

ZEN NOTES



Rinzai Reed

The Master said to everyone:

Brothers, Buddha-dharma requires no effort; there is nothing further for you to do. You yourself as you are--that is the Buddha-Dharma! I stand or I sit; I dress myself; I eat; I defecate and I urinate; I sleep when I am tired. The ignoramus derides me; the wise man understands. Someone long ago said: "Those who devise ways and means to obtain anything outside this are stubborn idiots."

SOKEI-AN SAYS

When Master Rinzai tells his disciples that Buddha-dharma requires no effort he is speaking about the famous principle of Buddhism--purposelessness. You cannot use Buddhism for any purpose. Of course this is said of those like Rinzai whose understanding was like the Buddha's, but for students whose attainment has not reached such a high level, Buddhism is a wonderful device with which to govern everyday life. Rinzai is speaking from his understanding and his view of Buddhism.

From the viewpoint of Shintoism, you are not living, you are not doing anything. If you think you are living, you are doing something--you profane the power of God. This is also "purposelessness."

In Christianity, "You cannot change the color of your eyes" is the same thing. A pupil of Confucius expressed it, "Pulling them won't lengthen your fingernails."

In Shintoism there are eight million gods and goddesses--all the elements are gods and goddesses; the whole substance of the universe is the body of God. The body of the human being is the shrine of these deities; a city is a place of congregation of gods and goddesses. We cannot see them but

they see us.

A Shinto priest told this story. "One day a pine tree in the garden was drying up and beginning to die. The gardener saw this and dug all around the tree and put fertilizer near the roots. Later he heard the tree talking to another tree, 'Well, somehow I feel pepped up and that I will live for a while more.'" The other tree answered, "My, it is wonderful that we have some strength left in us at our age of a thousand years!" The trees did not know of the gardener as we do not know of the invisible beings guarding us from outside our bodies and giving us thoughts of encouragement. We think such thoughts are coming from inside, but it is not so. The Shinto theory is not so different from other religious teachings.

The whole faith of Buddhism is in the one word--purposelessness. We think we are making ourselves strong, pursuing desire or handling one particular thing tenaciously, but this too is purposeless if we understand the law of the universe that all one does is not one's own work.

Day by day I feel that I am making contact with more people, finding right words to express what I mean. Two such words are distilled and extracted.

We distill alcohol from sugar, extract the perfume from a flower. Animal nature is extracted from the plant; the nature of man is extracted from the animal; the nature of deva is extracted from man. Deva is a purified sentient being.

Our mothers were sewing, cooking, nursing babies, serving their husbands. Each woman did all these things by herself; now these functions are abstracted in the life of a modern woman: food is prepared in a restaurant, the hospital cares for the babies, and so forth, and this will advance further in future. Doctors are becoming specialized: their particular functions are being individualized, distilled. In Buddhism, we could speak of man being deva-ized: once a sentient being in minor development containing male and female in one body, like an amoeba--this body too will be individualized into details in future.

Man thinks all individual powers of nature can be abstracted and controlled; Buddhists think that all particular functions individualize as devas and that these powers control all lesser beings as man controls the vegetable kingdom, the elements, and animals.

Man can be controlled by extracted thoughts, as faith in a religious teaching is controlled by it. This teaching was not made by the human being--it came into his mind and controls him. This is the Buddhist view. Those who believe in Sovietism are changed by it; a muse enters the head of a girl and she becomes a wonderful musician. In this way, elemental thoughts not belonging to the human come into him and control him. The Buddhist monk does not mind preaching to a small

number of people, for he is preaching to the devas--not attaching to the forms of a few human beings, his words will spread all over the world.

If we think of these thoughts coming and going as individual devas, it is as a bird that comes into a forest.

Some great power pushes. If an individual understands, he does not struggle, but those who do not understand must be saved by devices. The Buddha said, "For narrow alleys, you use the goat-cart; you cannot use the great white ox-cart. The deer-cart is used by the Bodhisattva: to save someone lying on the ground, he lies beside him; if someone is drowning, the Bodhisattva enters the water. Buddha's Dharma is the great white ox cart--it is motionless, not going, not saving.

The Buddha said, "It is not necessary to proclaim Nirvana; there is no Nirvana, no sentient being to be saved." That is said from the Buddha's understanding. From that standpoint, Rinzai said "The Buddha-dharma requires no effort."

There is nothing further for you to do. You yourself as you are--that is the Buddha-dharma! You must not misunderstand this. There is nothing further for a bird to do, nothing further for a cat to do. A bird flies in the sky--that is its natural condition. If fastened in a cage, this is not the perfect condition of the bird. When a cat dances, that is not its perfect condition. If any notion bewitches you to keep yourself apart in a mountain, it is not perfect Buddhism. Be as you are, nothing more. This is Rinzai's own standpoint.

I stand or I sit; I dress myself; I eat; I defecate and urinate; I sleep when I am tired. Daily life.

My teacher, lecturing on this subject, said that some think morality is religion, but religion is the foundation of morality. Religion has never changed from the creation of the universe. We have the three bodies: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya. Dharmakaya is the elemental existence of the universe; its Nirmanakaya is fire, and so forth. Between is consciousness, Sambhogakaya. All elements reduce to one substance, and when this one expands, it feels its consciousness. All this is the operation of the universe and this order will never change, but morality (mores) changes. Religion is the foundation of our adaptation to daily life. It must be applied at every moment, as Rinzai confesses in his own life, "I stand or I sit," and so forth. Rinzai is content with the necessities of life but one has to struggle to reach this stage, using many methods, *sanzen*, and so on.

The ignoramus derides me; the wise man understands. Time will do it; I need not push. If you push, then you will be pushed back; you will not be connected with Nature. You have to know the time, place, and conditions. To bring Buddhism to America, we must await the time, the place, and the conditions.

Someone said long ago: "Those who devise ways and means to obtain anything outside this are stubborn idiots." Trying to find universal law outside, not looking in oneself. Before you realized this consciousness, you were sleeping: consciousness was there, but sleeping. The three bodies are one body, but the human being who has this body searches for the truth outside somewhere. He is an idiot. Rinzai says to search inside.

SOKEI-AN SAYS

WHAT ARE THE TEN PARAMITAS?

In primitive Buddhism there were six paramitas, but later the last of these, wisdom (*prajna*) opened (as a lotus bud opened shows four more petals) to display four more paramitas, which, being added to the original six, make ten altogether.

Paramita (from *parama*--highest acme) means "to reach the other shore of nirvana," enlightenment, by crossing the sea of mortal life, birth and death, from the shore of delusion.

To attain enlightenment there are ten ways, just as when you wish to go to Long Island there are four or five ways to go there.

Giving (*dana*). When you give yourself, of course you give your belongings also. There have been many laymen in the history of Buddhism who said, "My whole life, my whole work is for Buddhism." I will work hard to support Buddhism." In Japan, a gambler or a businessman might make millions. "I will build a temple."

That is the old type of Buddhist life. It was natural for lay people to give their income to the temple, for in those days the temple was the center of society--hospital, school, bank, politics, everything was in the temple.

Today the temple has developed many offshoots. Hospitals, schools, now take independent attitudes. Religion is the keystone of the structure of human life. If there is no religion in a country, though there are schools and hospitals and banks, it is as if their structure has no keystone--they will fall. Today religion is not so

important, always talking about something--God, this and that. Convention and superstition have no power to control the human thoughts that are the essence of human life. When a priest really has knowledge to teach, people will find the importance of religion once more. Then they will contribute readily to religious institutions. We need a real power to control notions. Today when people give something to the church they feel as though they are throwing their money into the gutter. I am not talking about this country only, it is the same in mine.

At funerals in Japan, the officiating monk shouts "KAAAAaaa!" at the dead man in his coffin to send him into Nirvana. One old gentleman asked after such a service: "I am grateful to you for giving my son a "KAAAAAAA." I wonder where he has gone with your "KAAAAAAA." The monk did not answer. "You do not know where he has gone? I have been giving donations here for many many years." The monk was a decent fellow, so he ran away when he heard these words. If he were dishonest, he would have said, "Oh, my dear sir....." But this monk was a decent man so he went to Kyoto and began really to study Zen. He began all over again as a novice.

2. Observing the precepts or commandments (shila). Commandment is really law. A country has law. So has a monastery. In the Buddha's time there was just one sect of Buddhism, so there was just one set of commandments. There were the five precepts and then ten. Those who remained laymen could not take the monks' commandment. They might observe a set of eight commandments for eight days of

the month--one day would be "not kill" day, another "not lie" and so forth. The laymen try to observe the monks' way for that day. "Today I will not kill one mosquito, one cockroach." The next day he will observe celibacy. Perhaps his wife will go home to her parents! "Today I will not look at singing and dancing." Broadway would be empty.

Monks have two hundred and fifty commandments that are really etiquette--must do this, must not do that--almost he cannot breathe or sneeze. Nuns observe one hundred more than monks. This is the foundation of the Buddhist life.

3. Forbearance (kshanti).

4. Painstaking labor (virya).

In Japan there is a special day called Painstaking Day. On such days, you select one thing on which to concentrate your effort. "I am working very hard to attain enlightenment so I shall concentrate on *one* thing only. Every spare moment will be devoted to it." If you are translating a novel from French to English, and on that day you decide to do that only, you concentrate on that one work. If you are a Buddhist trying to attain wisdom, you concentrate on your koan every spare moment--when you are taking your bath in the morning--in each moment of leisure.

5. Meditation (dhyana), to meditate upon this existence. The Buddha taught the five skandhas (the five shadows, the five scales of consciousness). When I was a child on summer nights we would go to the temple. In summer there are ten nights in succession in July when the monks give lectures. They tell all kinds of things, including ghost stories. The children are

afraid to go home. After the harvest the farmer has nothing to do so he will accept Buddhism for ten nights. Once the monk said--I still remember he was holding a teacup--"If you meditate upon this, it will disappear." And I went home and meditated, but it did not disappear. I asked my father--he was a Shinto priest--about it and he said, "Do not believe any monk." But I tried very hard.

Today if I meditate, it will disappear. Do you understand this? There is **only** one way it will disappear--even the whole universe will disappear. Throughout the three worlds all is empty. There is nothing. Then where do you find your soul? This is a koan. Without eyes, the object exists but it has no color, form, smell, and so forth. When you meditate upon this glass with your eyes, your perception, your consciousness, finally it will disappear, for all is consciousness. There is no glass, no paper, no bowl. To science, there is nothing in the world except protons and electrons. When old science observed the world, there was nothing but ether.

When you meditate in such a way on the scale of the five consciousnesses you will find the wisdom intrinsically existing in you and in everything.

6. Attaining wisdom (prajna) you will solve all the questions of the universe and individual life.

These are the six paramitas. When you have attained them, you can go home, make your bed and go to sleep. Your teacher will be watching you to see whether you come back. If it is your choice to be a layman, you will stay at home, get married and produce babies. The hardworking monk who must take koans with great courage cannot

be a layman. But the temple cannot exist without laymen.

7. Contrivance, pious fraud (upaya). When the monk has attained wisdom, he must teach. But to teach wisdom we must use "contrivances." If I give you the koan, "Before father and mother, what were you?" and you come to my room and I take drastic measures and hold you to the koan for four months, you may get discouraged and go away. But a baby cannot stand alone at first. The mother says, "Come baby, come baby," and holds him from falling. This way we are taught. But still she must say, "Come baby, come baby." She knows he can't, but he will.

8. Supplication (pranidhana). Certainly in Buddhism we do not supplicate God, "Please God, I wish to make a good temple." We find God in our heart. We offer prayer to God's shrine, the human heart. I do not offer my prayer to an outside Deity, but to you. I appeal immediately to your heart to accomplish my desire, "Please do this for me," and I get the answer direct from you--yes or no. As a sacrifice I offer you my work, my labor, not a sheep or ox. When I want money, I offer my labor and I ask. If I want happiness, I work hard and I ask my happiness from you. My prayer is direct, for I know where God is living.

9. Strength (bala). We must have strength and knowledge to make this kind of supplication to keep things going.

The last four paramitas are for others, the first six for yourself.

10. Emptiness wisdom (jnana) I shall not speak about now.

Reconstructed from 1936 series by VC

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAYS

I cannot speak English but as everyone asked Roshi, please speak Teisho, I will. In my English, Cimarron Zen Center English. Gisela, please translate if necessary.

Zen practice is to realize yourself. Everybody who wants to practice Zen has to realize himself and realize Buddha. This is Zen. But we are still not Buddha. Buddha said, "All sentient beings are Buddha" but still we cannot manifest ourselves as Buddha because we are human beings. We must practice to become Buddha.

Human beings always have to have an object. If we have lost our object we cannot live in this world. The human being always needs food to swallow. If there is no food to swallow everybody is lost, cannot live in this world. We need an object. A subject always needs an object. Of course when you are the subject you are tied to an object. A man is always tied to a woman (laughs). A woman also is tied to a man. A subject is always tied to an object. An object is always tied to a subject. Everybody wants to transcend this. The man wants to transcend being tied to the woman; the woman wants to transcend being tied to the man. But if they transcend this, the world would soon end.

The Buddha said the true self is always illuminating as Buddha. It is not limited to subject, object; it is beyond. True illumination is beyond subject and object, but it includes subject and object. It is Buddha-nature. You are living as Buddha. Do you think when you are listening to my lecture that you are not illuminating

as Buddha (Roshi claps hands)? Everybody hears, though he is a man. Everybody, when he hears, has become Buddha. Everybody who wants to study Zen has to become Buddha, has to manifest as Buddha. Each one has to manifest as (claps hands). There is no need to study. But your wisdom is weak. Everybody is always manifesting himself, but having many times been taught to see subject and object, everybody's wisdom looks for the object.

Everybody should practice to become "one." (Holds up one finger.) Zen practice is to educate yourself. When you have educated yourself as prajna you can illuminate yourself. (Breathes out with a long breath that fades to nothing). The true illumination of prajna or Buddha includes subject and object together--complete. Buddha takes everything away completely. Buddha affirms himself. Buddha is compassion. Everything Buddha says, he is illuminating as Buddha. All sentient beings are illuminating as Buddha. Hmmm? You also are illuminating.

You can eat vegetables and fish and meat, but vegetables and fish and pig are never angry when they are eaten, because everything exists as patience and not anger. This is real compassion. If a tiger, hungry (Roshi growls), wants to eat you, if you say no you have no compassion for the tiger. You must illuminate as compassion. When you meet someone you don't like (Roshi shows distaste) but say: "Good morning, sir," and shake hands, that is to practice Zen.

Practice as oneness. Oneness means emptiness because there is no subject, no object. Oneness is not one that has two, three, is relative. Only one. Oneness means emptiness--*ku*. *Mu* means

Journal notes

COPYRIGHT 1971 BY The First Zen Institute of America, Inc. PUBLISHED MONTHLY 113 East 30th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016

Vol. XVIII, No. 8, Aug. 1971
Mary Farkas, Editor
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

nothingness. First you should manifest as nothingness. Anyone who can manifest as nothingness is a good student. How do you manifest as nothingness all through your life (laughs)?

MUMONKAN, Chapter One. JOSHU'S MU.

Joshu was a famous Zen Master who lived in China 1200 years ago. Joshu and a Zen teacher were talking one day about Buddha-nature. In English *Busho* is always translated as Buddha nature. Maybe "Buddhanness" would be better.

When the Buddha grasped enlightenment, he said, "All sentient beings are Buddha."

As Joshu and the Zen teacher were talking, a puppy came in. (Roshi imitates). The Zen teacher picks him up. He asks: "Is this puppy Buddha?"

Of course if all sentient beings are Buddha, then this one must be too. Does this puppy manifest himself as Buddha?"

There are other questions like this: "Does this bell appear as Buddha (pointing at a gong)?" How do you answer?

Maybe the teacher thought Joshu would answer "Yes."

Joshu answered, "MUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU.. NOTHINGNESSSSSSSS..". The teacher, doubting Joshu's answer, says, "NOTHINGNESSSS..? NOTHINGNESSSSSSSS..... HAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaa....."

Noted at the FZI March 22 by MF

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI, of Los Angeles, will conduct a Sesshin in Awosting, New York, Aug. 23-29. Contact Awosting Retreat, 315 West 57th St., New York 10019, Tel. (212)765-4670, for information and reservations.

BOOK *On Aggression*, by Konrad Lorenz, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. NY 1966

This noteworthy book by the Viennese naturalist, who was graduated as a doctor of medicine and of philosophy, has, in the course of his observations of the animal and human condition, remarked much that could help us to "know ourselves." Indeed, Chap. XII/On the Virtue of Humility, could make a good Buddhist sermon.

Three obstacles stand in the way of our self-knowledge (and consequent control of our own social behavior): the first is our inhibition against awareness of our own evolutionary origin; the second is our reluctance to accept that our behavior obeys the laws of natural causation; the third is our heritage of idealistic philosophy.

Concerning the second of these obstacles, which might be a scientist's commentary on *Mumonkan 2*, he remarks: "If...man ever should achieve complete insight into the causality of earthly phenomena, including the workings of his own organism, he would not cease to have a will but it would be in perfect harmony with the incontrovertible lawfulness of the universe..."

The attitude of the true scientist toward the real limits of human understanding was unforgettably impressed on him in early youth by the conclusion of a lecture by Alfred Kuhn (an Austrian biologist) when, quoting Goethe, he said, "It is the greatest joy of the man of thought to have explored the explorable and then calmly to revere the inexplorable." After the last word he hesitated, raised his hand in repudiation, and cried, above the applause, "No, *not* calmly, gentlemen, *not calmly!*"