

ZEN NOTES



Year of the Dog



The first hundred or so lectures Sokei-an gave on the *RINZAI RECORD* were noted by only one person, Audree Kepner. Her sketchy notes were given to Edna Kenton, the historian of the Institute, who entrusted them to me. They were deciphered and typed by three persons, Edna Kenton, Vanessa Coward, and myself. There are a great many difficulties in their reconstruction. It was my hope that the work of Ruth Sasaki, who, with her staff and collaborators, was engaged in the monumental task of preparing a scholarly, annotated translation of this Record, would have by now been at hand for reference. Unfortunately, this work seems to be even less near publication now than it was when Mrs. Sasaki died. If I wait until I can "rectify" the names and terms in our notes of Sokei-an's lectures from that text I shall have to abandon all hope of making this material available to the students of "today." To duplicate the work already done on Rinzai and his time would not only be foolish but impossible. Even if this hoped-for text comes to print in the next five or ten years, however, it will not include what I have taken as my personal responsibility, that is, the rescue from the oblivion of his disciples' notebooks, whatever of Sokei-an's teaching on this subject remains tangible. I have therefore decided to begin presenting it with this issue. Errors of fact and understanding are inevitable in the Notes you are about to read now and in future. As better information becomes available, it will be gratefully put to use to complete the working draft of the whole series.

What I am most concerned to convey is Sokei-an's Zen. If any of this comes through, our labors will be marvelously recompensed. In any case, we must exert our best efforts to requite the kindness of Sokei-an in attempting to carry Rinzai's message to the Children of the Eastern Seas.

Chinese names found in Mrs. Sasaki's *ZEN DUST* will be used, with a few exceptions: Zen will be Zen and Rinzai will be Rinzai. VANESSA COWARD'S DOG OF THE YEAR OF THE DOG adorns this issue. I am a "dog" so I wish you all a particularly Happy Dog Year. Those born in 1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958 share (according to the Japanese Fortune Calendar) all the fine traits of human nature. They have a deep sense of duty and loyalty, are extremely honest, and always do their best in their relationships with people. They know how to keep secrets absolutely private. However, they are somewhat selfish, terribly stubborn, and exceedingly eccentric. They also have sharp tongues and champion justice. There is also a "dog" in the character of the Buddhist name Sokei-an gave me, which happens to be the same as that of Rinzai's scribe. I take pleasure in noting these auspicious signs and take them as portents for the good luck of the venture here commenced. Editor

Wayne Barlas



Rinzai Reed

WHOEVER wants to learn Buddha's Dharma today must find Real Understanding. When he has attained Real Understanding he is not subject to the course of Nature that takes life-and-death. He is at liberty to go or stay in this or that abode of life. He does not seek the extraordinary, but it comes naturally. Brothers, the patriarchs had ways of making men. Do not be confused by others. If you want to use the power you have attained by Real Understanding, use it. Do not hesitate.

SOKEI-AN SAYS In China, where the Zen Sect originated, five schools of Zen developed. Rinzai, a Chinese master who lived in the 9th Century, was the founder of one of them.

From the 7th to the 10th Century was the famous golden period of the Tang Dynasty, when Chinese civilization reached its highest point. During this epoch, the Zen School of Buddhism swept throughout China. Chinese history in this period was distinguished by a struggle against fierce invaders, Tartars and Turks, "blue-eyed and purple-bearded," from the west. The spirit of China was strong, warlike, so Zen, influenced by the atmosphere of the times, was characterized by bluntness and force, coarser-grained than today.

Rinzai's "catechism," which precedes the part with which I am beginning (July 6, 1932), is difficult to explain to those not familiar with the Zen School. Here his idea of Buddhism is given to his disciples.

One of his disciples, Enen, noted these lines. There is not much detail, but the conception of Zen is clear.

No translation of Rinzai's sayings has been made from the Chinese until now; this is the first time it has been recorded in English or any language other than the Chinese.

Rinzai says "today." In Rinzai's time, Buddhism in China had reached the highest point of its metaphysical phase. The Chinese had accepted Buddhism from India with their brains. Now they realized it was a "brainy" Buddhism. It is the same in America. It will probably take five hundred years for Buddhism to reach America's heart. An impasse had been reached from which it was impossible to take another step. Rinzai broke out a new channel through which the slow flow poured into a quick stream.

Whoever wants to learn Buddha's Dharma must find Real Understanding. Real Understanding is not to be attained through brainpower nor through the emotions. Buddhism tells us how to come to it in the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path, the fourth of the Four Noble Truths, is the Way that brings us to Real Understanding.

When he has attained Real Understanding, he is not subject to the course of Nature that takes life-and-death. In the autumn, the red maple leaf falls into the pool. Looking at it, we see the water as red, but, scooping up a handful, we see that it is not stained but pure. The lotus grows through earth and water and air but is not stained. The soul is not touched by life-and-death as it struggles through the six ways of sentient beings (hell-dweller, hungry spirit, angry spirit, beast, man and god). If one has attained the knowledge of the fourfold, not dualistic, view, he knows that life-and-death taken together are just one aspect or phase of existence; this life is not to be changed, this life is the life in heaven. This is Real Understanding. Real Understanding is not knowledge gained from the outside but is inherent Wisdom, the faculty we possess of gathering experience and creating ideas. This faculty comes into manifestation through meditation. The gathering is the sharpening of the sword of Wisdom; to understand its sharp point one must meditate and realize IT.

There is no need to draw legs on a snake. You already have Understanding. Use your innate power of observation.

To attain Real Understanding is comparatively easy, but to exercise it is hard. If you do not exercise it, however, where is your Buddhism?

There are three stages in our observation of the universe. The first is kama-dhatu, the stage of desire; our observation of life through the five senses, where all is agony. The second is rupa-dhatu, our observation without desire, but through the senses. The

third is observation without the senses, but with mind. These three stages have been described in Buddhism as a staircase of meditation to ascend to the state of complete annihilation, the third of the Four Noble Truths. From the pure consciousness of arupa-dhatu, realization must be instantaneous. It is not necessary to deny or affirm anything, just to realize that one is Reality. Speak Reality with great SILENCE! Rinzai is speaking of Buddha's Way. When you reach here you understand that phenomena are Reality.

He is at liberty to go or to stay in this or that abode of life. At will he can live in any of the three stages of his understanding: kama-dhatu, rupa-dhatu or arupa-dhatu. In these three stages are many divisions, comprising all the abodes of sentient beings, who are constantly transmigrating through them. These three stages form the backbone of Buddhism. All ascending and descending experiences are to be found here and he who understands may go or stay as he wills.

The mass of mankind knows only one or two of these stages, kama-dhatu and rupa-dhatu. Even the stage of arupa-dhatu is still in the realm of conception. It is, however, the highest point for man, so it is truth as a conception.

He does not search for those things that are beyond the ordinary, but comes to their attainment naturally. He has attained the stage of Buddha's Real Understanding and has proved Buddhahood, yet at the same time he is able to enter into the life of any sentient being with sympathy.

Brothers, the patriarchs had ways of making men. Previous Zen masters

the zen

RAHULA

knew how to make good disciples with the stick. Under "thirty blows" one must prove one's cognition of non-existence, bearing any shame or torture as so many feathers. One will suddenly open his eye to Reality under the "shout" of the Zen master, will realize that existence is non-existence.

Do not be confused by others. If you want to use the power that you have attained by Real Understanding, use it. Do not hesitate. One time the Buddha said do thus and so; another time the Buddha said do not do thus and so. What then? What can one do about the many (227 for monks) commandments and endless theories. *Do not be confused. Believe in your own judgment. Use it! Do not hesitate.* Here Rinzai is speaking to those of a capacity for enlightenment equal to his own.

Are you able to use IT in everyday life? What is this IT? (Here Sokei-an held up his nyo-i, the symbol of the Master's office). Do you understand? It is the power that you attain through Real Understanding.

FOURFOLD VIEW A note by R.F.Sasaki in *ZEN DUST*, p.269. Indian schools of Buddhist philosophy developed a system of related formulas based upon principles of logic, the purpose of which was to destroy men's delusive thinking about Reality through dialectical reasoning carried to the limits of human logic. The basic terms in this system were the "four propositions" and the "hundred negations." In the system as it is usually referred to in Zen writings, the four propositions are "one," "the other," "being," and "non-being."

Although the Agamas are called Hinayana, if you read these early sutras without any preconceived ideas about Hinayana and Mahayana, you will find in them the true essence of Buddhism--just one vehicle from the Buddha's time until today.

The sutras about Rahula, the Buddha's son, have not much historical value. In the Chinese version, Rahula was in the bosom of his mother for six years, and was born in the days of the Buddha's enlightenment. In the Pali, Rahula was born about seven days before the Buddha left the palace. He was fifteen (about six years after the Buddha's enlightenment) when he visited his father and became his disciple. Shari-putra taught him the commandments.

Rahula was living in the woods, in a hot spring garden in Rajagriha. The hot water came out of a mountain, and all believed that hell was inside it.

One night, when the Buddha was at Venuvana, not far from where Rahula lived, he set out to visit his son. After begging food in the city, he went into the woods to seek him.

Rahula saw his father coming and ran to meet him. Of course, as a monk, he had no home, but he had made a little hut of leaves and branches under the trees.

First Rahula took the Buddha's bowl from his hand and set it down. Then he took off the Buddha's robe, folded it and placed it aside. Finally, he spread a covering upon a straw cushion. The Buddha sat down and Rahula washed his feet, pouring water into an earthenware bowl from a pitcher made of one joint of bamboo. Then he seated himself beside the Buddha.

The Buddha pointed to the bowl where a little of the water in which his feet had been washed remained, and said: "Do you see the water in that bowl?"

When I read such old sutras, I feel the conversations between the Buddha and Rahula are the same as those recorded between disciple and master in China. I can see the Buddha's face vividly. At this question, Rahula would look deep into his eyes.

Rahula answered, "Yes, Lokanatha, I see the water in the bowl."

The Buddha said, "As we look at the water in this bowl, we see there is not very much. It is like the enlightenment of the monks, of which there is only a little also. I do not say much to them, so they should not have too much to say to me. If they know how little understanding they have of Buddhism, yet still have a lot to say about it, I should say they have no sense of shame and that they are making evil karma for themselves. They even laugh about their lack of understanding."

The Buddha is speaking the way a father would to a child. Of course, in the monks' life they do not call one another father or son.

In this sutra we are not told the reason why the Buddha happened to make this visit to his son, but there must have been some reason. We can find it in the Vinaya. Rahula was making fools of people. When someone would ask him where the Buddha was, when he was sojourning in Venuvana, Rahula would say, "The Buddha is at Vulture Peak." The enquirer would go there, not find the Buddha, then come back and say that Rahula had lied. On another occasion he might say, "The Buddha is in the Deer Garden, or Shravasti," when he

was at Venuvana. Or it might be, "The Buddha will come today," or "He will come this evening" when he knew he was far away.

Once someone asked Rahula how the Buddha crossed a certain river, and the answer was, "Oh, he walked over the water."

After such an incident, people would talk. "Why does Rahula make such answers?" "If he were not the Buddha's son, we would drive him out."

The Buddha realized that someone who had entered the esoteric teaching might talk foolishly, but now he gave Rahula a commandment: "You shall not make useless jokes."

Then the Buddha poured the water out of the bowl and said to Rahula: "I am throwing the water out of the bowl." "Yes," said Rahula, "I see you are throwing it away."

The Buddha said: "I am going to speak to the monks and tell them that they must throw the Dharma out, throw Buddhism out of their minds as I am throwing this water out of the bowl."

These words have a very deep meaning: you must throw away the water with which you have washed your feet; you must empty your utensil. How?

Then the Buddha inverted the bowl and said, "Did you see what I did?" Rahula said, "Yes, I saw that you inverted the bowl."

What is this inverted bowl? This is a very short description and, if you are not a deep student of Buddhism, you will not understand it.

When you throw away the water, when you throw everything away and attain Nirvana, you invert the bowl. You become pure existence.

Buddhism is not a religion of taking into your mind. Buddhism strips

off the vestures of mind one by one--takes off all the vestures of affection, all the vestures of karma. You become pure being, pure Buddha nature--that is Buddhism.

To take off all the vestures, you must first go everywhere--put on the vestures of hell, evil spirits, animals and devas. Then there are holy beings like ashuras and bodhisattvas--so many vestures! To take off the vestures, you must return to the places in which you put them on. You must go down to hell to take off that vesture, if you are wearing it. There is a question: "Why must the enlightened one go down to hell?" The teacher will answer: "If you do not go, how can I save you?"

To take off the philosophical vesture, one must speak philosophy; to take off the gold vesture, we have to use gold. Diamond cuts diamond. To help others, we must take their attitude. If you wish to help someone who has fallen in the street, you must get down there. We use many methods to divest ourselves and show the real Buddha nature. Then we invert it, turn it upside down. It is not necessary to take the attitude of a saint, just invert it and come back to the original place.

The Buddha set the bowl upright, then inverted it once more. He showed Rahula four places of understanding. He did not say much, but Rahula understood.

Rahula entered the first stage of the esoteric teaching. Not knowing the three other stages, he had been making fun of unenlightened people.

The Buddha took this method to demonstrate this to him. Some Zen masters show you their hand, as the Buddha

showed the lotus flower to the multitude and only Mahakashyapa understood. He looked and smiled.

This is the true explanation of the Buddha's teaching; it may be shown in many different ways. A monk said to Joshu, the famous Zen master, "I have thrown away everything: knowledge, hope, past, present and future. What do I do now?" Joshu said, "Pick it up." Another monk asked Joshu the same question and he replied, "Have you finished your breakfast?" "Yes." "Then wash the dishes."

Buddhism is like a soap to clean away impurities. When you can smell the soap, we know that it is not yet pure. So, if you clear up your mind with Buddhism, then you must destroy that Buddhism. Then what? Do you keep your clean hand in your pocket all the time? No? You must stick it into dirt again. This is exactly like the incident with the bowl.

RINZAI

From *ZEN DUST*, a note by R. F. Sasaki LIN-CHI I-HSUAN (Rinzai Gigen, d. 866) was the founder of the Lin-chi (Rinzai) School of Zen. Though there is no evidence that in his lifetime Lin-chi intended to found a school, his personality and the manner and content of his teaching were so outstanding as to provide naturally the foundation for a distinctive style of Zen.

I-hsuan's family name was Ching (Kei), and he was a native of the village of Nan-hua (Nanka) in Ts'ao (So), a prefecture south of the Yellow River in modern Shantung. Though the date of his birth is not known, modern scholars place it between 810 and 815. Nor do we know how old I-hsuan was when he became a monk, though again we may

surmise that he was about twenty, the usual age at that period. Thereafter he devoted himself to studying the Vinaya (discipline) and other Mahayana schools and doctrines and familiarizing himself with numerous sutras and commentaries.

Some five or six years later, having become dissatisfied with these studies, I-hsuan journeyed south to Chiang-hsi (Kozei), in present Kiangsi. There he entered the monastery of the Ch'an master Huang-po Hsi-yun (Obaku Kiun) with the purpose of devoting himself to meditation. After three years had gone by without achieving any results from his practice, I-hsuan was induced by the head monk of the monastery to approach Huang-po with the question, "What is the cardinal principle of Buddha-dharma?" The Master's answer was a sharp blow. Twice more he asked Huang-po the same question, and twice more received only a blow in reply. Thoroughly discouraged, I-hsuan prepared to leave the monastery. But the Master persuaded him to go first to see the old monk Ta-yu (Daigu, n. d.), who was living not far away. The story of I-hsuan's subsequent enlightenment under Ta-yu and his return to Huang-po's monastery for ten years of further practice is too well known to need repetition here.

After receiving the Transmission of Dharma from Huang-po, I-hsuan went on a long pilgrimage, in the course of which he visited a number of masters. Eventually, perhaps about 849 or 850, he settled in a small temple just inside the capital city of Chen-chou (Chinshu) in the northern part of the province of Ho-pei (Kahoku), modern Hopeh. Since the temple was situated on the bank of the river Hu-t'o (Koda)

near a river-crossing, it was called the Lin-chi-yuan (Rinzai-in), or "Temple Overlooking the Ford." There the Master remained for some ten years, preaching and teaching the Dharma his master Huang-po had transmitted to him.

About 861 or 862 Lin-chi, as the Master is more popularly called, left Chen-chou, and, after a short journey southward, took up his residence in a temple in Wei-fu (Gifu), in southern Hopeh. There he spent the remainder of his life in retirement, attended always by his devoted disciple Hsing-hua Ts'un-chiang (Koke Zonsho). His last conversation, in which his disciple San-sheng Hui-jan (Sansho Enen, n. d.) figures prominently, is a striking example of the Zen style of using abusive words in giving praise:

When the Master was about to pass away he seated himself and said, "After I die, do not let my True Dharma Eye disappear." San-sheng came forward and said, "How could we let your True Dharma Eye disappear!" "Later on, when someone asks you about it, what will you say?" asked the Master. San-sheng gave a "Ho!" "Who would have thought that my True Dharma Eye would disappear when it reached this blind ass!" said Lin-chi. After he had spoken these words, the Master, sitting erect, revealed his Nirvana.

There is some disagreement as to the date of the Master's death, perhaps due to a copyist's error, but the weight of evidence places it on May 27, 866. His Imperially conferred posthumous title was Hui-chao Ch'an-shih (Esho Zenji). The *Chen-chou Lin-chi Hui-chao ch'an-shih yu-lu* is the record of the Master's sermons, sayings, and certain episodes in his life, compiled after his death by his disciples.

Journal

Copyright 1970 by (The First Zen Institute of America, Inc.)
Published monthly () 113 East 30th Street, New York, NY 10016

Vol. XVII, No. 1, Jan., 1970
Mary Farakas, Editor
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright of Zen Notes is the property of the First Zen Institute of America, Inc., and its content may not be copied or e-mailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download or e-mail articles for individual use.

Founded in 1930 by Sokei-an Sasaki	First Zen Institute of America 113 E30 Street New York, New York 10016 (212)-686-2520 www.firstzen.org
	
會 協 禪 一 第 國 美	