

ZEN NOTES



Rinzai Reed

SOKEI-AN SAYS

Previously, Rinzai has been speaking of those who try to gather fragments of knowledge from others. No matter how much information such a one gathers, he will never understand true Buddhism, for true Buddhism is to be found only in oneself. Anyone who wishes to practice Buddhism must begin by suppressing all desire because it is the cause of suffering, according to the Buddha's teaching of the four noble truths, which apply to the men and women in the stage of kamadhatu, the world of desire. Those who see beautiful objects and wish to possess them cannot attain truth so long as they remain in that stage. In rupadhatu, one can see an object as beautiful without desiring it. The Buddha's eightfold path, the fourth of the noble truths, is the way to bring everyone through this stage of seeming to its conclusion, so that they may enter the non-seeming stage, arupadhatu, and the noumenal stage that is not between the sense organs and phenomena, but between consciousness and the eternal atom, annihilating all into one substance. This consciousness is related to the eternal substance as the ocean reflects the sky. Nothing intervenes between subject and object. All consciousness is equalized--yours, mine, his, theirs.

When one attains this, one is free

If you search for Buddha, Buddha turns out to be merely a name. Who is looking for whom? All the Buddhas of the past, present and future appear only to seek truth. You students who are today following the way have only to seek that same truth. When you attain it, your pursuit comes to an end; until you do, you go on transmigrating through the five paths of deluded beings.

from egoistic notions--there is no separate soul; all individual souls are one--the many in the one. Monism, pluralism, dualism all exist here at once. Here one knows the law of the universe which subdivided is the ten elements of commandment.

The formulation of the commandments and the four noble truths stand upon kamadhatu and point to rupadhatu and arupadhatu. This idea of equalization stands upon arupadhatu and points to kamadhatu--making contact. If you have no conception of the three principles--kamadhatu, rupadhatu and arupadhatu--you do not know Buddhism. All are written in yourself, not outside. You cannot come to an understanding of them by devouring books.

When Rinzai here speaks of seeking Buddha, this is not the Buddha who incarnated as Prince Siddhartha in India. This Buddha is the knower. All the elements in the universe have the power of reacting to that something we call "another"; the function of "knowing" is in IT itself, the whole universe--and that is Buddha. It is in no form or human figure, but is the power of knowing in every atom; IT is omnipresent--that is Buddha.

You devour books, ask teachers, and try to conceive it. What you conceive is a name, not Buddha itself.

It is not necessary to pay attention to what is thought--pay atten-

tion to the one who does the seeking-- that one is the knower. You are like a grandmother who asks her grandchild to find her spectacles-- "Oh yes, I've got them on--" Though you search outside for a thousand years, you will never meet the Buddha that is in you.

Do you know the one who is seeking? This mysterious Buddha enters many different states and knows the feeling and taste of everything in all of them. We speak of many states of consciousness, but really there is just one soul who enters those states as an actor puts on different garments.

One Buddha in you enters all the different states. You scratch your skin, and Buddha enters your skin, feeling that sensation. Good, evil-- there is not a different type of animal in your body for each sensation, only one Buddha.

There have been many Buddhas, not just Shakyamuni, who have entered a human body. Usually we say the Buddhas of the ten directions-- East, West, North, South and between make eight, plus above and beneath make ten. We count seven in time. These were named: Vipasyin, Sikhin, Visvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa and Shakyamuni. The first six are those of the past; Shakyamuni is the Buddha of the present; Maitreya is the Buddha of the future.

Shakyamuni's Buddhism is thought to have some elements of Kashyapa Buddha's Buddhism, still surviving in his time. Some scholars say that the Shakya tribe came from Africa and that old Buddhism was a religion of Africa, perhaps Egypt, that came to rich India and contributed to all the religions there today, which in its developed form then spread to other countries.

The five paths of deluded beings are agony, preta, animal, man, deva.

THE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF DAITO KOKUSHI

All you people! You enter this monastery to study Zen. Don't do it for clothes and food. If you've got shoulders, you won't be without clothes. If you've got a mouth, you won't go without eating. Always direct yourself, twenty-four hours a day, to the place beyond knowing. Study hard, reach it, master it, and leave. Time is like an arrow, so be careful, don't occupy your mind with miscellaneous affairs. You've got to see that! You've got to see that!

After this old monk's pilgrimage, some of you may have rich temples, with large halls and volumes of sutras decorated with gold and silver, full of noisy enthusiasts, or may read sutras and recite dharanis, do zazen for long periods without lying down, eat only breakfast and work day and night. Although you do these things, if you don't set your minds on the marvelous untransmitted way of the Buddha and the Patriarchs, you immediately deny cause and effect, and the true teaching falls to the ground. All these are a bunch of devils, and though this old monk may have left this world for a long time, you are not to be allowed to call yourselves my descendants.

But if there is one person who seriously studies his own affairs, even if he lives out in the fields in a straw hut, cooking his meals of vegetable roots over a grass fire in a broken pot, he is the one who sees me daily and is grateful for what he has received. Who would dare to be careless? Work hard! Work hard!

THE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF DAI TO KOKUSHI

KOZEN DAITO KOKUSHI YUIKAI

NAN JIRA SHO NIN KONO SAN CHU NI KITA ATTE DO NO
TAME NI KO BEO ATSU MU EJI KINO TAME NI SURU KOTO
NAKA RE KATA A TTE KIZU TO YU KOTO NA KU KUCHI
A TTE KURA WAZU TO YU KOTO NA SHI TADA SUBE
KARA KU JU NIJI CHU MURI ENO TOKO RONI MUKA
A TTE KIWA ME KITA RI KIWA ME SARU BE SHI
KO IN YANO GOTO SHI TSUTSU SHIN DE ZO YO
SHIN SURU KOTO NAKA RE KAN SHUSE YO KAN
SHUSE YO RO SO AN GYANO NO CHI ARU IWA JI
MON HAN KO BU KKAKU KYO KAN KIN GIN O
CHIRI BA ME TASHU NYO NETSU ARU IWA JU KYO
FUN JU CHO ZA FU GA ICHI JIKI BO SAI ROKU JI
GYO DO TATO I IN MONI SHI SARU TO IE DOMO
BU SSO FUDEN NO MYO DO O MO TTE KYO
KAN NI KAZA I SEZU NBA TACHI MACHI IN
GAO HATSU MUSHI SHIN PU CHINI OTSU MINA KORE
JYAMA NO SHUZO KUNA RI RO SO YO SARU
KOTO HISA SHIKU TOMO JISON TO SHO SURU KOTO
O YURU SA JI ARU IWA MO SHI ICHI NIN A RI
YAGA INI MEN ZE SSHI I PPA BO TEI SE
KKYAKU SHO NAI NI YASA I KON O NITE KI SSHITE
HIO SUGO SUTO MO SEN ICHI NI KOJU O KYU MEI
SURU TEI WA RO SO TO NICHU NICHU SHO KEN
HO ON TEI NO HITO NA RI TARE KA AE TE
KYO KOTSU SEN YA BEN SEN BEN SEN.

Daito Kokushi (1282-1338) was the founder of Daitoku-ji, one of the seven Rinzaï Zen headquarters in Kyoto. He is therefore one of our forefathers, since our teacher Sokei-an Sasaki Roshi was ordained as a priest of Daitoku-ji. Kokushi is a title that means national teacher. Daito had various other names, of which Kozen is one. His *yuikai*, or final instructions, were originally recited before *teisho* (a Zen lecture by a roshi) by the monks of temples or monasteries related to the Daitoku-ji teaching line. Probably since Hakuin's time (according to Ruth Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, p. 236), this recitation has become common to all Japanese Rinzaï monasteries.

ON CHANTING has been taken from a tape recording of a talk given by Joshu Sasaki Roshi when he was at the Vancouver Zen Center (139 Water St., Vancouver 3, British Columbia, Canada). Comments are in parenthesis. Dashes mean a pause. Three periods mean that words have been omitted, usually because they were repetitious or because the tape was unclear. R is Roshi. T is the translator.

Questioner: When (we're) chanting the Sutras... shouldn't we know what the Sutras mean? (chanted in Japanese)

T:***

R:***

T: He says that it is better that you don't understand what the meaning is. (laughter)

R:***

T: You have enough wisdom-to-understand things.

R: So it is better just to practice to manifest yourself (as) the Sutra, and nothing else.

(Roshi gets up and begins to chant, very slowly, placing one foot down with each syllable.) KAAAAAAAAANNNNNNNN

T: You have only to say "Kan." (The opening syllable of the Hannya Shingyo, used for walking practice.) You put yourself--everything--in this "Kan," and put yourself on this leg (points to right leg).

R:***

T: If you think what the meaning is you cannot put all yourself on this right leg.

R: (Chants KAAAAAAAAANNNNNNN pretends to be thinking of meaning. His face wrinkles up, and he looks around.)

(laughter)

R: KAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNNNNNN JIIIIIIIIIIII ZAAAAAAAAIIIIIIII BOOOOOOO SAAAAAAA

(walking slowly with each syllable)

T: So you--you just not think of the meaning and practice Sutra.

Questioner: Could you ask him to tell us something about how to chant--how to breathe when we chant?

T:***

R:*** (Demonstrates as before. Occasionally he takes a breath between syllables)***

T: He says you do as he says... you breathe in as if you are swallowing all the air in the world. You breathe the whole air in the cosmos all in yourself and then breathe out all air.

R:***

T: For example, when you draw one leaf of a plant then you just put all yourself in the brush and draw as if you are drawing on the cosmos and this cosmos is concentrated on this brush. And this is the way that we have to chant.

SOKEI-AN SAYS

THE FOUNDATION OF BUDDHIST PRACTICE

The Buddha taught the three basic principles of shila, samadhi, and prajna, that is commandment, meditation, and the attainment of wisdom. By their practice, one attains freedom of mind and emancipation.

To act according to your true nature is shila. We usually translate shila "commandment," but this is not a good translation. Shila is the regulation of mind action and physical action.

When a Japanese farmer leads water from a pond to a rice-field, he regulates the flow of the water. When you eat, you regulate your intake of food. You do not eat all the food on the plate, but a portion of it. In the same way, you introduce into your mind and life what you need. In English, law means that someone has made a particular system or law, then commands others to obey it. But shila, in Buddhism, does not mean that someone commands you to follow a law that has been made by him. True nature commands us, so we do not need any teacher to command us. However, since while we are in a state of delusion or handicapped by habitual desire, we become blind so we cannot see the true regulation of the functions of body and mind, we begin training with the practice of commandment.

If you have just killed someone, and fear the police are after you, how can you keep your mind quiet or think of attaining wisdom? If you are involved in unlawful relations with someone's wife or husband or child, how can you keep your mind quiet when you know that someone may have found out and be after you with a gun? As a

preparation for the practice of meditation, therefore, you must keep your body and mind free from fear. A simple precaution is to be sure that there is no policeman, no creditor, no injured party to answer to.

Of course it is possible to think or meditate even on the battlefield. In the rain of fire and blood, one's mind can be quiet if one is trained. But this does not happen right away. At the sound of the guns, the instinctive reaction of the nerves is to tremble. Only through practice and experience can one attain "great guts."

When I was a soldier in Manchuria, I tried to practice quiet mind from my first day at the front. I struck my stomach. "I am a Zen student," I told myself. "Why should I not be able to keep my calm?" But the will to do it is not enough. Only practice brings freedom from fear.

Commandment is also connected with morality. To violate the rules of morality makes you feel you have no standing in human society. To be a harmless, good man you must find solid ground under your feet.

In Buddhism, when you enter a monastery as a novice, they ask you to observe the minor commandments, which differ in every group. You shall not lie, gossip, or accuse another of a fault are common commandments.

The first practice in meditation, the second of the three foundations, is to drive the useless mindstuff out of your mind. You are always getting carried away with it, rushing after every problem that comes up. When you go home from work in the evening, you sit down for a moment to quiet yourself, but the moment you pick up the evening newspaper, things come into

your mind. How about this? What about that? And before you are aware of what is happening, your mind is jumping and jerking. The part of your mind that does this is important and useful, but it is also the source of your troubles. There isn't any trouble really. Politics, worry about business, gossip are all mindstuff from the true view. While you are using your mind symbolically, that is, depending on names and comparisons, you cannot see Reality. See Reality first, then use your mind. The glass of water--what is it? This is this. That is all. There is just one Reality. Transcendental, actual--just names. Surprise the mind and see Reality directly.

When you talk you need names, but in meditation you do not need a word. We start in naked silence. When you find real meditation without a word, you attain true wisdom. Your mind becomes pure and you can see your true soul directly. When your mind is free from all conceptions--is it good? is it bad? is it giving or taking?--that do not truly exist, you will find real emancipation.

In Japan, there is a saying: "Punish the crime, not the man." This is some kind of talk, isn't it? How can you punish the crime without the man?

There was a famous judge in my grandfather's time. A monk who had committed a crime was brought before him. "Confess everything you have done and I will punish the crime, but not you," the judge told him. The monk confessed. "Well," said the judge, "if you can abstract your crime from yourself, you can go free." The monk stood up and started home. "Wait," the judge said, "Where is your crime?" "It is written in your book. You can

find it there." Of course he was a Zen monk. When you understand this, you really find salvation. But when you use words like Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, these are just words. When you know the one thing in the universe, you really find salvation.

In real salvation you attain the non-leaking mind. In English this has a strange sound. Leaking mind means that something is always exuding--desire, sensation, imagination. We must attain no-leakage.

Desire is common to every human being. When you look at food and try to get it without permission, or bite off more than you can chew, we call this desire. To eat what you must to support your life is not desire. To bite off only what you can chew the Buddhist calls regulation. I had a shameful experience when I was a very young novice. I went where there were many young ladies and tried to attract their attention. My teacher gave me a cuff--"It is not necessary to do that" he told me. That is leaking desire.

Desire distorts our observation. When an artist looks at his subject through some conception, he cannot make a pure portrait of the one who really exists. That is leaking sense perception.

Leaking imagination is the most difficult to exterminate. In meditation, you imagine: "Now I am in absolute oneness with Nirvana." Thinking you are "nothing" in meditation, or *thinking* you are in oneness, that you have really vanished, you drop your jaw and someone looking at you can see you are in a terrible condition. Imagining yourself Buddha, expanding your body through the universe--most

Buddhists experience this type of leaking imagination. It is not true meditation, but imagination. "I am in the air. I am nothing." This nothing is not true understanding, but imagination. This is dreadful, though it is not a word. Drop this. It is air, mindstuff. It must be exterminated for you to become the true pure entity that was made by God, not by the imagination of the human being. In a Zen monastery, if a student asks "What is Buddha?" the master will give him a slap to open his eye and wake him up.

This teaching of the three foundations is very famous, for although it is Hinayana, it forms the basis of Mahayana Buddhism.

In the Mahayana period all the cardinal principles were expounded and explained. We Zen students throw away names and terms, which are made by men. Zen stands upon consciousness, not the sky or visible phenomena. When I show you a box, I do not call it either matter or spirit, existence or non-existence. Man gives names and makes distinctions. The Zen student actualizes consciousness in himself, but cannot speak a word about it. However, when we wish to speak about the stages of consciousness systematically, we borrow the terms used in these old accounts of Buddhism.

Alaya is the name given to the consciousness that lasts forever.

Adana consciousness is the consciousness of the arhat. He lives in clear consciousness without anything in it. It is all cleared out. As man, we have this consciousness (of the head) but we realize that without our intention our hair grows, our food is digested. This is not man's consciousness, but nature's. As animal, we have

the consciousness of eye and ear. As preta, we have two consciousnesses, the ever-starving mouth and the nose. Then there is the body center, for procreation. The psychoanalysts call this sex, but we call it hell, the lowest consciousness. It is most useful, and essential to the continuance of human life. From the womb other bodies are created. We have no sense of disdain towards this consciousness but it is placed low, as a kitchen implement is kept near the sink, not on the shelf with the tea. We don't put it on top of everything.

We consist of all these consciousnesses. They have three periods in which they come out: growing, staying, and decaying. Everything passes through these three stages--a cloud gathers, flows, then fades.

People of the West think of their souls as something stationary, like a lump of sugar, but the Buddhist thinks of soul as something that comes and goes, converges and diverges; its function is like that of a furnace. Consciousness is flowing all the time, everywhere; it has no body and no mass. We see, believe and use thoughts to perform actions, but they have no permanent body. This earth, too, is like the mind that flows. The existence of the world is the mind of alaya consciousness; the mind located in our heads is the shadow of our real mind.

According to the Mahayana explanation, with our prajna mind we correct the distortion of our observation of the outside.

This explanation is a poor photograph we have made to explain our consciousness.

Reconstructed by Frances Reiter

gon notes

COPYRIGHT 1971
PUBLISHED MONTHLY

BY

The First Zen Institute of America, Inc.
113 East 30th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016

Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Feb. 1971
Mary Farkas, Editor
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED