

ZEN NOTES



うろちよりのむろちへかへるひとやすみ
あめふらばふれかぜふかばふけ

IKKYU'S DOKA

*Uroji yori muroji e kaeru hito yasumi
Ame furaba fure kaze fukaba fuke*

A rest on the way back
From the Leaky Road
To the Never-leaking Road;
If it rains, let it rain;
If it blows, let it blow

Translation by R.H. Blyth

SOKEI-AN SAYS

NO LEAKAGE--In Sanskrit, *ashrava* means to stream, to flow. *An* is a negative prefix. *Anashrava* therefore means not flowing.

Ashrava is a synonym of *klesha*. I always translate *klesha* "afflictions." It is the many vain thoughts that leak out in the state of *samskara* or in the state of *samjna* and then flow out from the gates of the six roots (*indriya*). When pure objective existence is blended with vain thoughts, one cannot see its original aspect. One who overhears whispering often takes the meaning according to his own imagination. Or, because one likes someone, one sees her as a beauty even though she is not. A farmer who is very proud of his blend of fertilizer thinks its odor is perfume. Or someone who bakes a biscuit thinks it is very tender when it is hard as stone.

The Buddha's disciples who annihilate this *ashrava* with their sacred wisdom are said to have attained the annihilation of *ashrava*. *Ashravakshaya* is the term for the annihilation of *ashrava*.

With the knowledge of *nirodha*, the annihilation that is the third solution of the Four Noble Truths, one attains pure *silā*, *samādhi* and *jñāna*. With this *silā*, *samādhi* and *jñāna*, one annihilates all afflictions and attains *Nirvāna*. Therefore *nirodha*, (annihilation) is the cause of *anashrava* and the state of *Nirvāna*. The attainment of the state of *Nirvāna* I call the state of *anashrava* (no-leakage). The attainment of the state of *Nirvāna* is called the result of *anashrava*.

When the Buddha's disciple attains *arhat*, he has annihilated his worldly

body and attained the body of Reality. In our terms he has attained *Dharmakaya*. We practice this in *sanzen*. The real meaning of *sanzen* is very pure. Sometimes, students take *sanzen* very carelessly, blended with their own emotions, their own sentiment, their own viewpoint. The true meaning of *sanzen* is that one makes interview with the teacher in the state of *Dharmakaya*.

In popular *Mahāyāna*, our physical body is the *Dharmakaya* without knowing the real state of *Dharmakaya*. So, the student takes it for granted that he can interview the teacher in the *sanzen* room with his worldly mind. The attitude of taking *sanzen* in *Dharmakaya* is that one carries the oil-filled vase without spilling a drop. Or, in popular metaphor, it is like a cat watching a mouse, all concentrated mind, so that there will be no room for the usual *klesha* (worldly afflictions) to come into it.

When a disciple of the Buddha attains this state of *anashrava*, he realizes that there is nothing he has to learn in his life. You will find this written many times in the *sutra*. When an *arhat* realizes there is nothing more to do, not a thing to do in his lifetime, he has attained *arhat* and annihilated all afflictions. He will never return to worldly life in future incarnations. He will stay forever in the state of Reality, which is the state of no-leakage. Therefore no-leakage is the synonym of Reality also.

In Buddhism we learn that there are six supernatural attainments. One of them is the knowledge of the annihilation of affliction. When we use our supernatural knowledge, people think there must be some miracle or

that there is something mystic about it, that one who has attained it transfigures himself into a transparent body and with this body penetrates stone walls and reaches the limits of the world. He walks on water, dives to the bottom of the sea, walks through fire. To think this is a sort of Buddhist dilettantism. One who truly attains Dharmakaya will never take this erroneous view. In the Dharmakaya practices you will realize that your upper body is the blue sky and your lower body is the black earth. You are able to transfigure yourself to the body of fire, the body of water. Those "miracles" are written about in the sutras and also you practice them yourself in the Dharmakaya; you will prove it for yourself. You will never listen to the words of dilettantes. A professional Buddhist reads the sutras differently than the dilettantes.

In Buddhism, one who realizes his emancipation (vimukti) is aware that he has been emancipated and will attain the knowledge of how to emancipate others from their afflictions. Then he attains the dignity of an arhat.

At the end of an Agama sutra there are customarily four lines: *My life has come to an end; my pure deed has been established; my pure action has been performed; I will not return again to this existence.*

My life has come to an end: My egoistic life of a heathen, my life of un-Buddhist behavior has come to an end.

My pure deed has been established: Usually this line is understood to mean that he has nothing to do with worldly affairs and that he will not drink wine, handle money, steal, sleep with a woman. All these worldly af-

fairs have come to an end. Accordingly, his daily performance has come to an end. He will not return to the life suffused with afflictions. One who has become aware of this state has attained the state of the annihilation of the afflictions.

This is a quotation from the Abhidharma of Shariputra. Shariputra wrote the *Matrika*, the mother of all Abhidharmas. He remembered the Buddha's *Matrika*. *Matrika* means the terminology of Buddhism. The Buddha created the terminology of Buddhism and used its terms, for instance, the five skandhas. They were not used previously. They were the Buddha's invention. Therefore Buddhists call these *Matrika*. Late Buddhist philosophy, the Abhidharma, is also called *Matrika*. So these lectures have been on *Matrika*. Shariputra described the Buddha's usage of terms and gave their explanation. This has been handed down to us, translated into Chinese. It is supposed to be very old and is very short, too. It was stuck in a corner, so European scholars don't dream of its existence.

In the annihilation of afflictions there are two states. In the first, he has annihilated his afflictions by his attainment, but his ingrained habits are not cleansed. His attainment is that he has annihilated his afflictions. This is the state attained by the Zen students who have passed the koans: "Joshu's Mu," or his "Poplar Tree in the Garden," or Ma Taishi's "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha." This Zen student has annihilated his afflictions with the power of this koan, and he has grasped the state that can be grasped through koans, but the ingrained old habits through many incarnations are not annihilated. Therefore

his knowledge and his deeds are incompatible.

The other state is that of one who has annihilated leakage with his intellect and whose ingrained or "perfumed" habits through many incarnations are also annihilated.

The former is the state of Bodhisattva, the latter is the state of Buddha. Buddha annihilates his afflictions with his sword of Wisdom and he is also emancipated from the long permeating habits of affliction. The Bodhisattva, with his sword of Manjushri, has cut off all afflictions, but he is still in the bonds of permeating afflictions that he still bears in this incarnation.

NIRODHA The practice of Nirodha is the way of reaching the state of Nirvana. The secular layman thinks Nirvana is the state of death, but the states of birth and death are the two sides of one Being. We cannot think that the state of death is the ultimate; there must be some other state that transcends death--that includes both death and life.

I cannot explain to you how one can reach the state of Nirvana, but this state embraces both life and death. It doesn't exist in any particular time or place; it is existing always. You are always in the state of Nirvana, but it is hard to realize this.

When I returned to Tokyo after fifteen years, the train reached the heart of the city and I came out of the station, lost my way, and could hardly believe I was in my old home town. It is the same with Nirvana; you are in that state, but you cannot real-

ize it because you are looking for something else, your idea of Nirvana. You are looking in the dark, so Nirvana means extinction--that your body will be cremated and the ashes scattered from the George Washington Bridge into the Hudson River. And your soul will remain. Queer kind of Nirvana, isn't it? You accept this material universe, this material existence, and you realize that there is a state of absolute annihilation, but this is a dualistic view. Why is cremation and annihilation necessary? You will understand this when you know the state of Nirvana.

It is written that Nirodha is the way of annihilation, the way to wipe out superstition and warped concepts, the way to give a big cleaning to the house inside your brain. If this house is haunted by ghosts, you must exorcise them, drive all false notions from your brain. Then, if you meditate thus, you will find Nirodha.

I wash my kitchen towel every day, but it is never quite clean because it is soaked so long in impure water. Meditation is the only way to clean your brain--this is Nirodha.

To meditate, you must know the attitude of meditation; it is the attitude of Buddhism since its beginning. When you are young, you go into a monastery. When your parents come to visit you, you refuse to see them; you live alone, without writing to your family or associating with friends in the temple. In meditation, you endeavor to find your mother-consciousness.

Body itself is consciousness. Someone asked me: "Sokei-an, you always talk about consciousness. What is consciousness?" I said: "You have it. Why do you ask me?"

THE TRANSCENDENTAL WORLD

It sounds very queer--"the transcendental world." We have the world in which we are living. Where, then, is this so-called "transcendental" world? I have heard that name, you have heard that name. And you have seen many people doing queer things--joining their hands, meditating, shaving their heads, putting on some unusual robes. Or perhaps your sister has become a nun, has concealed herself in a cloister, never coming out; her parents visit her but may see her only through a little window. Or perhaps one day your child suddenly goes away into the woods and never comes back home. Or some gentleman who wears a queer collar visits your house and talks and talks and asks your parents to donate money for something, and next year you see a new building with a sharp roof on the corner of the next block. What are they doing? Besides eating three meals a day, sleeping at night, working every day, why are they doing such queer things, you ask. It has no meaning for human life. They call it religion, but it looks to you as if they are crazy. You cannot understand them at all.

The pastors in the churches talk to us about something we cannot understand, something not related to politics, or stocks and bonds, or even education. And then they tell us there is a world which is different from this world and they call it the "transcendental world." They confess these pastors, that they haven't seen it yet. My father says he doesn't know what it is. My mother says she has heard of it, but that it is in a remote place very difficult for men and women to reach. I can't under-

stand what this transcendental world is.

I was a dreamer when I was a child. I liked to read fairy stories and when I was alone I was always dreaming and mimicking a fairy who visited me. A story I read told of the existence of a queer fairy world. A child saw a beautiful butterfly one day and tried to catch it with his net. He chased it, but the butterfly flew away, moving its wings very slowly. The child followed the butterfly and tried again to catch it, and again. "Oh"--it flew quickly. The child was entirely absorbed in his single-minded desire and followed the butterfly on and on. Finally, in fatigue, the child lay down and slept awhile. When he opened his eyes again he found himself in an unknown world. His sisters weren't there, but young ladies who looked like his sisters appeared and took him into a beautiful palace garden. The garden was in the blue shadow of tall old trees, and everyone there spoke a queer language he couldn't understand.

People who live in this world and speak about the transcendental world think it must be like the world in the fairy story; they wish to find it, and be absorbed in ecstasy. So they go to church on Sunday morning and listen to the pastor's sermon and sing hymns. Their voices vibrate in the cathedral, and they try to realize the transcendental world within. Then they come out of the building. All of a sudden the transcendental world disappears, and they find themselves on the Fifth Avenue bus.

They persistently say there is another world in this world, but they cannot find it. When someone does find it, then this someone doesn't speak

about it anymore, except to say he knows it and is living in it.

"Absurd," you say. "He is eating breakfast at the same table with me. How can he say he is in the transcendental world? What? He says his mind is in the transcendental world? Then his mind must be living outside his physical body. I don't believe it."

What is this transcendental world? You have experienced it--seen those people going to church, burning incense, clasping their hands, singing hymns, shaving their heads, showering coins on the altar. What for? You see it actually before your eyes and yet you cannot explain what they are doing. They call themselves religious; they live differently from us. You say, "For myself, I eat three times a day. If I am a carpenter, I work all day building a house. When evening comes, I go to bed--that is enough. I don't need to see any transcendental world."

In ancient days a man went out from the city and entered the endless desert through which a camel cannot pass--not even an elephant can cross it. He fasted in this desert twenty-seven days, drinking from a spring. Then, all of a sudden he was struck by the light of heaven and saw the transcendental world! He came back to the town in a sheepskin and called, "The Kingdom of Heaven is near!"

I have seen similar occurrences. In a village in Japan a man who was selling kindling wood from door to door disappeared one day. His wife and children were crying. One of the children said: "Three years ago a mountain monk came by. His skin was rough, his eyes were shimmering. He stopped and spoke to papa. When papa came home

he said to me, "My son, in three years you will graduate from school and then you can do my work." Now these three years are up. Once again that mountain monk has come by, and papa has disappeared!" Some fifteen years later the son saw his father among the mountain monks at a festival, but his father did not recognize him. For his father was living in the transcendental world. They saw each other, but they were living in different worlds. "Papa doesn't recognize me!" That transcendental world was very real to him--the child cannot help but believe it exists.

Yes, it exists. Yes, there is a transcendental world. How can you get into it? There is a way to enter it.

If someone should ask me, "Have you entered it?" I would answer, "Yes." If he should ask me, "Are you still in it?" I would say "Well, I haven't come out of it!" "Oh, Sokei-an, you are kidding. You are here speaking to me, with your eye-glasses, your nose, your voice.... How can you be in the transcendental world?" "I cannot explain. I can only tell you that I am in the transcendental world, but you are not in it yet. I am here with you, I can see you, but you fail to see me--the man who is in the transcendental world."

Once I visited Concord, near Boston, and saw the bed on which Mr. Emerson, the transcendentalist of New England, died. As I stood beside the bed of Mr. Emerson I thought, "Here was one in the Western World who also had some experience in the transcendental world."

Yes, it is true that there is one more world in this world. It is a different world, decidedly.

The world is a queer existence.

Your world and my world are not the same world. Your world is your own. Your world is yours and my world is mine. You have created your own world according to your own mind and senses, and your mind is not my mind and your senses are not my senses. I am living in a different world from yours. This can be proved very clearly at the Natural History Museum: the rooster is living in the rooster's world; the dog is living in the dog's world; man is living in man's world. The eyes, in fact all the sense organs of these beings have different structures. The reality which stands before them is the same, but the world which appears on their senses is not the same.

I think I must sound very queer to you when I say that my world is mine and your world is yours. We are living in a common world, it is true; but when we question carefully, you don't know my world and I don't know yours until you are living in the transcendental world. There, in the transcendental world, every soul will agree that the transcendental world is one and the same.

People ask me sometimes: "Sokeian, you have experienced the transcendental world and you are still there. How do you feel?" I say, "I feel just like this. I got into it in my twenties and I have been there ever since, so I haven't much experience of the other world."

How did I get into it? Well, I shall tell you the truth. One day I wiped out all notions from my mind. I gave up all desire. I discarded all the words with which I thought, and stayed in quietude. I felt a little queer-- as if I were being carried into something, or as if I were touching some

power unknown to me. I had been near it before; I had experienced it several times, but each time I had shaken my head and run away from it. This time I decided not to run away, and-- "Ztt!"--I entered. I lost the boundary of my physical body. I had my skin, of course, but my physical body extended to the corners of the world. I walked two, three, four yards, but I felt I was standing in the center of the cosmos. I spoke, but my words had lost their meaning. I saw people coming toward me, but all were the same man. All were myself! Queer, I had never known this world. I had believed that I was created, but now I must change my opinion: I was never created; I was the cosmos; no individual Mr. Sasaki existed.

I came to my teacher. He looked at me and said: "Tell me about your new experience, your entering the transcendental world."

Did I answer him? If I spoke, I would come back into the old world. If I said one word, I would step out of the new world I had entered. I looked at his face. He smiled at me. He also did not say a word.

Afterwards I realized that to do this needed strong conceit. I went back home and told my mother. She looked at me and said: "I thought you would go crazy and die, but now it seems you have got somewhere." For in my seventeenth year I had come on two words, "subjective" and "objective"-- "Ha!"-- and after that my brain flowed like water, and I became a no-good boy for daily life.

Now I realized that those ancient people who left home and stayed in the woods or monasteries, those fathers who went away from the street corner

with the mountain monks, were expecting to get somewhere. I understood that there is some place you can get into and find a new world.

From the new world I observed this world. I enjoy this world very much. I enjoy this world in favorable circumstances and in adverse circumstances. I enjoy this world in joy and in agony. I have no fear of death. This is an easy world for me. I understand those religious people and their state of mind, what they are doing, and what they are looking for.

There is only one key that opens the door into the new transcendental world. I can find no single word for it in English, but, using two words, perhaps I can convey the meaning--shining trance. In that clear crystallized trance--"Ztt!"--you go into the transcendental world. In one moment you get into it, and in one moment your view becomes entirely different. Then you understand why people build churches, and sing hymns, and do queer things.

Yes, there is another world.

HOW TO ATTAIN SATORI

In Satori, you don't come to a conclusion. It is as if you go to your mother. I felt so when I was meditating on my koans, it was as if I went to my mother's lap. I had such a feeling when I came to meditation. You have used your mind to its utmost, but still you haven't attained Satori. But when you come back to your mother's lap, abandon everything--this is the real religious feeling. You worship all the universe, you worship all nature, and

you bring yourself back to the bosom of your nature which is your mother. Then all nature's universal force will support you.

This Zen is not like anything in philosophy. Zen is like some type of art. All sincerity and worship go back to the bosom of nature. I found this knack to go back to the bosom of nature, because I was an artist and worshiped nature, and from that feeling I entered Zen very quickly. When you get a koan and, by philosophy, get the answer, then you cannot find the gate; it is a blank wall. But when you go back this way--keep your face to the phenomenal world, but step back so that the great universe will embrace you, and you go back to its motion (there is no other way to meditate)--you then realize consciousness. How deep can you go back? How deep can you meditate?

The way of Zen is different from all others. You cannot get it from books. You read Dr. Suzuki and you think, "Now I know and can lecture on Zen." It is foolish, childish. You must strive philosophically first, and hold that rope and then go back. If you have no philosophical conclusion, there is nothing to be realized.

When you are sleeping, you go back to the bosom of nature, but you have no wisdom. But first, what is nature? It is not sun and mountains and stars and moon. Nature is in your mind.

When you become very humble and adore everything, then you will find the soft attitude of mind and will reach the bottom of nature. I have talked about the philosophical part of Zen so many times. Sometimes I must give you a lecture on how to attain Satori.

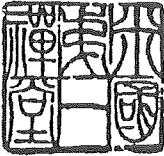
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