

ZEN NOTES



SOKEI-AN SAYS

SATORI Buddhism is depending always, from beginning to end, upon Buddha's Satori--enlightenment or rather, as we say, awakening. Therefore to us "the highest awakening," Buddha's *anuttarasamyak-sambodhi*, is very important. In the primitive sutras we seldom find descriptions of it, but there are a few. This is one of them.

THE BUDDHA came back from the Nairanjana River after he was saved by the cow-boys and cow-girls and accepted their offering which was, we think, buttermilk. Then he entered the woods of Buddhagaya and searched for a place where he might attain the highest enlightenment. He thought: "Where did all the previous Buddhas of the past attain enlightenment?"

A deva answered the Buddha's mind from the sky: "All the Buddhas of the past, as many as the sands of the Ganges River, attained their highest enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree."

The Buddha thought: "I shall go there too. Did they attain their enlightenment in the standing figure or sitting down?"

The deva answered the Buddha: "They spread soft white weeds under the Bodhi-tree then seated themselves upon them and attained enlightenment."

The Buddha thought: "The place is not very far from here. I shall go there."

And he saw a farmer cutting weeds with a sickle. The Buddha went to him and asked, "What is your name and where do you come from?"

"I am the farmer of this land. My name is Svastika."

"Very well, Svastika. You are my countryman. Let me have some of the weeds which are called Svastika." And Svastika spread the svastika weeds under the Bodhi-tree.

Svastika asked the Buddha, "Why do you spread these weeds under the Bodhi-tree?"

At this point you should know that in this legend Svastika was the god Maha Brahma disguised as a farmer. Therefore it is to him the Buddha is now speaking in the words taken from the sutra to comment upon.

Whereupon I replied to Svastika that I wished to spread four Dharmas under the king of trees if I could obtain them. What are these four Dharmas? They are: holy Sila, holy Samadhi, holy Prajna and holy Vimukti.

Dharma here means "law." *The king of trees* is the Bodhi-tree.

SILA is the law written on our consciousness. Whenever we make contact with another naturally this law is operating in our mind. We call it commandment, the commandment which is written on our own mind. To find it, of course, monks try to follow the commandments established by the Sangha. Sangha means Buddha's community.

SAMADHI is tranquillity of mind. We attain it by the practice of meditation and our mind becomes one with the thing which we are meditating upon. If you are meditating upon a bouquet of flowers, your mind and the mind of the flowers become one. In that moment we say we are in samadhi. When an artist is drawing a painting with his brush and his brush becomes his finger and the landscape which he is drawing becomes his own mind, this is so-called Samadhi. Samadhi is very important for everyone.

PRAJNA is the highest awareness. Especially Prajna is the knowing power of our original aspect. Our consciousness which is aware of the state of original being is called Prajna. Not "I know this, I know that," not knowledge of the outside. Prajna is the knowledge which knows the original state--you call it Reality--which is not the state of the world experienced by your five senses. The highest knowledge, the highest wisdom, is called Prajna. Perhaps you could call it intellectual intuition. But it does not face to this side of the world, it faces to *Sunyata*. I invented an English expression for this, "solid emptiness." The Sanskrit *Sunyata* is emptiness, but it is a solid emptiness. You must experience the real state of this by meditation.

VIMUKTI When you attain Prajna and then observe this phenomenal world, your mind is completely emancipated. Freedom of mind in Buddhism means emancipation from this phenomenal world in this sense.

When Svastika in the sutra spreads the weeds under the king of trees his personality changes from a real man to a symbol. He is the four Dharmas. Legendarily he is the god Maha Brahma, but really it is Buddha's own mind which spreads the weeds, the svastika, under his feet and sits upon them in the right posture of the body. The right attitude of mind is Samadhi.

Why does the Buddha say "I place my mind before

The Zen

ON THE AGAMAS

Whereupon I (Buddha) replied to Svastika that I wished to spread four Dharmas under the king of trees if I could obtain them. What are these four Dharmas? They are: holy Sila, holy Samadhi, holy Prajna and holy Vimukti.

O monks, you must know that then Svastika himself spread the weeds under the king of trees. I seated myself upon them in the Paryanika posture in the right posture of the body and the right attitude of the mind. I placed my mind before me. Then every attachment, every reasoning and every evil Dharma dissolved. Through awareness and contemplation my mind remained in the first stage of Dhyana. Guarding the pure stage of my mind I have annihilated both joy and anxiety, and my mind has entered the fourth stage of Dhyana. With this pure mind I have unraveled the whole web of affliction. I have attained fearlessness. I have realized the many changes of my past incarnations.

Through the purity of my Samadhi and the spotlessness of my mind all leakage of mind-stuff has ceased. Thus I have attained the non-leaking mind. I have attained emancipation from mind and from wisdom. For me the state of life and death has come to an end. My pure practice is now established. I have completed all my endeavor. Therefore I am free from every conception. I know that this is true. Thus I have attained the highest truth.

The above lines Sokei-an translated for the purpose of commenting upon may be found, according to a reference found in the original notes, in Taishō, Vol. II, P. 671 ff. For your information, we keep a record of data regarding such references when known which can be supplied to interested persons, but ordinarily we prefer not to use expensive space for noting it in ZEN NOTES. Sokei-an's comment is noted here for the particular benefit of a correspondent who wanted to know how to "unravel the web." The first three of the four terms mentioned in the first paragraph, you might also like to note, were the principles referred to by the Venerable Hsu Yun among his last words.

me?" This is queer literature, but it is inconvenient to express this attitude in any other way so clearly. It means "I am sitting right here; I am behind myself and this fellow here is not my Self." This is the real mind-attitude. When I keep my mind empty my Self is here.

In such an attitude of mind and body all attachment, every thirst, every desire is dissolved and disappears; and not only desire is dissolved, but every reasoning. So this description tells clearly that the Buddhist meditator is not meditating on some word or passage or thought or philosophy or reading; he is not repeating mantrams in his mind. He severs his mind entirely from the activity of reasoning in order to return to original mind. *Every evil Dharma* means all false knowledge, all theories and religions are also dissolved.

There are two kinds of meditation in the first stage of Dhyana, here described as awareness and contemplation. Truly contemplation comes first and awareness follows, but in this sutra they are written in this order, so I did not change it. This contemplation is not discriminating between this and that, analyzing and hair-splitting, or philosophizing. This contemplation, translated from the Sanskrit *Vitarka*, means, from the Chinese view, "searching for," "mind in action." In meditation when the mind is active and thinks of Buddha's Dharma, the Triune Body, and so forth, it is called *Vitarka*, "contemplation."

Awareness is *Vicara*, not using the mind actively but passively. We observe mind-movement. We do not command the mind to move but take a passive attitude. We let mind move by itself and perceive it on the surface of our consciousness. Moving, wavering is *Vitarka*; smooth ocean reflecting is *Vicara*.

The word Zen comes from the word Dhyana. Its first stage is described here. In it we use the mind actively--it is like waves fluctuating--and then the waves become smooth. The mind perceives, still carries reflections. "Pure stage" means pure like the bottom of the ocean, where there is no fluctuation. When all fluctuation ceases, it is the pure state of mind which remains.

My mind has entered the fourth stage of Dhyana. With this pure mind I have unraveled the whole web of affliction.

This description is very important. Those who have no experience think that in the final stage one goes deeper and deeper so mind and body are annihilated and

mind and body will never come back to this world any more. This is not quite so. When you reach the fourth stage the mind becomes active again. As a diver reaches the bottom and his body returns to the surface when the toe reaches the bottom, so the mind will come up again. Then we see the world anew, and the meaning of the world and the value of the world are entirely changed. Does this mean that the meaning of the world and the value of things have been upside down? No. We were upside down and now we have corrected our view in the right way.

We attain fearlessness when we understand what these phenomena really are. We realize where our mind was, all the stages it passed through. Legendarily we say the Buddha realized he was a man, a rabbit, a snake, and so forth, and now has attained the purity of Samadhi.

Leakage is translated from the Sanskrit word *Asrava*. The non-leaking mind is *Anasrava*. We receive everything from the outside and keep it in our mind. It is printed in our sub-conscious mind. Our mind is fumigated with the stuff from outside. When we are trying to meditate thoughts leak out and we try to clear our mind of this dust. Many things leak out and the meditator is disturbed. But he must reach to the stage of non-leakage, of non-leaking mind. Non-leaking mind is not human mind. While you are living in your own mind you cannot help being disturbed by leakage. You must reach non-leaking mind.

The "mind which you attain emancipation from" is the mind which is padded with human emotions, all the stuffs of our intrinsic mind. And "the wisdom from which you are emancipated" is your human, acquired wisdom--the wisdom you have acquired by studying, all the "isms." When you attain non-leaking mind you will be emancipated from human mind and from secular wisdom.

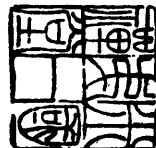
Then life in Samsara comes to an end. Pure practice, Brahmacharya, is established by the mind which has proven the original state of being. All expedients, all endeavor, are useless now. Mind has become immaculate, freed from human thoughts. There is no more need for a human body.

When you can say, as Buddha does here, "I know that this is true," that is what is called Satori.

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

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
New York, N. Y.
Permit No. 528

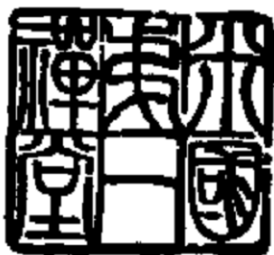
Zen Notes
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Vol. VII, No. 3, Mar. 1960
Mary Farkas, Editor
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**Founded in 1930 by
Sokei-an Sasaki**



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