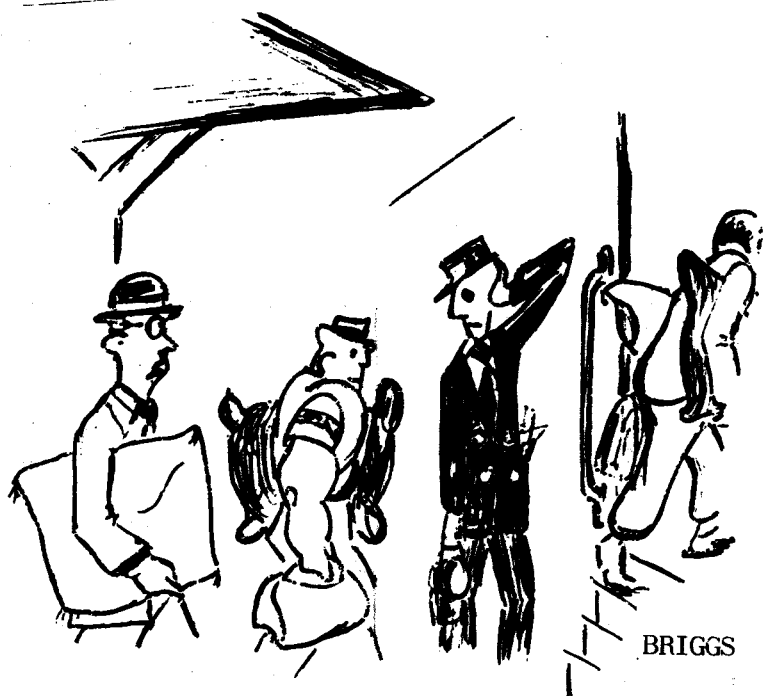
The Buddha said, "By composing your own mind. Do not let it run after many things--beautiful clothes, delicious food, lovely women."

Your mind is like New York City. Many busses are running around there. Compose your mind and you will reach purposelessness. Purposelessness is one of the important terms of Buddhism. Once a fire broke out in the house next where I was living. I saw a man running from corner to corner--carrying a chair back and forth! "What are you doing?" I asked him. He said, "Well, I don't know, but..." That is "useless creation," (*samskṛta*). Such running from corner to corner is "useless creation." Run about but keep your mind composed! If you keep your mind composed, it will bring you to "no useless creation" (*asamskṛta*). Then you will understand Nature's way and follow it without making a disturbance. If you act according to Nature's way, you will do it while no one notices. This will bring you to Nirvana.

Having heard the Buddha, Anuruddha opened his inner eye, his spiritual eye or *divyacaksus*. He saw Nirvana; he saw everything. His inner eye became as bright as three eyes, inside and outside. Looking at a brocade from the front, we comment on its beauty. However, in order to see the workmanship of that brocade, you must see its back, see how the needle ran in and out and made the beautiful brocade. This world is a beautiful world, but you must see how it is made. Anuruddha lost his human eye entirely and attained true Reality, Nirvana, in that inner eye. He never cared about the loss of that human eye. How funny!

Even the Buddha could not save the human eye which Anuruddha failed to possess. Is there such a human eye? There is some mystery in this scripture.

Every monk was sewing cloth and Anuruddha was trying and failing. Every one laughed at him.



## HAVE ZABUTON-WILL TRAVEL

With the July six-day O Sesshin conducted by Roshi at Mt. Kisco, New York, the Institute launched a new phase in its rapidly changing history. This first observance of O Sesshin in a relatively uninterrupted manner was frankly an experiment for the FZI--a grand and bold venture undertaken with a certain proportion of trepidation and courage by all who were involved. The remarkable event was made possible by the generosity of Mrs. Vanessa Coward, who extended her hospitality to Roshi and 17 O Sesshin participants at her beautiful country estate. It would be difficult to imagine a spot more admirably suited to the purpose. The unshakable solidity of the distant hills, the immediate quiet beauty of the house and grounds, and the deep country silence broken only by the voices of its natural creatures: all provided an inspirational setting for meditation, work, and an intensification of the best in human relationships.

One of the important implications of an O Sesshin week in the country is that the formal aspects of Zen practice may be viewed and expressed in a continuity not possible in New York. In the city, upon leaving the zendo we plunge, unceremoniously and with some spiritual awkwardness, into that from whence we came. A certain mental, as well as physical transformation results from the very fact of participation in regularized meditation periods alternating with orderly individual and group activity. In a truly new way the discipline of sitting falls into place with a gentle, unforced naturalness. Students gradually became aware, intuitively or overtly, that attendance at this O Sesshin added an important and long-awaited new dimension to their Zen study.

I.H.

EXISTING TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH OF  
ZEN WORKS FROM THE CHINESE AND JAPANESE

It is possible there may be a few additions to this list that I am unaware of. I would be grateful to have them called to my attention. RFS

I. *SHINJINMEI* 信心銘 (Ch. *Hsin-hsin-ming*) by Sōsan 僧璨 (Ch. Sêng-ts'an) (d. 606), Third Patriarch of Zen in China. A longish poem on the Absolute Mind.

1. "On Believing in Mind": transl. by D.T. Suzuki in *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, 1935), pp. 91-97.

2. "On Trust in the Heart": transl. by Arthur Waley in *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, ed. by Edward Conze (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), pp. 295-298.

II. *SHODOKA* 證道歌 (Ch. *Chêng-tao-ko*) by Yōka Genkaku 永嘉玄覺 (Ch. Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh) (665-713). A long poem traditionally attributed to this monk, who was a disciple of Enō 慧能 (Ch. Hui-nêng), Sixth Patriarch of Zen in China, and who is said to have had some connections with the Tendai 天台 (Ch. *T'ien-t'ai*) sect. This poem has always been popular in the Zen sect.

1. "Yōka Daishi's 'Song of Enlightenment'": transl. by D.T. Suzuki in *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, pp. 106-121.

2. "Sho-Do-Ka by Yoka-Daishi": transl. by Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth Strout McCandless, in *Buddhism and Zen*, Compiled, Edited and Translated by Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth Strout McCandless (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1953), pp. 31-72. The translation is interspersed by extensive informal commentary.

3. "Yung-Chia's Song of Experiencing the Tao": transl. by Walter Liebenthal in *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. VI (1941), pp. 1-39. This contains, in addition to the text, a scholarly introduction in which the authorship, the author, and the text are discussed; Appendix I and II, in which textual variants are listed, and Appendix III, where translations of biographical material from the *Sō-kōsō den* 宋高僧傳 (Ch. *Sung kao-sêng chuan*) and the *Kei-toku dentō roku* 景德傳燈錄 (Ch. *Ching-tê ch'uan-têng lu*) are given.

The Zen reader would, perhaps, not always agree with Prof. Liebenthal's translation of terms or his personal interpretation of the text.

### III. ROKUSO DAISHI HŌHŌ DANKYŌ 六祖大師法寶壇經

(Ch. *Liu-tsu ta-shih fa-pao t'an-ching*), *Taishō* No. 2008. This text is the work of Shūhō 宗寶 (Ch. *Tsung-pao*) of the Yüan (1260-1368). In his preface, Shūhō states that texts of the *Sixth Patriarch's Sutra*, as the work is commonly known, had long been lost or out of circulation, when one day he happened to come upon an old one. He was much interested and searched further until he found two more. All three texts varied from one another, so he undertook to collate them. Having done so, he decided that much additional material was necessary to make the text understandable to readers of his day, some 600 years later than the death of the Sixth Patriarch. Therefore, into the text which he had arrived at through collation, he interspersed other material of his own. Unfortunately, he does not tell us what texts he used for the collation nor indicate in any way what part of his finished work was his own added material.

Shūhō's text has been the text continuously in use in the Zen sect of China and Japan since the Yüan dynasty for, until the discovery of manuscripts at Tun-huang, no other was in general circulation. It is the text translated in the books mentioned below.

At Tun-huang, early in this century, however, were found versions of the *Sixth Patriarch's Sutra* which pre-date the Yüan text of Shūhō by at least 350 years. One of these is the *Taishō* No. 2007. This Tun-huang text is about one-third the length of Shūhō's text. Perhaps it is an example of one of the versions used by him for his collation. However that may be, comparison of this Tun-huang text and the Yüan text discloses many identical passages in both, but with such passages in the Yüan text considerably expanded, obviously by Shūhō's "necessary additions." An English translation of the Tun-huang text will shortly appear in the Columbia University Press publication: *Sources of the Chinese Tradition*. It seems probable that careful study of the several Tun-huang texts and comparison with the Yüan text will better reveal the actual teaching of the Sixth Patriarch in middle T'ang, and clearly indicate how and to what extent Zen had developed during the several hundred years that had passed before Shūhō made his expanded text. Until such time as a comparative study is made, we should not perhaps consider that we really know the Sixth Patriarch's Zen. What we know at present, through the translations available, is the interpretation given to the Sixth Patriarch's Zen by a Zen priest of the Yüan dynasty.

1. *Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch Wei Lang on the High Seat of the Gem of the Law*, transl. by Wong Mou-lam (Shanghai, 1929):

I do not have at hand a copy of the original of this pamphlet, but the abbreviated "Preface" and "Translator's Preface" included in the

edition edited by Christmas Humphreys (see below, transl. No.3) states that the work was translated by Mr. Wong at the request of his teacher and patron, Mr. Dih Ping Tze, who desired to have this sutra translated into a European language in order that the message of Zen might be transmitted to the West. Mr. Wong keenly regrets his incompetence to translate this sutra, since neither his linguistic ability nor his knowledge of Buddhism are adequate for the work requested of him by his teacher. The original translation clearly shows Mr. Wong's devout heart, but leaves much to be desired as an adequate translation of the material.

2. "Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch": ed. by Dwight Goddard in *A Buddhist Bible*, Revised and Enlarged, Edited by Dwight Goddard (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1938), pp. 497-561.

Mr. Goddard's version is based upon the translation made by Mr. Wong. However, the original sequence of the ten chapters has been changed, the text shortened, the material somewhat reorganized, terms and phrases retranslated, and whole sentences paraphrased. All this has been done in accordance with the editor's avowed intention in his preface to the *Bible* to produce a book that should be a "source of spiritual inspiration," rather than a "source book for critical and historical study."

This version of the *Sutra* suffers greatly from the editor's very limited knowledge of the Chinese language, and his dependence upon personal intuitions rather than sound scholarship. It cannot be used as a text for serious study of Zen.

3. *The Sutra of Wei Lang (or Hui Neng)*, transl. from the Chinese by Wong Mou-lam. New edition by Christmas Humphreys (London: Luzac and Co., for the Buddhist Society, London, 1944), 128 pp.

The editor of this version of the *Sutra* has "scrupulously avoided any re-writing or even paraphrasing (of Mr. Wong's text)...but confined himself to a minimum of alterations." Thus, we have in it practically a reprint of the original Chinese publication. The reader becomes somewhat wary of even the editor's "alterations," however, after reading in the preface his reasons for changing Mr. Wong's "Gem of the Law" in the title to "Chariot of the Law." With any knowledge of the Chinese language at all, the editor could have saved himself an embarrassing disclosure, for a glance at the title of the *Taishō* text would have shown Mr. Wong's rendering of the Chinese *pao* as the Sanskrit *ratha* to have been either a typographical error or a mistaken reading for *ratna*.

We must still wait for a scholarly and penetrating English translation of this work in which the words of the real founder of the Zen Sect in China are recorded. In the meanwhile, Western readers should take care not to place too much dependence upon the versions that exist. They would do well to inquire into the qualifications of translators and editors.

Dear Everyone:

This month's and next month's letters will be a little out of the ordinary. I was asked some time ago to compile a list with comments of the translations of Zen texts that had been made into English, French and German. The general impression seems to be that considerable work has been done in this field. But this is not correct. Dr. Suzuki has ranged far and wide through Zen literature for the translated quotations he has used in his many books on Zen. And of course there are many, many books on Zen by Western writers. But translations of full texts into European languages are still very few.

I am giving below the list of translations into English. It should be helpful to you in checking your own collections of books on Zen to see which, if any, of the translations you have missed. After all, the full texts are of the utmost importance to us, for they alone can clearly show the total of a master's teaching. When they are carefully done, the masters can speak directly to us, better than in any other way.

Just yesterday the long awaited, illustrated pamphlets on Ryōsen-an came from the printer. They will be sent out to all of you as rapidly as possible, together with the Publication Plan, which covers in detail the work our Library Research scholars are engaged in. If you want additional copies of either of these, please just write for them. There is no charge.

Ryōsen-an  
Daitoku-ji  
July 4, 1959

*Shun F. Suzuki*





Anuruddha said, "O, enlightened Arhats, please thread the string. Please string the needle's eye." No one was able to do it.

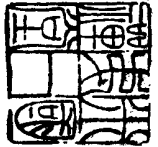
The point of this is very clear. "Needle's eye" is this head of ours full of its wisdom. The Buddha came up to him, took an end of the string, and went himself through the eye of the needle. Anuruddha said that no Arhat really has the true body of Dharmakaya, but the Buddha himself has it. No one has the true body. Everybody is a material body, but the Buddha has the true body, and so he went through the needle's eye.

We have a koan: "Go through the needle's eye." Many koans are similar. "Go through the keyhole." You will understand it, but I will not explain it.

This story is from Primitive Buddhism, but it is not different from true Buddhism today. One who has been enlightened today will understand those monks who were enlightened in that day. There is no difference between ancient and modern Buddhists; modern Buddhists will understand these ancient scriptures. If this story is not very clear to you, your mind is very bad. You must work for spiritual enlightenment. Ask yourself. Is it clear to you?

Anuruddha said to all those enlightened Arhats, "Please thread the string; please string the needle's eye." No one was able to do it. The Buddha held one end and went himself through the eye of the needle. Anuruddha found the spiritual eye but lost the human eye. You must not take this story as telling of Anuruddha's actually losing his sight. He opened his Zen Eye.

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Founded in 1930 by  
Sokei-an Sasaki

A square seal containing stylized Chinese characters in seal script. The characters are arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left character is '禪' (Zen), the top-right is '美' (America), the bottom-left is '會' (Association), and the bottom-right is '一' (One).

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會 協 禪 一 第 國 美