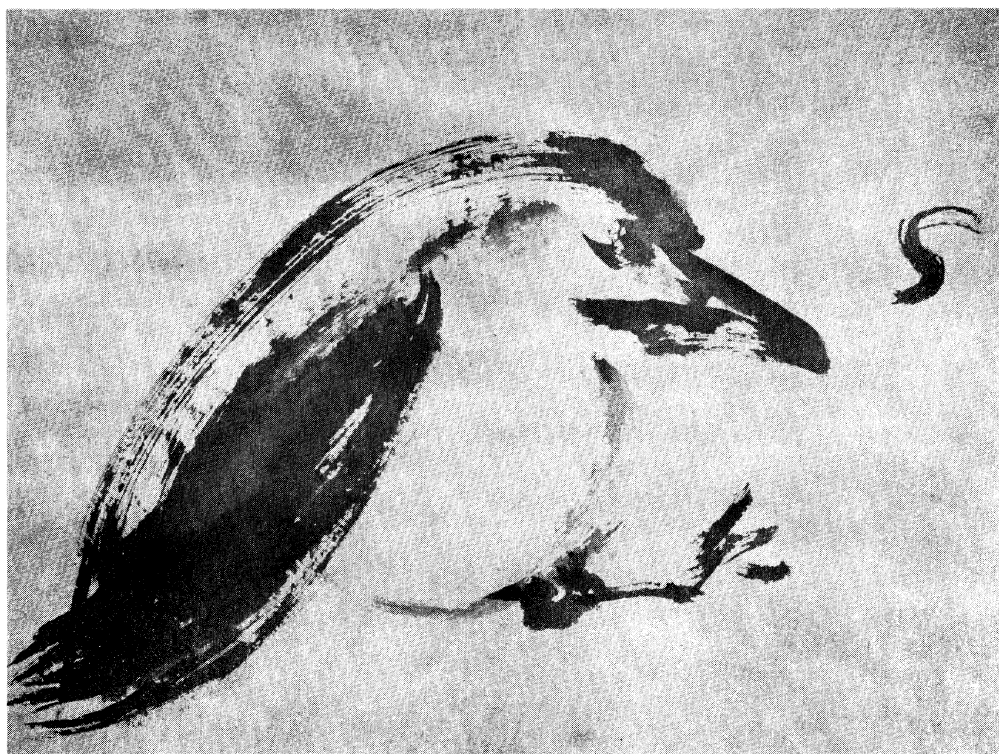


ZEN NOTES



Rinzai Reed

Brothers, what law am I talking about now? I am talking about the law of the ground of soul by which the soul embodies the secular and the sacred, the pure and profane, the real and temporal. You yourselves are not real nor temporal, secular nor sacred. You attach these names to that which is real or temporal, secular and sacred. That which is the secular and sacred, the pure and profane, the real and temporal cannot attach a name to this man. Brothers, grasp and use, do not name IT. This is fundamental.

Rinzai is speaking about the law of the ground of soul. From the soul everything is produced, as all plants sprout from the ground. The soul is a law in itself as the earth is its own law: in winter it holds the seeds; in spring it gives life to the seeds; in summer it gives strength to trees; in autumn it receives the fruit of the trees and again holds their seeds. Anyone who makes a garden must know the earth's law. In the same way anyone who wishes to do something in his life must know the law of this ground.

Rinzai said that the law of this ground is unwritten, but that it manifests itself in you. You feel sad, angry. By this feeling you know what you are going to do. Your reaction is your guide. When you are insulted, you feel angry, when you are smiled at you become quiet--that is the law operating in you. But you must understand this law, not abuse it. If you follow the law that is written in your heart, it is not much trouble to go through life. But even though all law is written in your own heart, you do not realize it until the day Tathagata Buddha comes to you and proves it. The teaching is like the coming of spring. It shakes you into the realization of what is in you, as seeds in the ground sprout when spring comes.

You may say, "My conscience is the guide that tells me to do this or not." But how obedient are you to that whisper of conscience? Do you follow it faithfully? If you do, you are no different from Buddha.

When a ship swings to the left, its compass points to the right, and vice versa. A weight in your mind tells you exactly how to take a balance. If you are deceived by preconceived ideas and do not hear the true voice, you do not get the message. So man's real work is to destroy preconceived ideas and old habits and to listen at every moment to the directions of the law that is written within. This human life then can be a new adventure at every moment. If you cultivate your awareness of the law, it will tell you the exact truth--like the hand of a boxer, it will move for defense or offense. If you do not cultivate this, it grows faint and loses the power of commanding you. The true man does not need to listen for this voice, it is always guiding him.

Of course one must understand all three laws, the individual, the group, and the universal.

Rinzai tells us to grasp and use it, but to put no name to it. This is fundamental.

Soul embodies everything as elec-

tric current enters every lamp of the city, as water enters utensils. Soul enters man, woman, black and white, good and bad. The Buddha's teaching of just one soul is peculiar to Buddhism: no cat nor dog, frog nor snake, man nor woman, dragon nor tiger, but just one soul in everything. It may seem that each one has a different soul, but all that variety is made by the conditions of time and place. Soul itself has no differentiation and receives no karma--karma itself makes karma.

One who has a logical mind knows that the essential power of the universe must be one power yet diversified like a tree and its branches, a flower and its fruit, which is the result of the power that is in the tree.

The soul that embodies diversification is "secular" in the sense of one who does not know the law of life and death. He has an illogical philosophy and causes himself great suffering. Perhaps he believes in hell. We all know there is no hell under the earth nor any heaven in the sky. We know the earth turns daily, that it has four stages in the year around the sun, that it does not remain in the same place, so in which direction is the sky of heaven? For people who believe in heaven and hell, the teaching of transmigration and reincarnation is a device to pull them into understanding, but we are not fish to bite such bait.

One who understands his own consciousness and that consciousness is one we call "sacred."

We have three "impurities"--desire, anger and ignorance. Desire is to crave the unnecessary thing. A glass has a limit of receiving--you cannot pour more into it than its ca-

capacity allows--so man's capacity and power has a limit. One who wishes more experiences desire. We take what food is necessary; the Roman epicure demonstrates desire. If such a one cannot get more, he is angry--that is ignorance. He is profane. The one who knows the limit is "pure."

When Rinzai speaks of the "real and the temporal," he means that which really exists and that which is temporal, not that what is for God's sake is real, for money temporal. He says, "You yourselves attach to these names." "Self" here is a synonym for soul. This man means the soul in the man. You cannot put a name on soul, calling it Mr. So and So. The name does no work. Soul is teaching; the name is not teaching. Yet, in religion, all attach to names--Buddhism, Christianity.

Brother, grasp and use, do not name it. This factor in the soul knows the function and uses it. Do not call it good or bad, true or false, beautiful or ugly.

There was once a novice in the temple who, after such a lecture, said: "I will take it all and use it." The teacher twisted his arm and the novice cried, "Don't!" The teacher said: "You cannot use it that way. The arm can bend in one way, nature's way. You must understand the law; if you know the law you can take it and use it."

The law is operating in everyone according to the time, place and condition. Why name it? Essential existence is one--is the head, the flesh of Christ. If you know multinominal existence, you know it has many names yet is only one; if you understand the essential meaning, you can use it.

Do not live on the surface, in su-

perstition, in the artificial; know the great currents of life, live in these and do great work. Today we have to prove scientifically all that we experience with mind and consciousness. But when we operate the real law in ourselves, we will meet the science of today--it will come! It is not necessary to strive to do artificial work, just keep an eye open and see how the current of modern civilization is running. Man, not nature, operates this law. Nature works through man. All works out in time. We should not build fences between the East and the West--the one law is operating in both and they will be united in the future. The one who is profane suffers because he does not know the law and is operated by nature. The one who is sacred operates himself because he knows the law.

(From *The Conversations of Dr. Johnson* by James Boswell, ed. by R.W. Postgate, New York, Vanguard Press, 1930.)

"After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it--'I refute it thus.'"

THE ZEN SECT OF BUDDHISM

February 22, 1936 I gave a lecture before the Japan Society of Boston. It seems to me they did not understand my address; they could not understand which was the tail, which was the head. According to the questions they asked me after the lecture, I must conclude that the intelligentsia of Boston could not understand what is Buddhism. I wonder if my audience in New York could understand my lecture. Of course, I couldn't repeat exactly what I told them, but following my memorandum, I shall repeat it.

Before you understand what is Zen, you must understand what is Buddhism. I was born as the child of a Shinto priest. Until I entered the Buddhist temple I did not know anything about Buddhism, though I had read the lines of the Sutras. When I received the first koan from my teacher--"Before your father and mother what were you?"--I used German philosophy as an instrument to solve it. I was preparing to have an examination to enter the Academy of Art in Tokyo, and as preparation I was studying esthetics. Edouard von Hartmann was famous in Germany at that day. In his philosophy of the unconscious he emphasized the concrete microcosm. I took this viewpoint to solve the koan, and my answer was "Absolute." My teacher rang the bell at me--I was terribly disappointed.

Then I came back home and I took a materialistic view--before negative and positive and all relative existence which is based upon phenomena, there is just one solid existence which is colorless. My second answer was transparent--and my teacher rang the bell. Disappointed, I was walking

around in Tokyo, and, standing before a bookshop, I opened a paper and found a line of poetry translated into Japanese:

*Oh rose in the garden
I do not ask what you were
in the past,*

Or what you will be in the future.

Your existence is forever with God.
I did not like his "God," but certainly it opened my eye into an entirely different vista, and I walked into this avenue and I found the gate of Zen and opened it.

Three years later, I opened the sutras and studied Buddhism. When I knew the ins and outs of Buddhism, I could say that Buddhism is to teach you "What is this?" instead of "What to do." To the question of "What to do" the Buddhist pays no attention; but he strives to know "What is this?" (Lifts up glass)-- "What is this?" (Beats table) "What is this?" When I was a child I went to a Buddhist temple and listened to a monk giving a lecture. The monk was lifting up a tea cup and said: "Gaze long enough at this and it will disappear." I went back home and looked a long while at the tea cup, waiting for it to disappear. It did *not*. My father asked what I was doing. I said: "I am concentrating, waiting for the tea cup to disappear, as the monk said." My father said: "That Buddhist monk does not know what he is talking about. He does not know the metaphysics of disappearance."

Turn the objective "What is this" to subjective and ask this question of yourself. Then this question takes on a Buddhistic appearance. "What is this?" is the first question of Shakyamuni Buddha. He followed the Indian method

of meditation and tried to understand this intuitively. He renounced the world and became an ascetic. This is the attitude of all Buddhist monks. Before concentrating on himself to find "What is this?" he renounced the world. He took such an aloof attitude because he did not want to find himself in a "pretty kettle of fish." In the first line of the Samyutta Nikaya--oldest of Buddhist scriptures--there is this: "You ought to observe that rupa is ephemeral; that vedana, samjna, and samskara are also ephemeral. Therefore you must find something that is not ephemeral upon which to base your life." The question of mutability and how to get out of it and find eternity was a current question in that age in the Orient and in Greece.

To subjugate all this rupa, vedana, and so forth -- the so-called five skandhas--you must use your scale of consciousness. (In Boston they could not understand what I was talking about.) I called Buddha the conqueror of the world of optical and mental delusion. As students we begin with the task of subjugating the five skandhas, phenomenal appearances. When I was a child I asked why the sky is blue. I was told because interstellar space is dark, so vibration of ether is not transmitted into light--light doesn't manifest except in the air. Space is pitch dark and we see this space through the atmosphere, so the sky is dark. This happens just in air which is twenty miles deep. Later this knowledge gave me a sense of the ephemerality of the outer existence.

If you study optics it will prove to you what color is. You will see this usually as green, but it will occasionally turn into red, according to the

condition of your eyes. Color does not exist out *there*--it belongs to the retina of your eye. You would say, "Color is red," "Sound is noisy," "Sugar is sweet," "Pin is painful"--pin is not painful; pain belongs to the skin, not the pin. All sense perceptions are your perceptions and exist inside; what exists outside God knows!" Perhaps noumenon. Noumenon and phenomenon--if you do not know these words, go home and look in the dictionary and find out.

Next is rupa-skandha--to feel outside. Outside and inside are like a box and lid. If you have no sense organs you cannot tell outside and inside. And then thoughts--samjna-skandha. Thought is very, very fine; it exists in your mind naturally. It is tenacious; you must exterminate it. How? You must use your brain to exterminate it. What is monism? What is dualism? What is pluralism? All this has value, but it has nothing to do with Reality, with Real Nature.

Then samskara-skandha. You find many translations given to this "samskara." One Western scholar translated this "the accumulation of the creative element." Another translated it "confection" or "confectioner." I could not understand this translation. I opened a dictionary and found it was "candy" or "cake-maker." I could not understand this at all until someone told me that some candy has seeds in it! This samskara does hold seeds--it is the seed-holder. When you are sleeping, samskara *dreams you*--you are not dreaming. We are samskara. We feel it as mood, emotion--all we cannot control. If you observe this in the outer world it is very clear to you--the willow shows you its spirit

drooping its branches, and so forth--all the endless shades of the mood. It gives you a panorama in which you can live. But if you feel it in your mind it is only a wave of your consciousness.

What is consciousness? To meditate upon your pure consciousness--vijñāna-skandha--you feel boundless space, then space gets into your consciousness and all the universe is your consciousness. It is like a mirror. Without anything to reflect upon the mirror, the mirror does not exist. In a New York department store I see nothing in the mirror--then suddenly I see a yellow-faced Jap--it is I.

The mirror in the sky that receives no reflection cannot prove its own existence, so consciousness disappears and enters into eternal emptiness. But from this emptiness all the universe will spring out once more. The universe does not need to do anything to wake up again. And when this is carried out it is not yourself. *That* thinks, *that* comes. It is Great Nature.

Tathagata means: "He came exactly at that wholeness of the universe"--so we call the Buddha Tathagata, for "He came exactly at that wholeness." And Buddha is the microcosm of that. He is the child. He was there as a child before that and when he came he came exactly as that--the image of the father. You must understand how Christianity is analogous to Buddhism--Buddhism is five hundred years older.

Then we come to this present conscious mind and material world--the flower is blooming, the bird is singing. I enjoyed this phenomenal world when I was thirty-seven years old.

In the real experience of meditation, you will experience everything

at once. When you are going up you are coming down. The youngest baby is the oldest man and the oldest man is the youngest baby. For the baby has a long past--just left it; and the old man is ready to be a baby again.

A story is told of two monks watching a current of water. One said: "It is circling to the center." The other said: "It is circling to the outside." The debate was endless and a Zen Master came and hit one of the monks in the eye and asked: "Which way is the water going?" And the monk answered: "All ways at once." So in meditation you are converging to a point and at the same time you are diverging to the kaleidoscopic universe--in the interval you will find yourself.

Another story is told of how Master Gutei showed one finger in answer to every question. "What is Buddha?" "What is Nirvana?" Gutei always showed his finger. A young novice imitated him. The Master called the novice to him and asked him "What is Buddha?" When the novice showed his finger, imitating, the Master cut it off. The novice ran shrieking; the Master called him again and raised his finger--the novice imitated. And in that instant he was enlightened. He realized what is this.

A Western story is told of Dr. Johnson and Bishop Berkeley--on reality. Johnson kicked a huge stone. "I refute thus." So there is Zen in the Western country too. I hope you understand. If you don't, no one understands Zen in Boston or New York. Of course I spoke my English a little more carefully in Boston.

Reconstructed by Wm. H. McPheters

SOKEI-AN SAYS

TATHAGATA-GARBHA The womb of Buddha is a term used from the early times of Buddhism. In the Mantrayana School, where the sun is the symbol of absolute knowledge, omnipresent Buddha-knowledge, the empty sky that begets this absolute Buddha is called the womb of Buddha.

From the Buddha's time, monks used the word *shunyata* (nothingness) to express the idea of the womb of Buddha, the empty sky that begets the sun. In Buddhism generally, this empty sky is the symbol of Reality. It is empty, but everything comes out of it and everything returns to it, is annihilated in it--stars are born from it and will be reduced into it, and so with all existence; it begets the sun which is intrinsic wisdom; it is the very foundation of Buddhism. It is not "idea" as Plato would call it, but it begets Buddha. It is not Buddha, for it is the womb of Buddha. Sometimes we call it Buddha-maitri or Maya--the creator of vision or vision, but the sky itself is not the vision.

Mantrayana sect artists have portrayed these ideas in colorful paintings. They have provided the whole Orient with material. My sect is not very familiar with this type of art; instead of using symbols, it points to Reality itself. A Zen artist uses water and a drop of ink--Sesshu, for instance. This "ink" goes from pitch black to various shades of gray and then into mist. It is very near to Reality itself. You call it "black and white". Pure transparent white was used by Sesshu to represent the creatress of vision.

The *real* is more beautiful than art when the sky vomits it from bot-

tomless emptiness. You must find this bottomless emptiness in your own consciousness. You will find it in meditation. You think it is far away from your present consciousness, but once you realize it--this alaya consciousness--you will never be separated from it--there is no space between you and it. It is like the two sides of one sheet of paper. When you are enlightened, this present consciousness is Buddha-consciousness and alaya is the womb, the creator of it. Alaya consciousness holds the seeds of all vision. It is intrinsic wisdom containing all our knowledge.

When one dies, his consciousness immediately goes back to the bottomless alaya consciousness. Do you think that one then comes individually back after going into that emptiness? Take a drop of water in a glass of water. You cannot take it out, it is indistinguishably mingled with the rest of the water. How then can an individual consciousness be separated from the universal consciousness and again take an individual attitude? The Buddhist does not take an individual atom idea, but takes the whole universe as one existence, and empty.

You have heard many times of the five skandhas--rupa, body; vedana, senses; samjna, thoughts, intellect; samskara, seeds of thought--flowing with universal movement and rhythm, swifter and finer than the thoughts themselves, which are just the "tuning up" of the brain, transient. The brain is not a repository of thoughts--it is like a radio that tunes in on the universal consciousness as expressed in words. Samskara is expressed by eyes and movement. The artist who dwells in samskara gives a deeper interpreta-

tion than the one who deals only with the outside.

The fifth skandha is vijnana--intrinsic wisdom if you are enlightened; if not, just the everlasting consciousness reaching to the bottomless ocean.

You must stand upon this emptiness, this tathagata-garbha. There is no ego in it. Sitting next to one who stands upon emptiness, you feel you are sitting beside a rock or tree. Man is really living in the universe of thought--in samjna you must think--but in samskara there is no time to think--everything comes like lightning. You don't need any words. This is the ground of the artist, the genius. The religious man must stand upon this emptiness.

The states of samjna and samskara are not the property of the individual but the treasures of all. There are no individual thoughts, no individual existence.

When you die, your thoughts still exist in the state of thoughts--the semi-consciousness. There is no life-or-death in the so-called state of emptiness. The only death is the entrance into this physical body where you are cut off from the universal consciousness for a time. You are not dying in vijnana, so death is the state of universal consciousness. Your physical body disappears, but your thought and vision--samjna and samskara--exist everywhere forever. Sometimes a thing happens exactly as it happened in the past. Then we say one who has been dead for two hundred years, perhaps, has come back again. The seed that I sow will not die, though everyone forgets the monk who was here years ago.

Reconstructed by M. Farkas

gan-nata

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