

ZEN NOTES



The Year
of
the Boar

19
71



Rinzai Reed

Some baldheads can't tell good from bad. They believe in spirits, gods; they point to the East, to the West, select a clear day, a rainy day. All such monks must sometime pay their debts before old Yama (the lord of hell) by gulping down redhot iron balls.

Men and women of good family, possessed by fox spirits, are bewitched by fables of their invention. Blind idiots, someday they will have to pay back the cost of their rice.

SOKEI-AN SAYS

In the last lecture, Rinzai called attention to the blind religious teachers who are always talking, making sounds, but whose words have no substance; they are like birds that imitate human words without knowing what they say. If you ask such a teacher a question, he just starts talking without even knowing what the question is. Rinzai despised such teachers.

A real teacher knows how to guide a disciple into the channel of real religion. If a student does not get into the true channel, he may spend years studying philosophy or elaborate metaphysics without its meaning anything real to him. Rinzai is independent. Observing the decline of old-type Buddhism of the metaphysical type, he is trying to open a new channel. That is why he abuses all the teachers of his time with such a fiery and venomous tongue.

There are monks (here called baldheads) who have nothing in their heads, no enlightenment, no third eye opened to Reality. There are many such blind monks. They wear the robes of monks,

but they do not have the eye to see beyond phenomena. Beyond phenomena to them is a mystery with no Reality to it. They do not know how to discriminate between good and bad, for they have no criterion, no standard of judgment.

In the Orient people worship local gods or spirits. One of these may be selected by a friend as a guardian for a newborn baby. Superstitious precautions are carefully taken. For instance, there was a novelist who always stepped on his left foot first going out of his house. If he forgot which foot he had used, he would have to go back home and step out on the left to make sure. Another man was supposed to visit his uncle in the hospital but it was on a day the diviner warned him not to go north so he remained home. War is declared on a "dragon" day.

One day the Buddha made a soup that had a hundred flavors. He let a disciple sip it and asked him: "Do you taste a hundred different flavors?" The disciple said, "Yes." "Do you think there is an ego in this soup?" "No." The Buddha agreed. "It

is exactly as you said." There is no particular ego in anything in the universe. When you understand this, you give up all clinging, desire, selfness. What we feel to be a separate ego is a combination. When the combination disappears, nothing is left.

Biology today demonstrates that consciousness comes between the tissues of two cells. One cell has no consciousness; it is contact that creates consciousness. A million things making contact within us create our consciousness. Our body is a composite of the four elements; our mind is composed of the five skandhas, the five shadows. When these dissolve, they return to the eternal atom, akasha, as water goes back to the ocean. Akasha and jnana (consciousness) always go together. So we know we have no ego. If you have realized non-ego, your true nature permeates all nature.

The Buddha told his disciples that this flavor comes from the combination. If one element is too strong, the taste is not good. Harmony is natural to the universe. When the elements contact each other, first there is love, then balance and symmetry, straightness. The whole eightfold path, the body of commandment, is innately in us. Without it, we cannot live. But there is no teacher for this, no disciple. It is the nature of the universe--harmony, balance, right consideration--it is in us. If a monk comes into the temple, sees that a paper on a table is crooked and passes on, the teacher will call him back. The natural commandment is in everyone. Music is an excellent example of commandment, as are all the arts. If you realize this body of commandment is in you, it is not

necessary to study the commandments, but we have been blind so long that we do not see our own nature.

When the light of Dharma begins to shine in us, when we realize the dignity of the soul, then our eye will see the law of the universe and we know what to do, we feel what we must not do. Agony directs us to make everything straight. When somebody feels pain, nature is fighting for him. He can recover. This is the criterion written within us.

THIS IS THE END OF THE FIRST CHAPTER. *GULPING DOWN REDHOT IRON BALLS* occurs in the twelfth subdivision of the Hell of Human Thoughts, the first of the Eight Great Hells, according to the *Mahabhidharmavivashya*.

THE JAPANESE FORTUNE CALENDAR SAYS: Boar people (those born in 1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971) put forth all their strength when they set out to do something--have a thirst for knowledge--are short-tempered, yet hate argument--are affectionate and kind to those they love--do best marrying rabbit and sheep people--should avoid snakes at all costs.



Photo of L.B. Chow taken in 1954

LAWRENCE B. CHROW July 10, 1897-December 19, 1970

There is no way of knowing how many of our readers were acquainted with Larry Chrow, but I do know there were many persons all around the world with whom he was in correspondence, some of whom see Zen Notes. His communications often took the form of "notes" bringing information that would be of particular interest to them. This message is in part directed to those persons.

It happens I was the last person who knew him to be with him on Saturday, December 19th, before his heart gave out on the Third Avenue bus as he was on the way home to East 75th Street. On the following Tuesday, John Harvath, a friend at his office, called to tell me of his death, realizing I might not hear of it otherwise, as Larry's sister, who came from Richmond, Indiana to take care of his affairs, arranged for cremation, with no service here.

Larry sometimes invited me to the opera or theatre, both of which he attended regularly. On this occasion we had gone to see "Home", in which two fine actors, Gielgud and Richardson, gave what must be among their best performances. It was a moving play somehow about the end of life.

During the last few years, Larry, being an orderly and responsible person, and having passed the age of retirement, had, he told me, devoted quite a bit of time and consideration to the disposition of his worldly effects (including a number of rare books and art objects) and was satisfied with the arrangements he had made for them (the Quaker University of Earlham in Richmond, Indiana, had agreed to accept the greater part). His retirement actually took place several years ago. After it, he had taken an extended trip, then (somewhat surprised at the offer) gone back to work at Recording for the Blind, where he had been employed most of the time since 1956.

Through good management, he was getting along all right in a frugal way, and discussed with me the fringe benefits open to the senior citizen. He always seemed to be able to include the things he cared about in his budget. He rarely came to visit the Institute empty-handed, the most recent gift here being the colorful Japanese calendar which was an annual present.

Although not currently an active member of the Institute, he was nevertheless related to it, and had his own place in its life. For instance, he used to photograph events and objects to insure that its history be properly recorded. Occasionally he took a more active hand and proffered well-considered and sound practical advice.

He kept track of astrological aspects (a friend, Shirley Spencer, the Daily News authority, said she had met him through this interest some thirty-five years ago). When the Institute began its 113 East 30th Street life, he had a chart prepared for it, having ascertained from me the moment of its inception, which we were able to fix by establishing that its entity began when I signed the bill of purchase for the premises Oct. 5, 1960, at 3:32 P.M. He asked me to try to have its first formal meeting at a

time his observations found favorable. Bearing a few such precautions in mind, the Institute, we were assured, should do well. In 1964, he wrote me: "The 9th House of the chart for the Zen Institute...will always remain strong and that means a solid and fine religious-philosophical basis...Providing that the characteristics of (certain) planets...are used for what might be termed penetration into and even through psychic-occult strata of being to that "something-else", the foundations of the Institute will never be shaken." Once Larry telephoned me to be very careful that afternoon as "underground matters" were extremely likely to go awry. Upon examination, the Institute basement was its usual unZen-like, messy but untrammelled self. Imagine my amazement, however, when I arrived at 156 Waverly Place, my home, and previously the Institute's, to find a break in the sprinkler line had inundated our sub-basement and brought out the firemen. Another correct prediction was that of the Institute's actual moving into 113 East 30th Street. In, the face of a variety of planned dates, Larry's was the only one that hit the target.

Although Larry followed the events in the worlds of opera, theatre, travel, and at one time restaurants (though I think he had rather given that up in later years and even tended somewhat toward brown rice), his special interest was in the personalities of the thought worlds that are sometimes lumped (as in Weiser's book catalogs) together with Zen, under the heading of occult (perhaps Larry would have used the word arcane). He kept track of, often corresponded with, and occasionally made arrangements for such assorted "names" as Ernest Wood (Larry had studied with him in India in the '20's and retained lifelong friendly relations), Alan Watts, Christmas Humphreys, Dr. Suzuki (it was Larry who arranged for his 1950 lectures which were the beginning of his career in New York), Lama Govinda, Lin Yutang, Paul Repts, Ruth Sasaki, Norbu (the brother of the Dalai Lama), Manly Hall, and numerous others. Edgar Cayce had been an interest also. Of Aleister Crowley, he wrote me: "I had a chance to meet him when I was in London, but I foolishly took the advice of friends who insisted that I stay clear of him." Larry took pleasure not only in a voluminous correspondence with such persons, but also kept each informed of the others' activities, and introduced them one to another whenever feasible.

New books in one's field of interest were noted, xeroxed copies of reviews and notices of events came in the mail ready for the bulletin board. Cartoons from the New Yorker and Playboy did not escape his eye.

When I was once thinking about doing an article on the consciousness-altering drugs, I became aware of the extent of his archives. Larry instantly produced a mass of clips and books. He himself had written some articles (several appeared in Gentry magazine) and tried his hand on at least one book (a compilation of the "Golden Rules" of various systems) but did not hit the market. A report he made of the visit of Asahina Roshi of Engakuji to the Institute found its way into Zen Notes in 1954. His photo appears in the group picture, in the right forefront, taken on

that occasion.

Larry by no means restricted his ministrations to the "names" he enjoyed collecting; all sorts of people were the recipients of thoughtful attentions. Out-of-town visitors were guided, the aged, halt, and blind were visited, escorted on expeditions, or entertained, the sick and dying attended, the indigent aided, the younger discreetly advised, all this quietly done with no expectation of return or even gratitude. The unreasonableness of the crotchety and forgetful oldsters or sick was sometimes mentioned and excessive or unusual demands were noted as such, but as near to truly non-ego "doing" as I have so far seen was demonstrated regularly throughout the years by this considerate human being. Anything done for him was always noted appreciatively. The words "thank you" were often formed by his lips, "gratefully" by his pen.

When unwise acts were committed by the persons on his list who really ought to have known better in his opinion, Larry, though regretful, even perturbed, neither criticized nor condoned. The nearest to condemnation I ever saw him express was a kind of sigh and headshake combined after an exceptionally untoward act had been brought to his attention.

I first knew Larry when he was acting as a kind of secretary to Ruth Sasaki in the later 40's, as I recall. At that time I wondered how he came to be doing this type of work. The reply he gave me went for other jobs he subsequently held. He wanted to be allied with organizations that aimed to benefit humanity. His was an example of "right livelihood" carefully chosen and efficiently executed.

Larry managed to make the best of his modest living. What he enjoyed most, I think, was travel. After completing his education at Carnegie Tech, he began with a trip to India (where he sought out Wood and Theosophy), and Australia. An old member reminded me that a photograph of him on board a ship, headed, as I recall, into the sunset (I was unable to locate our copy) appears in an early book of Marco Pallis. His voyages covered much of Europe and Central America. He lived in London for a time, though I have no details of his life there. The United States was also well covered. A recent interest was to preserve the Delta Queen on which he took a trip last year. Letters had been sent to those it might concern.

Larry was a walking guidebook to the economical management of tours to the many places he had visited at home and abroad and a willing adviser to anyone contemplating a vacation. Our last conversation, during the intermission of "Home," had to do with the delights of barefooting it in Hawaii, which Larry was enthusiastically looking forward to revisiting in the near future. Mexico too merited a return trip. The holidays were going to be spent in Connecticut with the family of the captain of the ship on which he had visited Australia a half-century ago.

After the theatre we walked across Forty-fifth Street and parted at the door of Abercrombie and Fitch's, where I hoped to find a last minute gift. Wishing each other happy holidays, we said goodbye. Mary Farkas

RUNNING WATER

One day the Buddha told his disciples: Your mind is like running water. Trees and rootless weeds flow along with it. This tree, as it floats along, pays no attention to the trees flowing beside it, nor do those other trees pay any attention to this tree. The one ahead does not notice the one behind, nor does the one behind recognize the one ahead. Your mind is exactly like this. This mindstuff and that mindstuff--all the bits of debris that are floating on the water of pure soul--do not recognize each other. One mind flows and another follows: the one that precedes does not know of the follower, nor does the follower know the one that precedes. One after another, they flow with the water, like sieves. On the earth, under heaven, there is no place you can call your own; there is no rest and no joy through countless incarnations.

If a body has no eye, it does not know where it is going. If a mind has no eye, it does not know the direction in which it is running.

The Buddha is talking about his enlightenment. He is trying to tell you that your mind must have an eye. If you observe your mind from morning to evening, you can see it is like a river in flood. You are writing a letter--about four lines--then you go to the kitchen, cut up a few potatoes, go back to the letter, a few more lines, then you want a cigarette, can't find any, go to the store, go to the movie--your mind is flowing without uniformity. Why? Because it has no center. There is no eye in it. A vegetable has no eye. A tree has no eye. It feels unconsciously. Great Nature, instinct, does the work. For instance, there are

male and female ginkgo trees, but they are in a helpless situation, for they have no sight. Perhaps a seed is carried by the wind twenty miles through the sky to reach the female tree where the flower catches it and conceives. It is so casual because there is no eye.

Developed animals have eyes and perhaps some ideas, though many of the lower species have only a sense of touch not much better than that of weeds. Animals have no real mind so they do not remember anything. Their hunting food is a mere adventure, a lucky strike, casual. They have no purpose. They don't know how to sow seed or grow food. Their mind depends upon instinct, the bosom of nature. How poor they are! If the male leaves his mate, she is never sure he will return. The young leave and it is unknown if they will return or where they will go.

Some human beings are in that class. But the human being has a mind. Wonderful, isn't it, that we have mind, that we think this and that, all day, all year, all our life long? Some human beings think the way a spider spins a web. They cannot find the center of their thoughts. They cannot concentrate thought into one spot. Their thoughts are like the weeds of the ginkgo floating in the air, going every which way because they have no concentrative power. They cannot observe the mind from one step higher than it or gather or govern it. Because they have no eye in their minds they are blind. The body of the human being is not flesh, it is mind. This flesh is the body of the animal, the body of the ginkgo tree. The blossom is the tree's eye. This physical eye is our blossom. The human being, this

strange being, is living in the mind. Have you ever observed the body of mind? Perhaps never. If I say to you "body of mind," what do you think of? Expanding, contracting, growing, circling, diverging, converging, the body of mind is not unlike a jellyfish. It has its own peculiar existence that is the human body. The animal body has sex, but the human body, the body of mind, has no sex. Men and women have the same human body. It generates by metamorphosis to beget posterity. The body of mind is like an amoeba. It divides to beget more existences. During the moment when I am talking and you are listening in this room now, there is just one body of mind, united, then it divides, and the offspring scatter, joining one to the other, and those unite to beget more.

You must look at the human being from a higher viewpoint. It lives in the animal body but it takes an independent attitude. The eye of the mind! If I give you the koan: "Before father and mother, what is your original aspect, why cannot this mind-body find its eye? The tree has its eye, the animal has its eye, why cannot the mind find its eye? Because it never comes to its center, the eye of the mind. Foolish, isn't it?"

You start to spin your web--think, think, think, and what have you got really? Nothing. You cannot answer. We do not care for those trees or weeds that flow in the water of the mind. The existence of our mind depends on that pure water of mind flowing without weeds and trees, not the debris. Before your mother and father, is there mindstuff to talk about? Before creation is there any mindstuff to talk about? There is no past, no

present, no such words. There is no way to think about it. Stop that spinning. Come back to your real existence, find your eye of mind.

I have wasted five years with you already, yet none of you understand Zen. Perhaps that is my fault for speaking for one hour after *sanzen*.

When the Buddha said attain Buddhahood, he meant open your own eye of the mind. The eye of the mind is the flower of the universe. The lotus bud of your mind will open and you will find the eye in the center of the flower of the universe. By opening the eye of the mind, Buddha said, you will understand the benevolence of your teacher.

You come to my room and speak. If I were permitted, I would give you thirty blows. Without a teacher, you can occasionally find the eye of the mind but you don't believe it. So the teacher proves it for you. If you are with your teacher, the Buddha said, you will depend on your teacher's instructions. If you are far away, you will think of his words. When you open your eye of mind you will have pity on those who are blind. When you get your eye of the mind you will laugh at the six ways. You will find that you are not agony yourself in hell. When you see the hungry demons who never find food, and the animals who must labor always and the angry spirits and the gods who dwell in the mind with your eye of the mind, none of these will bother you. You will find your own world, you will look at your mind, animal and vegetable body and locate yourself in the Universe. You will find freedom there.

Reconstructed by Frances Reiter

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