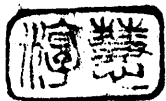
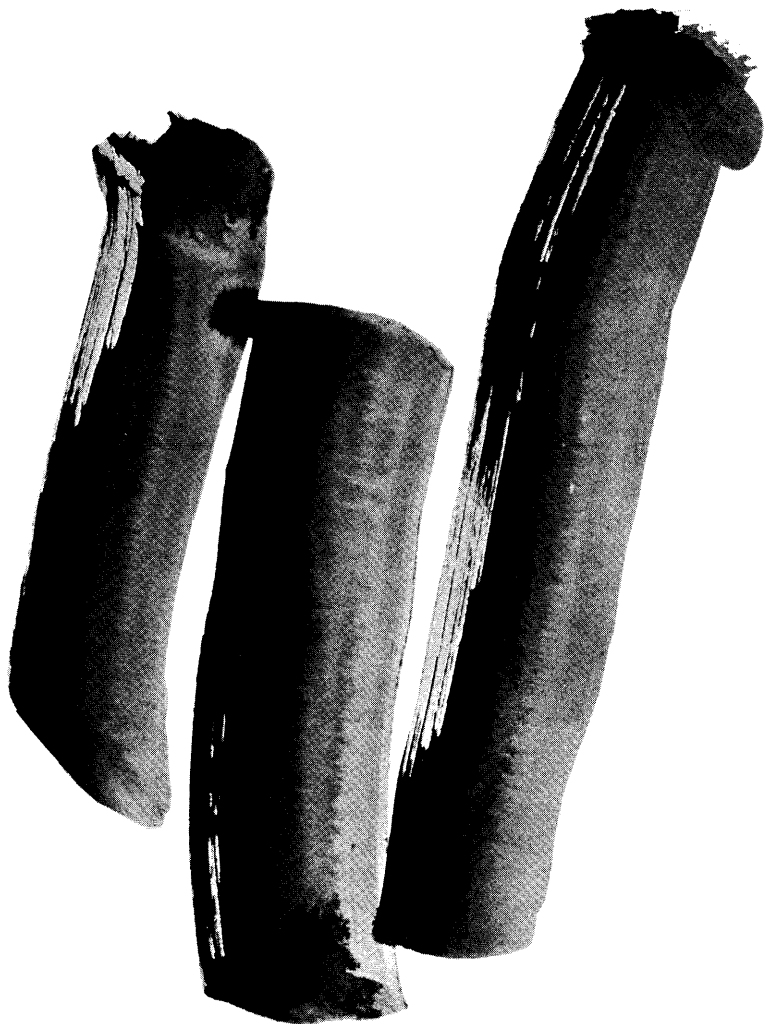


# ZEN NOTES



SOKEI-AN SAYS

### THE THREE BASKETS

In the Buddha's teachings there are three methods by which to attain Bodhi: Sutra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma.

These are familiar Buddhist terms. You call them the "Three Baskets," --in Sanskrit Tripitaka. To translate *pitaka* as "basket" sounds very queer in English, but since basket is the English word for *pitaka*, we cannot make any opposition to it. Of course the "Three Baskets" are not three baskets of manuscripts or books; they are three methods by which to attain Bodhi.

Western people think that Sutra, Vinaya and Abhidharma are the titles of scriptures--that the "Sutrapitaka" is the name of a particular sutra. "Sutra" is the law of practice, but we also use this word to designate a type of scriptures, and as the name of a group of scriptures, the Sutra-pitaka. In the Sutra-pitaka are many memoranda of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha talked to his disciples of his experiences in practicing meditation, and he taught them how to meditate and how to prepare to practice meditation. The Suttapitaka of the Pali Canon consists of the five Nikayas, or "collections" of short sutras: Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara, and Khudakka. Of course, in Mahayana Buddhism there are many famous sutras. They, too, are more or less explanations of the experience of meditation.

The Vinayas are the records of the commandments. I shall speak about commandment another time. Some of the Vinayas are translated into English or other European languages, but Europeans seem to dislike the Vinaya

scriptures. To us this seems very queer. The complete Vinaya-pitaka was handed down from the Hindus to the Chinese and from the Chinese to the Japanese; but many volumes of these scriptures were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese, so we have enough of them to keep the monks busy for a lifetime reading them.

The Abhidharmas are the scriptures of Buddhist philosophy, of the theories of Buddhism. When you have practiced meditation a long time and have attained Bodhi, awakening to the state of Actual Reality, you will begin to theorize how, and when and what will be the result of this awakening. You will make a complete theory of your experience. Just as your scientist "invents" something accidentally. It works wonderfully. But when other scientists ask how and why, he cannot explain because he came on it accidentally. So the Buddhist experiences awakening but cannot explain it. He has an enlightened mind but no way of talking about it. Therefore enlightened men tried to systematize their experience of awakening, tried to explain it so that others could understand it theoretically. About five generations after the Buddha's death, from the period of the patriarch Tashya Maudgaliputra, the philosophy of Buddhism attained a great development. We call it Abhidharma. Of course Abhidharma was already existing in the Buddha's lifetime. The earliest Abhidharma we can find, the Abhidharma of Shariputra, one of the Buddha's great disciples, is translated into Chinese.

So these three types of scriptures are the records of three types of practice: Sutra--meditation; Vinaya--

commandments; Abhidharma; the philosophy and theory of Buddhism. From Ashoka's period, about two hundred years after the Buddha's death, it was a monk's duty to practice these three methods. Sutra is the method that belongs to mind. When I say "mind," I am speaking of "mind" which does not include words. Mind is *mind*; it is not words. Mind is pure, as pure water is pure. Words are symbols of the outside that we keep in our minds. Words belong to the outside, they do not belong originally to mind. Vinaya is the method of commandment. The practice of commandment belongs especially to the physical body. It includes mind, but it is that activity of mind which belongs especially to the body, to physical action. In the Hinayana school particularly it rules the physical actions. Abhidharma belongs to words, and words mean thoughts. We call these three types of practice Body, Word and Mind--in our speech *shin-ku-i*: *shin* is body, *ku* is words, *i* is mind. So Sutra is mind; vinaya is body; abhidharma is words. The Buddhist must practice these three methods to attain enlightenment.

Laymen who practiced Buddhism were so situated that they could not practice all the commandments, so they practiced some of the minor ones and Abhidharma and Sutra. But, in ancient days, the monks emphasized the practice of commandment most of all. Buddhist commandments are different from Christian commandments. Take, for example, your Christian commandment, "You shall not kill." How can you practice that? Of course, you shall not kill a man; but in that commandment of yours it is not written that you shall not kill a cow or a pig. The

Buddhist commandment is: "You shall not take the life of living beings for your joy, to amuse yourself." In Buddhism, angling and fishing are not permitted even today. But these are minor commandments; to kill a cow, a pig, a goose, is not important.

One who wishes to attain enlightenment must first of all give up personal desire. In this present-day civilization it is very difficult to do this, but twenty-five hundred years ago in India it wasn't so hard. One would just say goodbye to his family, sleep outside, wear his robe made in three pieces, and when hungry beg food. It was the custom for an old man, when he had married his son to a bride, to hand down his fortune and go away from home. Quite tragic, but it was the custom then. Sometimes a young man would leave home because he wished to practice to attain wisdom, not to engage in productive daily life. His brothers would see him sitting all day doing nothing, and would say, "Go away! You are lazy, go away!" And the young man would say, "All right," and go to the woods, to the ascetics, and spend his life in meditation to annihilate personal desire and attain enlightenment. Of course such men eat, but they eat to support their physical body, not to gratify their sense of taste. Not as one who says, "Well, this beefsteak is awfully nice and I have eaten so much I have no more room, but I will take one more piece." No, those men eat just soup at noon. If one of them meets his mother on the street, he doesn't speak to her. Even when, by chance, he begs at his own door and the servant puts some rice in his bowl, he goes away without a word. This is to sever every rela-

tion with the world, to keep his mind separate, pure, and disinterested--always in a condition to attain enlightenment. This is the reason for keeping commandments, not because the teacher says, "Obey or I will expel you from the temple!"

So the practice of Vinaya is the first practice for initiation into Buddhism. When you practice commandment and your mind becomes calm and quiet, you don't envy that friend of yours who is making a hundred dollars a week, or the friend who marries a beautiful girl--it doesn't mean anything to you. You don't envy a man his beautiful clothes--it doesn't mean anything to you. No, you just sit down and meditate.

I have already spoken about meditation--what it is and how to practice it. Of course Buddhism is not philosophy; from the beginning Buddhism and philosophy are very different. We don't meditate on philosophy. Philosophy is a method to find the truth. Truth is something which defines an object. As long as the object is here you can find the truth of it. This diamond is here--round, hard--you can find the truth of it. But when there is no object in the universe, when all is empty, there is nothing to define, and truth is unnecessary. As long as the objective world exists, truth cannot be permanent truth, because the world always changes its truth. What is truth today is not truth tomorrow. What is truth? You answer. Someone once said truth is milking the he-goat and catching the milk in a sieve. There is no "truth" in Reality.

So the Buddhist doesn't meditate upon words used to define something.

He just meditates on his soul. That is all. It is as simple as water.

But when you try to explain the Abhidharma, it takes five thousand and forty-eight volumes. So Buddhism looks like philosophy. But the Abhidharma is only the philosophical part of Buddhism, a very minor part of the world of Buddhism. Of course, now that time has passed and the condition of the human world has changed and human nature has also become very sagacious, people don't put much emphasis on the practice of commandment or meditation. An American once visited a Japanese monastery and saw the monks sitting meditating all day long. "Why don't they do something?" he asked. "Why don't they spend their time producing something instead of sitting there doing nothing all day long?"

#### Theravada Buddhism in Modern Society

Observation of the code suggested for the layman in the Sigalovada Sutta insures an orderly and peaceful society. In the Chakkavattisihanda Sutta, the Buddha explains how a man can progress materially. The Venerable Pimbure Soratha Thero of Ceylon, summarized this sutta in a talk at the 2nd Buddhist Seminar in Japan.

Poverty is the cause of immorality and crimes in this world. Therefore the Buddha emphasized that the government should not try to suppress crime through punishment but should eliminate poverty. Grain and other facilities should be provided to the farmers who live on agriculture, the government

should lend money to traders and those who engage in business, and adequate salaries should be paid to those who are employed.

When the people are provided with opportunities to earn adequate incomes they will be contented and have no fear or anxiety. Consequently the country will be free of crime.

A man named Digha Janu visited the Buddha and said: Venerable Sir, we are ordinary laymen, leading family lives with wives and children. Would the Blessed One teach us some doctrine that will be conducive to our happiness in this world and hereafter?

The Buddha told him that there are four things necessary for a man's happiness in this world. First, he should be skilled, efficient, earnest and energetic in whatever profession he has chosen (utthana sampada). Secondly, he should insure his security by keeping his income and expenditures in proper balance. Thirdly, he should have good friends, who are faithful, learned, liberal and intelligent, to help him along the right path. Fourthly, he should spend in proportion to his income, neither too much nor too little.

There are four other virtues that are conducive to the layman's happiness. He should have faith and confidence in moral, spiritual and intellectual values (saddha). He should abstain from destroying and harming life, and from stealing and cheating, from adultery, falsehood, and intoxication (sila). He should practice charity without attachment and craving for wealth (caga). He should develop the wisdom that leads to the complete destruction of suffering and finally to the realization of Nibbana.

In the days of the Buddha there were rulers who governed the country unjustly. People were oppressed and exploited, tortured and prosecuted. Excessive taxes were imposed and cruel punishments were inflicted. The Buddha was deeply moved by these inhumanities. Therefore he directed his attention toward problems of good government. He showed how a whole country could become corrupt, degenerate and unhappy when the head of that government is corrupt and unjust. For a country to be happy it must have a good government. The Buddha said that kings have ten duties to perform in order to provide good government.

The first of these is generosity, liberality, charity (dana). The king should give his wealth earned from the state for the welfare of the people. Secondly, he and the others in his government should have high moral character (sila). The king should not destroy life, steal or exploit others. Thirdly, he must be prepared to give up all personal comforts in the interest of the people. He must be free from fear or favor in the discharge of his duties and must be sincere in his intentions and must not deceive the public. He must possess a regular temperament (maddava). He must practice non-violence, and harm no one. He must promote peace by avoiding war. He must have the ability to bear hardships and insults without losing his temper. He should not oppose the will of the people. He should not obstruct any measures that are conducive to the welfare of the country.

If a country is ruled by men endowed with these qualities it is needless to say that the country will be happy.

BASIC BUDDHISM AS TAUGHT IN CEYLON by  
The Ven. Nyanasatta Thera --abridged

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SAYING THAT A PERSON KNOWS THE DHAMMA? Most people mean by it that such a Buddhist knows the Precepts, all the common forms of worship, the usual stanzas or gathas (verses), suttas (discourses) and stories illustrating the essentials of the Dhamma, and that he or she knows how to do the right thing in public and in private life. Further, he knows the life of the Buddha, the common forms of meditation, a few Paritta-suttas (discourses recited for protection), and hence can give consolation in a calamity, and eventually take the place of a Bhikkhu (a Buddhist monk or priest) at funerals, if a Bhikkhu is not available. He also can teach the Dhamma to his children and pupils, can conduct a Sunday School or a refresher course in Buddhism and give a lecture on any aspect of the Dhamma. In Burma, he also knows the Abhidhamma or at least the essentials of Abhidhamma, the Higher Doctrine.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE DHAMMA can be discerned by a student: Institutional or Organized Religion, and Personal Religion. Institutional religion is the form of Buddhism found among the masses in the East; Buddhism as a Personal Religion predominates in the West and among the intellectuals in the East. Organized Buddhism centers around the monasteries; while the Dhamma as Personal Religion usually takes the form of literary activities, study and propagation, appreciation and a desire to apply the teaching in one's daily life.

THE USUAL METHOD OF TEACHING THE DHAMMA in Ceylon, not in Burma, is to teach the Five Precepts and the forms of worship, both in public and in private. This instruction can be undertaken by parents and then supplemented by Teachers and Bhikkhus. Next we teach the life of the Buddha, the basic truths of Buddhism, the Paritta-suttas, the meditation, at least the Satipatthana-sutta, the Discourse on Mindfulness. Advanced adult students still learn the History of Buddhism and the History of Buddhist Thought. It is also a custom to discuss the Dhamma in comparison with other religions and with non-religion. In Burma it is the Abhidhamma that predominates in the curriculum of Buddhism.

BUDDHA-DHAMMA-SANGHA, the Teacher, the Teaching, and the Order of Disciples are the subject of Buddhist study.

BUDDHISM is the System of Teaching of the Buddha. It is a philosophy, ethics, psychology and religion.

THE BUDDHA as a historical personage is the all-enlightened and compassionate teacher who by his own effort has discovered and first realized the Truth called Dhamma and has the ability to lead other intelligent beings to the self-realization of the Truth taught by the Buddha.

THE DHAMMA of the Buddha is the ethical and philosophical teaching of the Buddha, the cosmic and moral law governing this world and realized as well as revealed by the Buddha, the All-enlightened One.

THE SANGHA is the Order of the Disciples of the Buddha, the Community of those who have realized the truth first proclaimed by the Buddha or who are striving to realize it, and who by example and precept teach the Dhamma.

Though in the new Western usage not only priests but laymen are called members of the Order, in the original early Buddhist usage "Sangha" refers only to the fully ordained Bhikkhus, and even the novice (Samanera), though outwardly resembling a Bhikkhu, is not counted as a member of the Sangha. Hence in Southeast Asian countries the Sangha consists only of those monks who have received the Higher Ordination (Uppasampada) and really follow the rules.

THE BUDDHIST is a person who accepts the guidance of The Three Refuges (Buddha-Dharma-Sangha) and endeavors to the best of his ability to observe the basic moral precepts of Buddhism. The Buddhist reveres the Buddha, studies the Dhamma, follows the Teaching in his daily life, and gladly supports the members of the Sangha, the Bhikkhus, in their work of deliverance and enlightenment.

THE ESSENCE OF THE DHAMMA, the Four Noble Truths of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of suffering, is the special Teaching.

Virtue, Meditation, Wisdom and Deliverance (sila-samadhi-panna-vimutti) is the briefest summary and definition of the Path to Liberation and Enlightenment. Charity, Virtue and Contemplation (dana, sila, bhavana) is the same path as trodden by the lay devotee of the Enlightened One. Hear and study, bear in mind and practice the Dhamma is another brief summary of the course to be followed by the Buddhists. The study of the Dhamma leads to practice, practice means spiritual development and spiritual development leads to the self-realization of Enlightenment and Liberation.

## THE FIVE PRECEPTS

A Buddhist, before he commences a session of meditation, takes five vows. They are these:

- 1 I undertake the rule of training to refrain from injury to living beings.
- 2 I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking what is not given.
- 3 I undertake the rule of training to refrain from sexual misconduct.
- 4 I undertake the rule of training to refrain from falsehood.
- 5 I undertake the rule of training to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs.

It must be understood that these five precepts are not in the form of commandments issued or demanded by any god or man. They are vows which one takes upon oneself as conducive to progress. It is important to note that they are not in the form of a promise or pledge to "refrain from taking what is not given" and so forth. If they were, and a follower broke such a precept, his confidence in himself would suffer a serious setback.

Instead, they are worded in the form of an undertaking to try one's best to observe them. It is clear that the vow is to make a serious effort. To observe these five precepts at all times and under all circumstances would normally be a difficult task, especially for a layman, but at least he must try. The stress is on the training of oneself. If he fails, it is to himself that he has failed, but to renew with a determined effort to keep on trying. That is why the vows are daily renewed by every layman.

*From the World Fellowship of Buddhists  
News Magazine, Rangoon, Burma.*

SOKEI-AN SAYS

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH is the description of the practice by which one attains enlightenment.

1 See correctly. Technically, this means to accept the Four Noble Truths--agony, the cause of agony, the annihilation of agony, and the way of the annihilation of agony. The Buddha said, "Life is agony." Without avoiding or rejecting agony, look at it correctly. Accept it, go through it and annihilate it. There is a koan: "In the moment of death, how do you emancipate yourself?"

When you see a river or a mountain, you must observe it as it is. But observe it once! Do not look at it twice. Having looked at it with your pure and clear mind--do not look at it again with deluded mind. Your sensations are not absolute existence. From the correct standpoint, New York City is transparent.

2 Think correctly. The activity of thinking belongs to willpower. If you want, you can stop thinking. You are thinking of your mother, for instance. A friend comes and you give up thinking of your mother and face your friend. Correct thinking is to disengage yourself from desire, anger, ignorance. Passion comes from ignorant instinct. When you throw the light of your mind upon it, you can turn this instinct into wisdom, and you will find it is love, or compassion.

3 Speak correctly. Speak straight! When you are ignorant, every word you say is a lie. "Have faith in God," someone tells you, but he himself has no faith.

4 You must begin from the practice of right observation, as the sun rises

from the horizon at dawn. When you see things correctly, you will think about them correctly. If you had been born without senses, you could not think. You would be unaware of your own existence. What would you call this first state? Buddhists call it "Shunyata." It is empty. When, standing upon this first state, you think something, it is correct thinking, and when you say something, it is correct speech.

4 Correct deeds. Behavior is regulated by the commandments. In Zen, these have extended meanings. "You shall not kill" includes all living beings.

A young novice came to the bath while the teacher was bathing. He told the novice to bring cold water to cool the bath. When the master had enough, the novice threw the spare water on the ground. The teacher yelled, "You are killing the water! Why do you not give it to the plants?"

5 Correct livelihood. Support yourself by observing the laws of the country and the commandments.

6 Right effort. If there is an evil way, annihilate it. If there is a good way, protect it and make it better.

7 Mindfulness. Do everything mindfully, with deep attention. Observed positively, the whole world is pure, for everything consists of the Four Elements, each of which is pure.

8 Samadhi. The meditation in which you will become one with the universe. When you go to a movie and see Greta Garbo, you jump into her, lose yourself and become her--when she cries you are one with her, when she laughs it is the same--samadhi.

When you practice to become one with the universe, you will enter it and it will enter you.

*Zen Notes*

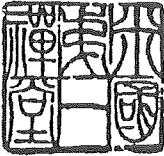
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