

# ZEN NOTES



SOKEI-AN SAYS

## THE CASTLE

THUS HAVE I HEARD. *The castle of the king must have a tower overlooking the surrounding land. It must have a high turret on which a guard can watch, and deep moats (both water and a dry ditch).*

*Within the grounds there must be broad roads and small paths that connect with the main highway of the country.*

*In the castle there must be the four kinds of soldiers--soldiers on elephants and on horseback, wheel-soldiers and foot-soldiers. And there must be appropriate weapons in reserve for them.*

*A general must watch and protect the gates in the ramparts of the castle.*

The Buddha is speaking to a young Buddhist student, telling him the seven necessary characteristics of a castle.

*Faith is the tower, the main part of the castle. Faith is the first thing you must have. You cannot enter into any religion if you have doubt. You must crush all doubt with your wisdom--affirm, not deny. You must attain faith through affirmation and hold to that faith. If you are Christian or Buddhist, you can understand one through the other. Diamond cuts diamond, jade polishes jade. You can use the jade of another mountain to polish the jade of your mountain.*

*You monks must have a sense of shame. Shame is one of the qualities of grace. It is like a moat or ditch. If you have a sense of shame you cannot kill and you cannot be killed in your sleep. If you dig a deep ditch of shame around yourself, you will be safe from the enemy's attack and you will be at peace within yourself.*

This sense of shame is rather emotional, so the Buddha now emphasizes a more intellectual aspect.

*You must have a sense of honor. It is a disgrace to your own soul if you are not enlightened. Day by day you must advance, taking off the burden of mind and soul. Your meditation must go deep. Even in sleep your attention must be there or you cannot attain.*

Effort is the main road within the castle. If you are not clear in your own mind, you cannot connect with the highway of human life. You must make a beautiful system of roads inside the castle. To do this, there are four exertions (like the four kinds of soldiers) to be made in the Eightfold Path.

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SOKEI-AN SAYS

THE FOUR FRUITS OF THE PRACTICE OF THE HINAYANA--Why do I call these the fruits of the practice of the Hinayana? These four fruits, or results, are particular to the Hinayana teachings; they never appear in Mahayana teachings. They are the results of the monks' listening to the sermons of the Buddha--their enlightenment.

The monks of primitive Buddhism, who, following Shakyamuni Buddha, practiced true meditation and listened to the sermons given by the Buddha, attained their enlightenment in four degrees; they went from the first degree to the second, from the second to the third, and finally reached the ultimate goal.

Those who had been endowed with poor capacity and limited mind did not reach even the second degree, but remained in the monastery as the lowest type of enlightened monk.

The first result, or degree, of the Hinayana practice is to enter the stream of sacred life. Those who have been home-dwellers renounce worldly life and enter the stream of sacred life. In primitive Buddhism all followers left their homes and entered the Sangha. Of course, there were many laymen who stayed home and followed Buddhism, but when circumstances permitted them to abandon their accustomed life, they left home and entered the monastery, shaved their heads, put on their monks' robes and, following the order of the monastery, studied the teachings of the Buddha and, in accordance

with the practice, eradicated all erroneous views of the three worlds (subjectively viewed, the entire universe from the lowest hell to the zenith is called the three worlds).

We say "views" because the effect is only to their minds. When they absolutely straighten out their views, when they do not fall into any superstitions, illogical or heretical views, they have attained the first degree of enlightenment. This degree is sometimes described as "to go against the stream." To go with a stream is easier for all sentient beings, for all men. When you want to eat, you eat; when you want to drink, you drink. But when you control the desire to eat (in the monastery you eat only once a day instead of three times) it is hard. It is easy to entertain notions, but to cut off the notions is like rowing a boat against the stream. So the first degree is called "to go against the stream" or "to enter the stream." You are not following the usual stream but are entering an inverting stream. As you renounce your secular life and enter the monks' life, you enter the sacred stream of Dharma against the stream of samsara--the recurrence of birth and death. With this "view" you eradicate the whole worldly view. This is the first step of monastic practice.

From the Buddha's time, young men have left their homes to live in the woods, to beg from door to door in the village, and to practice all the contrivances of Buddhism.

# THE PRACTICE OF THE HINAYANA

By Mary Farkas

Seven weeks after the Buddha's Enlightenment, the subject of his first sermon was the Four Noble Truths. After his death, when all his sermons were collected into the sutras, these could be epitomized into these same principles, or something to do with them. These Truths therefore may be said, and indeed traditionally are said, to be the essence of his Dharma.

It should be noted, however, that knowing or understanding these Truths intellectually is not their practice. Their practice is the foundation of all Buddhism; particularly, it is the basic training of the monks of the Theravada School, preserved intact until today in the Buddhist countries of Burma and Ceylon, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

When Westerners began to be interested in Buddhism, their observations were usually about the Hinayana, as the Theravada practice is more generally, though somewhat slightly known, as *hina* means small in comparison to the *maha* or great *yana* (vehicle) of developed Buddhism. To the Theravadins, however, their clinging to the words determined to be the actual teachings of the historical Buddha precludes the acceptance of the looser "any good word is a word of Buddha" and "any practice that leads to Enlightenment is good" type of thinking more prevalent among Mahayanists.

I wonder how many of our students of today are acquainted with the system of practice which is the origin of all Buddhist practice, including that of the Zen School, and certainly one of the best reasoned and most effective methods of spiritual training so far developed. Its stated goal is Nirvana. The one who attains it to the nth degree is called an arhat, sometimes referred to as a Buddhist saint.

Lay people among Hinayanists figure primarily as supporters of the monks of the Sangha. Codes of conduct were established for their guidance, but not too much is expected of them in the way of progress on the Path.

Three years ago the only Theravada Buddhist center in America was established in Washington, D.C. under the name of the Buddhist Vihara Society, Inc., 5017 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. There persons interested in this Way may obtain information about it.

If anyone would like to try this practice, training is available in Burma. Admiral E.H. Shattock's book *An Experiment in Mindfulness* describes his three weeks of training there. An American psychologist, Jack Huber, also reports his brief encounter with it (he withdrew after four days of an originally prescribed course of six to ten weeks) in *Through an Eastern Window* (Bantam Books, New York, 1965).

Actually, I was present when U Nu in 1955 at New York University first publicly issued an invitation to American students to come to

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Burma for training. I have no figures on how many, if any, have completed the course at that time contemplated as an introduction.

In 1965, the Venerable Maha Nayaka Thera organized a Bureau of Information on Theravada Buddhism at the Bhikku Training Centre, Lake Road, Maharagama, Ceylon. According to a message sent us at that time, this organization welcomes inquiries.

An excellent source of written information on the Theravada Way is the Buddhist Publication Society, P.O. Box 61, Kandy, Ceylon. They publish a variety of useful booklets.

Practically, the Path has been summarized as "Do good, avoid evil, purify your mind."

The person embarking on the Path puts his trust in the Three Refuges: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha--the teacher, the teachings, and the officially recognized monks, or members of the religious community. If he is not a Buddhist by birth, conversion to Buddhism may be accomplished by taking the Three Refuges before an accredited monk, who acts as witness. A Buddhist name is often given, usually one with a meaning to which the newcomer may aspire.

The Buddha's Way is often thought of as therapeutic, the first of the Truths being the diagnosis of the aspirant's dis-ease, the second the discovery of its cause; the third, the assurance that a cure exists, the fourth, a prescription or guide for its cure.

The Four Noble Truths are called noble because they were discovered by a noble person, and because they can be observed only by noble persons.

1. The First Noble Truth is dukkha. This word, usually translated into English as suffering, or agony, means

disharmony, dis-ease. It is made up of two words. *Du* means bad, mean, vulgar, low. *Kha* means empty or hollow. Everything about man's world is changing, unsatisfactory, empty. "It's all in your mind," we say today. Buddhists said it long ago. The world of man is the world of mind, for the external world is a reflection of the internal, the object of the senses. "In this one fathom long body along with its perceptions and thoughts do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world."

"This, O monks," said the Buddha, "is the Noble Truth of dukkha. Birth is dukkha, decay is dukkha. Death is dukkha. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are dukkha. Association with the unloved, separation from the loved, that is also dukkha. Not to get what one desires, that is also dukkha. In a word, this five-fold mass that is based on grasping--that is dukkha."

2. The cause of dukkha is *tanha*, craving or attachment. Craving is more than desire and always has some selfish element. Its object is unreal. We want what we cannot have, what no one can have. When we do not like what we see, we scream for the unattainable.

3. *Nirodha* is the cessation of craving. Abandonment, renunciation, liberation, detachment are words that suggest its meaning. It is not control of craving, but complete letting go. The person who reaches *nirodha* becomes an *arhat*. He is calm and does not make karma. He has transcended good and evil. Grief and fear do not arise in him. The chain of causation, how one thing leads to another, is clear to him.

How the cessation of craving works is often compared to the uprooting of

a creeper that has a tree in its clutches. When the creeper is uprooted, it may still hang on the tree for a while, but its future is only to wither and disappear.

A famous analogy is that of the lamp, in which the chain of dependent origination is expressed. "Suppose, ye monks, the light of an oil lamp is burning, generated by oil and wick, but no one from time to time pours oil or attends to the wick, then, ye monks, according as the fuel is used up and no new fuel is added, the lamp for want of nourishment will go out. Even so, ye monks, in him who contemplates the transitoriness of existence, craving ceases. Through the cessation of craving, grasping ceases. Through the cessation of grasping, becoming ceases. Through the cessation of becoming, rebirth ceases. Through the cessation of rebirth, old age, sickness, death, pain, lamentation, suffering, sorrow and despair cease. Such is the cessation of the whole chain of dukkha."

The prescription, if one thinks of a disease being cured, or a guide for one's life, is scheduled in the Eightfold Path, which is the fourth of the Truths.

Right understanding is the beginning and end, the most important, of the eight spokes of the wheel that often represents the Path. One must have it to some degree in order to embark on the Path at all. At the same time, it is the completion of the circle.

The eight factors of the Path fall into three divisions; sila (virtue); samadhi (concentration); prajna (wisdom). These represent the three stages of spiritual progress.

Virtue refers to normal discipline and includes right speech, right action

and right livelihood. These three compose the first stage.

Right speech abstains from falsehood, tale-bearing, harsh words and idle gossip. The disciple learns not to repeat anything that might lead to dissension. He tries to unite those who are divided. He disciplines himself to speak at the right time, moderately, and usefully. He develops a personality that is pleasant and welcome, and is agreeable to all.

Right action means not to cause harm, hurt or loss to others, by abstaining from killing, stealing or wrongful sex indulgence. The disciple does not arm himself with lethal weapons.

Right livelihood means abstention from trading in arms or animals for slaughter, from trading in human beings, intoxicating drinks and poisons. It also means not to practice trickery, cajolery, insinuation, dissembling, rapacity for gain upon gain, or usury.

The observation of the first stage which may be summarized as word, thought, and deed is essential for the second and third stages, for purity of mind is promoted by purity of conduct.

In the samadhi stage are three factors: right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Right effort prevents the arising of evil states of mind and overcomes those that have arisen; it produces good states of mind, and develops those that have already arisen; particularly, the discipline develops the seven elements of enlightenment—mindfulness, investigation, energy, rapture, tranquility, concentration and equanimity. He disciplines himself not to give up his effort but to pursue it to the end.

Right mindfulness is developed by

contemplation of the body, contemplation of the sensations, contemplation of the consciousness, and contemplation of mental factors.

Among the contemplations of the mental phenomena are those on the five skandhas (our readers may remember Sokei-an took twelve years for this part alone). Here too is included the contemplation on breathing out and breathing in--anapanasati.

The instructions for the training given in Burma are not difficult to state. Twenty hours a day, the practice goes on, with breaks for two meals and an interview with the teacher. The student is to sit, stand or lie for an hour concentrating only on the abdomen rising and falling during breathing. During each breath, he is to make a mental note, "Rising, falling." The second hour he is to walk slowly about in his quarters, concentrating only on the details of walking. He is to state verbally in his mind what is actually happening, such as, "Up, forward, down" (of his feet), or "Walking, walking," or some such simple characterization. These two types of practice are to be alternated. He is also to watch everything that he is doing, thinking, or feeling, whether in meditation or not. Whatever occurs, he is to state verbally in his mind. If some image appears during the breathing exercise he is to verbalize it in his mind, "Looking," or "Seeing, seeing," until it disappears. If he itches, he is to say, "Itching, itching"; he is to scratch only if and when the itching has become a distraction he cannot overcome.

Right concentration insures one-pointedness of mind. It is the ability to focus one's mind steadily on any one object to the exclusion of all

others. At this stage the four dhyanas are developed. With the penetrative power of right concentration, the disciple understands existence and realizes the highest wisdom, prajna--the third division of the Path.

Right thought is also included in the third division. According to the Hinayana, thought rules the world. It is man's duty to use it well, to think only the best thoughts. These are threefold. With thoughts that are free from craving, thoughts of benevolence, and thoughts of compassion, he frees himself from worldly desires, ill-will and cruelty.

When the highly concentrated mind in samadhi focusses on the three characteristics of existence--anitya (impermanence), dukkha, and anatta (egolessness)---it sees things as they really are; it sees Reality. Highest understanding then occurs, as does the cessation of craving and the attainment of Nirvana.

On its lower level, right understanding, which to some extent one must have had at the beginning of the Path, is a general understanding of existence and right and wrong. At its highest level, Right Understanding means the realization of the Four Noble Truths.



Today, children of twelve in Japan beg their parents to let them leave home and go to the monastery. For twenty years they must go to school, so they go to school from the monastery. Perhaps the parents come to the monastery to see them once a week. These are the monks of the first degree.

The second degree is "to return once more." The monks in this class not only annihilate all erroneous views but they attain emancipation from erroneous deeds. In the world of desire, the kamadhatu, there are nine kinds of suffering, such as attachment, anger, arrogance, ignorance, doubt, and so forth. Or they attach to their bodies, thinking that their bodies are themselves; or they attach to their homemade precepts or homemade morality. According to the sutra, the monks of the second class annihilated six of the nine sufferings, but were unable to annihilate the last three. They do not enter Nirvana, but return once more to this world to eradicate the remaining three kinds of suffering.

There are monks who practice meditation and annihilate all sufferings but cannot annihilate their own consciousness, so they attach to their own consciousness and think it is God in them. Consciousness is like a fine seed, or like a candle flame. When one blows out the flames of all the candles but one that he has forgotten, he returns once more to this world with this candle flame. Not only once, according to our view, but always to one

particular place, this world. As long as you stay in your own consciousness, taking this as the supervisor, you will never attain Nirvana. From there you will observe the whole world again. Those who practice meditation are trapped in this last candle flame and think it the ultimate attainment of Zen. You meditate and meditate, but the ox-tail never goes away. You need to come back once more, to go around once more to attain Nirvana. This is a peculiar place in Buddhism. The monks in this class come back to the six kamadhatu heavens and once again take life in the world of desire. So this stage is called "to return once more."

The third degree is not to return to this world. The monk of this class has gone, he has annihilated all distorted views and all sufferings in his physical body and he will never return to the world of desire. He will be born in rupadhatu and arupadhatu. Rupadhatu is the world of the senses when seeing is not desire, hearing is not desire. To see everything from the standpoint of Reality is called arupadhatu. Monks who attain the third class will be born in the worlds of rupa and arupa and will never return to this world of deluded view. When a child of five sees candy he cries to get it, for he lives in deluded view. At eighteen, when he sees candy he knows its taste; his mind is no more deluded in connection with the candy. The monks of the third class are dead in the deluded view

of the world of desire. They are born into the enlightened view of the non-intentional world.

The fourth degree is called arhat. It means that the one who has attained it has annihilated all the afflictions of mind and body. He has nothing any more. He has entered Nirvana. His body is not his own, his mind is not his own. He possesses nothing. Your mind is like water, your body is like fire, air or sunshine. These are not yours. Then everything is provided for you. All is yours. Your eye is offered to you; your ear is offered to you. The eight million pores of the skin are offered to you. One who attains arhat is like this. It is the ultimate in Buddhist enlightenment. He has annihilated all distorted views and all deluded sufferings. Though he lives in the flesh, he is living in Nirvana. Though he is living in Nirvana, he is living in the flesh.

#### THE CASTLE (continued from page 1)

It takes great effort to attain Wisdom. It takes right effort and right force to attain Enlightenment. Will power has a positive and a negative force--one can look at a person and judge his power of emotion, of physical strength, of Wisdom. The four powers must be in you or you cannot press forward to Enlightenment. Daily life must have the power of emotion, but one must use this power in all directions, not just one.

As a Buddhist, you must have all

the necessary weapons. You must use the Sutras, the Vinaya, and the Abhidharma to conquer the evil in yourself and others.

The Three Baskets (the three sets of writings) in Buddhism are referred to here.

The Sutras are the record of the Buddha's teachings; they include the methods to attain enlightenment, instruction in meditation and stories of students in the practice of meditation and in the observation of the commandments.

The Vinaya is the record of the exertions of the students, the Buddhist daily life and the applications of the law of the community.

The Abhidharma is the philosophy of Buddhism, the understanding of the Buddha and also that of his giant disciples, Shariputra, Maudgalyayana and Mahakashyapa.

*The castle must have a general who can employ great strategy and tactics.*

The Buddha is speaking here about how to teach--the art of tactics. You cannot use force to open another's heart--you must first make contact as a human being, and show upon what law (rule) you are living.

Finally, the castle must have a strong rampart made of stone, from which guards watch everything that enters or goes out of yourself. They must watch so closely that not even a little mouse can get in. There must also be strong guards at the gate. In our Buddhist temples, the god is tiny but the gateman must be huge.

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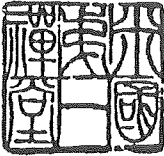
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