

ZEN NOTES



OBITUARY *Neville Denman Fowler (Lt. U.S. Navy), 27 years old on September 4th, killed at Rabat, Morocco, together with 76 other persons on September 11th.* This was reported in the newspapers on September 12th, his father wrote us in a brief message. The newspaper back files revealed that this was in an Air France Caravelle jet-liner crash in which three of the 77 victims were Americans, Neville one of them. There were no survivors.

Neville (Nev to his family) was not a member of the Institute but the younger son of Dr. George B. Fowler, its president since 1944, appointed by Sokei-an some months before he died, and a senior Sangha member since 1935. The news we receive from Dr. Fowler (he is regularly the Professor of Medieval History at the University of Pittsburgh but has spent a number of years in Europe researching medieval monasteries and as a visiting professor at the University of Göttingen, Germany, so we do not often see him in New York except at annual meetings) nearly always contains some mention of the activities of the members of his family. We especially remember a day Neville spent years ago with us at East 65th Street, where he had come on his own to find out something of what it was that dwelt in his father's heart called Zen. We were touched then that he had devoted his precious young man's day to this exploration. Later we followed the reports of his career with interest and were proud that our fellow-member had managed to bring a son to such very hopeful maturity in these difficult days for young people. Neville had been a fine student, a devoted son, ~~had married~~, and, following his father's example, become a navy officer (Dr. Fowler was a Lieutenant-Commander in the U.S. Navy during the war and had received his undergraduate education at Annapolis). So though Neville was not personally known to our students here, he was no stranger to us. It seems fitting and proper therefor for us to chant the Hannya and burn incense to his memory with Roshi at a meeting on October 8th. Our deepest sympathy goes to all the members of the Fowler family at this time.

MARY FARKAS

the zen

ON THE AGAMAS

In the Agama sutras the Buddha's teachings are described in the form of memoranda. This morning lecture to the young monks has the genuine sound of the Buddha's own words. When we read these words we realize this was not a lecture given by one of the Buddha's disciples. In this sutra the human quality of the Buddha is tangible.

SOKEI-AN SAYS

COMPENSATION

from The Fox's Cry 1939

Therefore, O monks, you should learn this lesson. You must know the other's kindness and must requite it: The other's kindness is Buddha's kindness. In the Zen view this is the manifestation of all Law. Buddha is your Original Nature. To requite the kindness of Buddha means to realize your own Original Nature and understand the Law.

You must requite even a small kindness, to say nothing of great kindness: In Buddhism the teacher makes disciples. The disciples carry the teacher's teaching and give it to their own disciples. This is requiting. Though you give the teacher food, clothing to wear, a house to live in, this does not mean you are requiting the teacher's kindness. You must attain enlightenment yourself and accept the teacher's Dharma and then pass it on to your followers. This is in

Buddhism called compensation. It is the bond of filial piety of Buddhism between teacher and disciple.

In my teacher's temple were many ladies and gentlemen who offered delicious food and clothing of beautiful texture, and built a beautiful house for him. But there were only a few who really accepted the teacher's Dharma, really grasped the view that he had in his mind, and said, "Old man, your day is over. Please retire. Go back to your own sleeping place, old man. Pile your pillows and sleep well." "All right, children, all right!" The old man will be very glad and will retire. This is filial piety in Zen Buddhism.

Sometimes it happens in the Zen room that a student thinks, "My Roshi never passes my koan because I did not make a donation!" There is no such Roshi in Zen. To pass the koan accepting the teacher's view is paying your debt to the teacher more than giving one hundred dollars.

Zen teaching is very simple. In the first stage you are deluded. You are in original darkness. You don't know where you are. You don't know what it is all about. This is the first stage.

The second stage is when you realize what your Original Nature is, what the true state of Reality is. To attain this stage many young monks in ancient days obeyed very severe commandments, renounced the world, and lived ascetic lives, purifying their minds and bodies, concentrating on that state called Reality with body, mind and soul, and attaining it.

The third stage is reached when you have attained the state of Reality and move into it. As with a house--many people buy a house but do not move in. Many people talk about Reality but never

move into it. In Buddhistic terms, you say you think about it, you offer your prayer to be born in that state and you will be born in it. When you move into it we cannot call it the state of Reality any more. We call it Pure Existence, True Emptiness. There is no more term of emptiness left in that state. You refuse nothing in that state.

And in the fourth stage you come back again. But when you come back again it will not be to a place of delusion any more. Then the pure force of Emptiness performs its agency in this world. You are enlightened. Therefore you see the Law. In the Sutra of Perfect Awakening this stage is expressed as "marvelous existence." The flower is not the usual flower, the moon is not the usual moon, the willow is not the usual willow. But the flower is red, the willow is green and the moon is shining. This is the whole teaching of Buddhism, and of Zen, too.

I carry this teaching into America. The principle is this True Emptiness. This True Emptiness is the principle of Buddhism. This is the so-called purpose of Bodhidharma's coming from the West. What is the purpose? No purpose. It is as the man in the tree-top, holding on to the branch with his teeth, hands and feet not touching. Someone asks him, "What is the purpose of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" And the man in the tree-top must answer. Biting the tree branch, how can he answer? If he answers a word he will drop down.

The purpose of Bodhidharma is the true principle of Buddhism. The main principle of Buddhism is not the *word* True Emptiness. You must grasp it, not merely utter its name. You must realize this True Emptiness and then change your attitude and manifest yourself thus in this world.

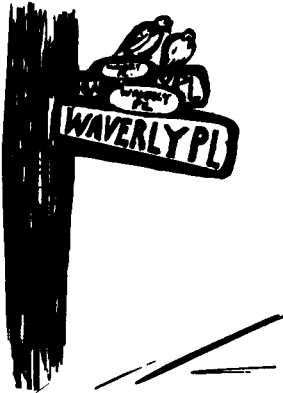
I carry this message to the West. It is my mission. To give this message to America is my purpose. There are many philosophies in the West talking about Reality, but their message isn't complete. They never return from there. I brought this complete teaching from the East. Even in Japan many monks attain just one side. I began to study Zen at an early age. At forty-eight I completed the hairpin turn of Buddhism.

I came to America this last time in 1938, on August 16th, when I landed in Seattle, Washington. I have stayed ten years. On the first day I began to make a hermitage. Everyone helped me. Everyone fought against invisible enemies. Those who will be converted to Zen in the future are our enemies. We are fighting against them to capture them. Many have been wounded and dropped out of the lines. But all those people who helped have left mementoes that are still vivid in this temple. Their footprints are everywhere and their bloodstains are left and I am grateful to them.

I have reached a period. I have reached the point where I have dug a trench and embanked it and made a foothold. I have worked for ten years and my friends helped me. I shall be working for another ten years. I am not doing this for my own purpose. I would be happier in Japan working with my own people.

I love this country. I have decided to die in this country. Oriental civilization must be brought into this country; we have been misunderstood. I shall die here, clearing up debris to sow seed. It is not the time for Zen yet; but I am the first of the Zen school to come to New York and bring the teaching. I will not see the end.

Reconstructed by BRIAN HEALD



On September 9th, 1953, we opened our Wednesday evening meetings at 156 Waverly Place (Wavery Place someone recently addressed us). Our last meeting in the Village will be October 11, 1961, for during the month we move to a new environment, once very famous as Murray Hill. Following is a note one of our members recently sent us of his impressions of the Wednesdays of the past years. We set it down as a memento of our stay here.


THE ADVENTURE OF THE MIND During my Zen reading I have often come across the statement that the Zen Master knows when the student has obtained enlightenment, without resorting to verbal explanation. This knowledge must be similar in nature to that which little children exhibit when they intuitively approach the kind stranger without fear, or the aggressive dog who relaxes when confronted by a friendly person.

My Wednesday evening trips to the Institute are always a fresh adventure in interpersonal relations. There I meet many friends as well as strangers in a relaxed atmosphere. There is no competition here. I sense an eager quest for enlightenment. I can feel that the minds of some are confused and groping--in others a sense of feeling of arrival or awakening. In the fortunate few I feel that they have found harmony with the universe--a cessation of restless striving. Most of this communication goes on with little verbalizing. Therefore at the end of the day's work--somewhat tired and spent--I lie down for a short rest to prepare for another subway ride--because I know that at the end I shall come again in contact with this most interesting adventure of the mind. **ARTHUR SITZMAN**

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